NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

SAUDI ARABIA'S IMPLEMENTATION OF SOFT POWER POLICY TO CONFRONT IRAN'S OBVIOUS THREATS

by

Abdullah Khuliyf A. Alanazi
December 2015

Thesis Advisor:	James Russell
Second Reader:	Robert E. Looney

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13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

The American scholar Joseph Nye was the first to coin the term "soft power." The soft power of a country is based on three resources: the culture, the value of internal policy, and the strength of the foreign policy. In international politics, soft power is among the ways in which success can be achieved without hard power. The concept of soft power has become an integral part of today's language for Saudi Arabia's political leaders, who use soft power to confront challenges with Iran. Such a concept has to be maintained for Iran to stop increasing its influence in the region. This thesis explores Saudi Arabian soft power aimed at counteracting challenges presented by Iran's hegemonic ambitions in the Middle East. Accordingly, the thesis explores the tools at Saudi Arabia's disposal that could enable it to counter Iran's ambition of dominating the Middle East and the rest of the Arab world.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Saudi Arabia, Iran, soft power, challenges			**15. NUMBER OF PAGES** 81
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	**18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE** Unclassified	**19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT** Unclassified	**20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT** UU

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Abdullah Khuliyf A. Alanazi
Colonel, Saudi Arabia National Guard
B.S., King Khalid Military College, 1993

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(STRATEGIC STUDIES)**
from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2015**

Approved by: James Russell
                  Thesis Advisor

                  Robert E. Looney
                  Second Reader

                  Mohammed Hafez
                  Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AGC	Arabian Gulf Countries
AICE	American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Council Countries
GFP	Global Functional Plane
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
INP	Iranian Nuclear Project
IEC	Iranian Economic Capabilities
INF	Iranian Navy Forces
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and Levant
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
ISIS	Institute for Science and International Security
MW	Megawatts
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NTI	Nuclear Threat Initiative
OICA	International Organization of Automobile Manufacturers
SR	Saudi Riyal
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of the Socialist Soviet Republics

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I extend my pleasant appreciation and gratitude to my family. Their motivation during my study enhanced my aspirations throughout my master's thesis. Second, I extend thanks and gratitude to my primary advisor, Professor James Russell, for his directions and comments that helped me complete my thesis. I also express my thanks to my second reader, Professor Robert E. Looney, for all his efforts that guided me during the learning process. Third, I want to dedicate special gratitude to National Security Affairs Chair, Professor Mohammed Hafez, for directing me since I started my studying at NPS. I extend my thanks to my colleague, Col. Fawzan Alfawzan for his support and encouragement that helped me during my learning process at NPS. In addition, I would like to sincerely extend my thanks to the Graduate Writing Center for their optimistic support, insightful comments and directions, and their hard work to help me complete my thesis. My thanks and gratitude from the bottom of my heart goes to everyone at NPS throughout my learning process and for helping me complete my thesis.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The American scholar Joseph Nye was the first to coin the term "soft power." The soft power of a country is based on three resources: the culture, the value of internal policy, and the strength of the foreign policy.[1] The definition of soft power has been used as a catchphrase by many political practitioners, and is among the ways in which success can be achieved without hard power. The concept of soft power has become an integral part of today's language for Saudi Arabia's political leaders, who use soft power to confront challenges with Iran. Such a concept has to be maintained for Iran to stop increasing its influence in the region. Gallarotti and Al-Filali explained that Saudi Arabian "soft power has also been, and will continue to be, of importance in addressing two other important international problems/objectives that bear on regional peace and political stability."[2]

This thesis explores Saudi Arabian soft power aimed at counteracting challenges presented by the Iran's hegemonic ambitions. Iran is an inevitably growing power, particularly in the Persian Gulf, and throughout the Middle East. Such a situation advocates utilizing soft power as a new medium to confront Iran. Saudi Arabian political institutions have developed soft power as a strategy to halt Iranian regional domination. This point necessitates the importance of activating soft power in the Kingdom. Increasing the official role and complying with the public effort enhance this confrontation, internally and externally. As such, this could be formulated within short-term, mid-term and long-term strategic perceptions. A clear future vision should pave the way for an integral strategy for the Saudi soft power system, which should respond to such challenges efficiently.

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[1] Joseph, Nye. "Soft Power and Higher Education." Internet and the University Forum, 2004. http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ffpiu043.pdf, 34.

[2] Giulio Gallarotti and Isam Yahia Al-Filali, "Saudi Arabia's Soft Power." *International Studies* 49, no. 3–4 (July 2012): 251. http://isq.sagepub.com/content/49/3-4/233.short?rss=1&ssource=mfr.

A.   MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Iran has been a major threat to the Arabian Gulf regional countries. Saudi Arabia has been utilizing a soft power policy to challenge this threat. This thesis explores the concept of Saudi's soft power in the context of confronting Iran's challenges in the Middle East and Arabian Gulf. First, it briefly describes the origin of Iran's influence in the region in terms of political and economic power. Second, it defines how and where Iran exerts its ideology. Third, it addresses the importance of soft power and its impacts on Saudi Arabia's foreign policy, specifically how the Saudi state uses soft power to change the power balance in the region. Noted regional specialist Anthony Cordesman has described this dynamic as "a broad regional power struggle that focuses on internal security, regional power, and asymmetric threats far from more than nuclear threats."[3] Saudi soft power should play different functions in confronting Iranian challenges. The results of confronting these challenges do not equal the exerted efforts, and here lies the problem that motivates the following research questions: Why does Saudi Arabia implement a soft power policy despite Iran's obvious threats? What are the optimal methods to employ the Saudi soft power policy to efficiently confront the Iranian challenges efficiently? To what extent is the Saudi soft power strategy effective in facing the Iranian challenges?

Figures 1 and 2 provide maps for reference of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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[3]Anthony H. Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the clash within a civilization," February 03, 2014, http://csis.org/publication/saudi-arabia-iran-and-clash-within-civilization.

Figure 1.   Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Figure 2.   Republic of Iran

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The major research question is concerned with the possibility of Saudi Arabia establishing an effective strategy to deal with the Iranian threats. During the 1960s and 1970s, Saudi Arabia and Iran had substantial political, military and security relations. However, after that period, their relationship became characterized with mistrust for each other, which eventually cascaded to hostilities. Considering the events that led to the 1979 Revolution and the resulting anti-U.S. rhetoric that followed, Tehran began to regard Saudi Arabia as a proxy of the United States in the region, which it termed as "The Great Satan." Saudi Arabia on its part sees Iran forming trouble in the region by exporting revolutionary ideology to the Gulf Arab states.[4]

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, like most countries in the world, encounters intertwined external and internal challenges in various fields and on different levels.[5] The most critical of these challenges is that some regional forces are attempting to expand or dominate others. One particular example is Iranian ambitions. Iran challenges Saudi Arabia on both regional and international levels. The critical tensions between these countries involve doctrinal, social, political, economic, and security dimensions. This challenge becomes more dangerous in light of the continuous Iranian attempts to pursue a nuclear program and other weapons of mass destruction.[6]

During the seventy-year of history of the U.S.-Saudi alliance, the beginning of the relationship between the two countries has evolved slowly, due to political difficulties.[7] Yet, the U.S. government is slowly becoming aware of the importance of the Kingdom in the international and regional arenas. The relationship between the two countries is not just a friendship, but rather a long-term strategic partnership. The United States and Saudi Arabia are strategic, political, economic and security allies in the Middle East.

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[4] Khosrow Soltani, "Iran-Saudi Arabia: A Troubled Affair," *Al Jazeera*, November 20, 2013, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/11/iran-saudi-arabia-troubled-affair-2013111961213978211.html.

[5] Simon Mabon, *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co, 2013), 83.

[6] Mabon, *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East*, 90.

[7] Wikipedia, s.v. "Saudi Arabia–United States relations," last modified 26 November 2015. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia%E2%80%93United_States_relations.

Undoubtedly, Iran is trying to expand its influence in the Middle East, but Saudi Arabia is the bulwark against this. Saudi Arabia is committed to non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. It has denounced violence and its means, which disturb international peace and security. Saudi Arabia is also committed to international law, treaties, and conventions. For example, President Barack Obama's last visit to Condole, Saudi Arabia, with the death of King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz accompanied by a VIP delegation from the Republican and Democratic parties, was to show both the appreciation of Saudi Arabia and the strength of their bilateral relations.[8]

Iranian hostility originated after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Saudi Arabia grew steadily in terms of its territory borders, with the reunification of Shiite density provinces such as Ahsa and Qatif into the Kingdom.[9] In return, this provoked Iranian hostility as the Shiite population of the Eastern Provinces became integrated into the Kingdom. Thus, that historical dimension has a crucial role in fueling hostility toward the Saudi Arabian state. Such historical heritage has never been ignored in this important struggle.

Since the successful Khomeini revolution, Iran has planned to revive the ancient Persian Empire, and also establish a Greater Iran, or what is known as Shiite Crescent, which includes Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and territory south of the Arabian Peninsula.[10] From Tehran through the territory of Iraq, passing the Syrian land and ending up in Lebanon, where Hezbollah and its central command in Beirut, Iran has worked to project an image as a leader of the Muslim world. Iran has actively advocated for their issue, and has adopted a public policy approach that tackled the feelings of millions of Muslims, and established organizations and groups that claim to stand by the oppressed and disadvantaged. The provisions of the Iranian Constitution depict these ideas and policies: Article 152 regulates Iran foreign policy and defends all Muslims'

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[8] Michael R Gordon, and Baker Peter, "Top Officials Join Obama in Brief Visit to Saudi King," New York Times, January 27, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/28/world/middleeast/obama-leading-a-high-powered-delegation-to-saudi-arabia.html?_r=0.

[9] Mabon, *The Rentier State in Saudi Arabia and Iran*, 81.

[10] Jamal, Khashoggi, "Saudi Arabia, Facing Tough and Tougher Choices," Alarabiya.net, September 9, 2014, http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2014/09/09/Saudi-Arabia-facing-tough-and-tougher-choices-.html.

rights with a commitment not to be biased toward the vast countries that dominate the other states; Article 154 states that the Islamic Republic of Iran must protect the equitable struggle of the deprived and oppressed in any corner of the globe.[11] Under these constitutional provisions, Iran has felt panic, confusion, dissension and unrest in the region by agitating the Shiite minority in the Arabia Gulf States and the region. This has incited them to use revolution and violence against governments in the region under the pretext of injustice and oppression.

C. SAUDI ARABIAN SOFT POWER INNOVATION

Saudi Arabia should address the tensions in its relationship with the Iranian Islamic Republic and draw a distinct strategy to approach Iranian oppression. In his book, *Innovation, Transformation, and War*, James Russell describes strategic objectives with respect to the relationship between internal and external factors. At the strategic level, tensions manifest within the political institution and impact its ability to adapt the country's doctrine to new challenges and threats. Saudi Arabia should embrace this idea of innovation and adaption in terms of soft power strategy to confront the contemporary Iranian challenges. Russell finds that "change is more likely to be stimulated by the senior civilian and military leadership through an ostensibly rational process."[12] In the confrontation with Iran, Saudi Arabia's soft power doctrine gives the region a new requirement to pursue its strategy to achieve the goals of peace.

The nature of the soft power process establishes peaceful relationships through soft power means and sources, in order to deter Iran from using its capabilities to threaten Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region. The new image of Saudi Arabian soft power could attract the Iranian people and serve as the basis for more cooperation in terms of political, security and economic aspects for the prosperity of the countries in the Arabian Gulf region and the Middle East. The performance of Saudi Arabian soft power is

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[11] "The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran," Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, February 06, 2015, http://www.iranhrdc.org/english/english/human-rights-documents/iranian-codes/3017-the-constitution-of-the-islamic-republic-of-iran.html?p=20.

[12] James A. Russell, *Innovation, Transformation, and War: Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa*, Iraq, 2005–2007, Stanford, CA: Stanford Security Studies, 2011, 31.

demonstrated through the advanced tools and methods that Saudi Arabia must utilize with Iran to address the international relation principles and values. Saudi Arabia's political institution should supplement its current foreign policy with some of the attributes and dimensions of soft power to include the economy, religion, culture, education and media. Saudi Arabia needs to embrace the concept of soft power. Essentially, it is not a weakness, but is a form of power; merely the failure to integrate it into the national strategy is a serious delusion.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of this literature review is to provide a brief introduction of soft power strategy, including definition, resources, methods and tools. It will establish a theoretical framework for analyzing, describing, and testing the previously proposed hypotheses concerning the Saudi Arabia's use of soft power strategy to influence Iran. This literature review will go further to suggest reasons for Saudi Arabia's choice soft power strategy in dealing with Iran.

1. Soft Power Strategy

The concept of soft power is one of the new concepts that have been developed in the political atmosphere, in which political actors use the means and methods to influence others without the direct use of military force. Soft power is a form of power used by a state in its foreign policy to establish a broad framework of cultural patterns and behaviors.[13] A state can utilize soft power to achieve a certain level of international influence. Various countries have perceived soft power as a substitute for hard power, which is an organized military instrument for achieving the nation-state's interest in foreign policy. Countries have varied on the implementation of foreign policy in accordance with objectives, means, resources, time and spatial measures and external decision-makers. Soft power negates from a range of different behaviors and attributes in

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[13] Giulio Gallarotti, "Soft Power, What It Is, Why It's Important, and the Conditions under Which It Can Be Effectively Used," Division II Faculty Publications, 2011, 11 http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/div2facpubs/57.

the state, in an attempt to promulgate it in accordance with what termed as the cultural invasion.

2.   Definition of Soft Power Strategy

This paper explores ways that Saudi Arabia uses its soft power to influence Iran. Therefore, it is important to first define what soft power is. In his book, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Joseph Nye defines soft power as " the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments," and "the sources of soft power are the attractiveness of country's culture, political ideals and policies. " [14] A state's soft power depends on its ability to perform as a role model and formulate others desire for the adoption of its values and lifestyle. One of the main advantages of utilizing the concept of soft power is the substitution of "carrot and stick" method. Others, such Joshua Kurlantzick, go further to explain soft power by incorporating elements of economic power with soft power, which both sit outside the security field to include investment and aid.[15] In his publication, Kurlantzick is specifically interested in how China has expanded its soft power over the last decade to create the appropriate circumstances to transform to be an international force.

The scholar Giulio Gallarotti notes that "soft power manifests itself in specific contexts and situations—that is, it depends on the relationship between action and policy orientations of particular nations and also the responses to these actions and orientations by other nations."[16] Soft power, according to Gallarotti is derived "from two general sources: International sources and domestic sources."[17] These contribute to a positive

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[14] Joseph S. Nye, Soft Power: *The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

[15] Joshua, Kurlantzick, "China's Charm: Implications of Chinese Soft Power," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 05, 2006, 2–7. http://carnegieendowment.org/2006/06/05/china-s-charm-implications-of-chinese-soft-power/p4v.

[16] Giullio, "Soft Power, What It Is, Why It's Important, and the Conditions under Which It Can Be Effectively Used," 20.

[17] Giullio, "Soft Power, What It Is, Why It's Important, and the Conditions under Which It Can Be Effectively Used," 20.

image that endears "nations, which in turn enhances the nations' influence in world politics."[18]

Hard power consists of elements that revolve around military and economic powers. This type of power is associated with the realist school in terms of using the state's materials to shield its security. Gallarotti argued that the concept of hard power is in military power, the most traditional form of hard power that is commonly used to achieve the goals of the state. There are various forms of force, ranging from coercive diplomacy, which reflects the moderate use of force, to the direct use of military force, which is a more aggressive use. The successful use of hard power creates substantial soft power through attractive reverence and appreciation, although, hard power's elements may destroy such positive images. For instance, military assistance and humanitarian aids increase a state with much military cooperation. Also, military and economic supports for probable adversaries promote willingness and respect. Therefore, combination of soft and hard power can be beneficial if they complement each other. But they can also counteract each other if they are not properly managed.

Economic power should be excluded from policies and actions because such power does not leverage a state for persuasion. However, economic power could be combined with elements of soft power such as culture attractiveness, media influence, and aid. This is in agreement with Gallarotti's perspective that for soft power to be effective, it must be derived from two sources; international and domestic. From the three previous thoughts of soft power, Gallarotti's assumption seems to be most appropriate to accept.

3.   Resources of Soft Power Strategy

According to Nye "soft power is the ability to get what you want through persuasion not coercion."[19] Its tools, such as political and cultural values, media potentials, scientific and intellectual correspondence, and a foreign policy are capable of

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[18] Giullio, "Soft Power, What It Is, Why It's Important, and the Conditions under Which It Can Be Effectively Used," 20.

[19] Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 6.

building bridges, linkages and alliances. There are two types of soft power sources. The first is national sources, which encapsulate a state's attributes at home that enrich its image and legitimacy internally and externally. These attributes correspondingly enables the state to achieve the objectives of its foreign policy. In addition, the cultural and political institutions fall under the framework inherent in national sources. The second type is international sources, which refer to the need to recognize the state throughout the scope of the international relation, norms and institutions. Nye's description of soft power has excluded economic power as it is a type of hard power.

The capability that produces soft power emerges mainly from the values expressed by an organization or a realm in a culture, that hook the internal and political practices, and in the way it forms its relationships within the international community.[20] There are two main streams from which soft power stems its sources, domestic sources and international sources (see Table 1). Among the domestic sources of soft power, the culture of a nation plays a major role in formulation of its identity. The soft power created by culture is a consequence of nation norms and values. Cultural appearance to others can depict in showing respect and admiration. Lifestyle and its quality influence in a way that can render imitation or appreciation.[21] Apart from culture, the political side of soft power resides in the political system of a state. It is not necessary to be a democratic regime to earn proper outcomes from soft power. There is much evidence that governments are neither democratic nor liberal, and they can induce stable political systems and, in turn, stimulate soft power.

Another fundamental source of soft power is international sources. The collaboration in the international relation system is significant stream of soft power. The commitment to address various issues on the regional and universal arenas with the international norms and policies constitute the position and type of soft power. Enhancing an image on the international stage empowers the legitimacy of a nation, which in turn

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[20] Gallarotti, "Soft Power, What It Is, Why It's Important, and the Conditions under Which It Can Be Effectively Used, 20.

[21] Nye, Soft Power: *The Means to Success in World Politics*, 6

achieves the desired foreign policy goals. Such commitment and legitimacy image are the primacy sources of international soft power.

Table 1.   Foundations of Soft Power

Domestic Sources	International Sources
Culture • Pronounced social cohesion • Elevated quality of life • Freedom • Sufficient opportunities • Tolerance • Alluring lifestyle • Political institutions • Democracy • Constitutionalism • Liberalism/pluralism • A well-functioning government bureaucracy	• Respect for international laws, norms and institutions • Fundamental reliance on multilateralism and disposition against excessive unilateralism • Respect international treaties and alliance commitments • Willingness to sacrifice short-run national interest in order to contribute towards the collective goals • Liberal foreign economic policies

Adapted from Giulio Gallarotti, "Soft Power, What It Is, Why It's Important, and the Conditions under Which It Can Be Effectively Used," Division II Faculty Publications, 2011, 23. http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/div2facpubs/57.

4.   Methods of Soft Power Strategy

Soft power entails utilization and investment of its strains to garner great influence in the global community and to draw a positive and solid image. Soft power has the potential to promote corporative relationships on the strategic level by investing in different international laws and multilateralism. "Both domestic and international

methods of soft power reflect an emphasis on policies and actions oriented around justice, collective concerns, and rules of fair play."[22]

Nye expresses the role of the elite culture in the production of soft power, introduces the importance of academic and scientific exchanges, and ask how many of the Soviet scientists have been influenced by the American ideas and become activists in human rights movements in the former Soviet Union. Although, the United States is not leading all kinds of soft-power means, other countries, such as the former Soviet Union, had an extensive impact to boost communist parties in different regions of the world. The former Soviet Union exerted substantial efforts to expand the culture and arts, and participate in attractive humanitarian issues, in addition to the great scientific progress.[23]

5.   Tools of Soft Power Strategy

To achieve this, Joshua Kurlantzick demonstrates that China serves as a model of utilizing conceptual tools of soft power. China has not only relied on diplomacy, though it has resorted to tools of soft power such as aid, investment and cultural diplomacy.[24] This Chinese attractive intervention exercises an outstanding success, represented by the rising popularity of Beijing in a number of countries that were disquiet about China. China attributes converged efforts towards the developing world. This possesses tremendous natural resources and emerging markets, which China needs to ensure economic growth in the future. In this context, China is keen to charm governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America by giving loans and assistance to finance projects in African continents. Thus, China has achieved drawing a rational image abroad. An image is seized from distinctive features, such as, socialism, adverse of the hegemony of the Third World, and supporter of the liberation movements.[25]

A soft power tool of a state acts a vast part in defining its status quo on the national and international arenas. The concept of soft power defines such a power as the

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[22] Nye, Soft Power: *The Means to Success in World Politics*, 6.

[23] Nye, Soft Power: *The Means to Success in World Politics*, 45-49.

[24] Kurlantzick, "China's Charm: Implications of Chinese Soft Power," 2–7.

[25] Ibid.

ability to influence others. Soft power institutes elements such as institutions, resources, properties and capabilities as the tools of state influence. These elements interpreted through geographical dimensions, natural resources, economic capacities and political foundations, which enable the state to influence the behavior of other countries in the directions of its interests.[26] These capabilities together establish the total strength tools of a state. The essential variances between them, related to the ability to influence, specifically during situations in which state interests are threatened or pressured.

E.   POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

The thesis puts forward three hypotheses to explore Saudi Arabia's soft power in the context of the Iranian continuous influences and threat to the Persian Gulf countries and the Middle East. The first hypothesis is that Saudi Arabia uses soft power policy toward Iran because of Saudi Arabia's concerns about security and stability of the Gulf countries. For instance, China attempts to expand its influences in Asia making Japan abandon its peaceful strategy and turn into a key player in Southeast Asia region.[27] Japan's current national security strategy is informed by the ongoing dispute with China over some strategic islands in the East China Sea. Japan has launched increased amount of soft power's influence in the region. Japan seeks to promote its image by providing military assistances, and showing the strength of its armed forces; in an attempt to hold regional alliances, and enhancing defenses and securities of neighboring countries to confront the Chinese tide.[28]

The second hypothesis is that the Saudi Arabia uses soft power policy toward Iran's threats because Saudi Arabia proposes to cooperate with Iran rather than confront it. For instance, the United States has incited many tactics to employ soft power with Latin Americas countries. The implementation of newer concept, rather than hard power,

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[26] Gallarotti, "Soft Power, What It Is, Why It's Important, and the Conditions under Which It Can Be Effectively Used," 6.

[27] Ankit Panda, "Soft Power and China-Japan Relations." *The Diplomat*, December 18, 2013. http://thediplomat.com/2013/12/soft-power-and-china-japan-relations/.

[28] Ing, Sun, "Japan's Shrinking ASEAN 'Soft Power," *The Diplomat*, August 08, 2012, accessed February 23, 2015, http://thediplomat.com/2012/08/japans-shrinking-asean-soft-power/.

has impacted in new era of cooperation in Latin continent.[29] The U.S. supported foreign exchange programs such as economic, military and cultural to demonstrate to the Latin Americans that they are of significant countries that the U.S. must reach without sacrificing their securities.[30] The United States chooses to help Latin America to increase prosperity and undergo its programs to promote democracy. The United States is able to deploy development, improve health care, address the threat of climate change and has been able to combine military power and economic supremacy to expand its soft power investments.[31]

The third hypothesis is that Saudi Arabia's use of soft power policy is a future-based strategy to influence the Iranian political decision-making. For instance, Egypt succeeded in restoring its leading role in the continent of Africa and Arab World, because of what is termed a "soft power."[32] Significant factors to measure and determine that Egypt strength in its regional surrounding and the international arena is the economy, technology, international cooperation, geographic area, population, language, culture and shared history. Religious and political institutions, al-Azhar and the Arab league, are influencing factors in the Arab World to address Arab and Islamic collective interests.[33] Egypt has a common history with the majority of the Arab regions and the African continent, and contributed to draft a large part of the awareness of the people through literature, arts and culture. The Egyptian culture has an impact on the Arab societies through cultural activities such as the entertainment industry. In fact, Egypt produces the largest number of movies and television series in the Arab World, in addition to the largest number of

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[29] Cronin Jason William, "Soft Power and Its Impact on U.S. Influence in Latin America," Master's thesis, Monterey, California, Naval Postgraduate School, 2004, 1, http://hdl.handle.net/10945/1276.

[30] William, "Soft Power and Its Impact on U.S. Influence in Latin America,70–75.

[31] Ibid.

[32] El-sayed Amin El-shalabi, "How Can Egypt Revive Its Power," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 1107 (July 19–25, 2012), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2012/1107/op2.htm.

[33] Lawrence Rubin, "A Typology of Soft Powers in Middle East Politics," Dubai Imitative Working Paper, December 2010, 9, http://www.researchgate.net/publication/260979451_A_Typology_of_Soft_Powers_in_Middle_East_Politics.

books and published scientific and scholars' articles. The aforementioned facts, has given Egypt the soft power to influence the Arab public opinion.

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II.   IRAN'S TARGETING OF SAUDI ARABIA

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, having existed for around two and a half centuries, holds a great deal of influence around the world. It has become a pioneering country in both Arab and Islamic worlds due to its spiritual driving power and pioneering intellect.[34] Growing economic power has enabled the kingdom to develop itself locally while spreading its Islamic and political values and influence internationally. The Iranian Revolution of 1979, however, founded upon Persian expansionist ambition and a radical, sectarian, Shiite trend; upset the balance of power in Islamic and Arab regions. Set on spreading its power, Iran has become an opposing power and genuine threat to Saudi Arabia's leadership in the Arab and Muslim world.[35]

This chapter establishes the challenges that Saudi Arabia faces in dealing with the rival state of Iran. Part one explores the intellectual foundations of the Iranian state, ranging from sections and wording of the Iranian Constitution to its doctrinal and sectarian foundations that call for an Islamic army. Part one traces Iran's exportation of revolution, its position as a chief energy producer, and its cultural and media exports in its attempt to spread Shiism. The paper continues by evaluating Iran's current practices targeting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Illustrated topics will include Iran's discrediting of Saudi Arabia as a Muslim world leader, its use of the Hajj and Umrah Seasons to catalyze chaos and disorder and its efforts to convert Sunni Muslims to Shiism. Section B will also focus on Iran's attracting of international powers to the Middle East, its direct intervention upon and breach of the autonomy of other states, the challenges its nuclear program poses to Saudi Arabia, and its economic and security targeting of Saudi Arabia.

A.   INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF IRANIAN CHALLENGES

The most important reliable sources, which help identify the Iranian strategic keystones precisely and objectively, are represented in the transcripts of the Iranian

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[34] Mabon, *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East*, 80.

[35] Simon Mabon, "The Middle Eastern Great Game," The Foreign Policy Center, June 2013, http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/1555.pdf.

constitution which was laid down and approved by the Iranian regime. The constitution expresses the Iranian regime's philosophy of rule, foundations, and objectives.[36]In political and government regimes worldwide, the constitution is considered the highest official political support and source. It defines the frames, generalities, limits, and channels of foreign policy in a country. The same applies to the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran which mirrors the foreign policy and the country's strategic objectives.

The first Iranian constitution after the Iranian Revolution was issued on March 29 and 30, 1979.[37] After a decade, Khomeini himself issued an order on April 18, 1989 through which he appointed a group of experts and assigned them to amend the constitution. The constitution was amended on July 28, 1989 after being accepted by the public and approved by Khomeini.[38] By analyzing this constitution's transcripts, preface, preamble, and amendments which concern this thesis, it is evident that Iranian challenges are based on several doctrinal keystones. These keystones will cover the doctrinal and sectarian foundation, the political dimension and its intellectual system, and the culture and media dimension.

1. The Doctrinal and Sectarian Foundation

The preamble of the Iranian constitution expressly states that the fundamental characteristic of this Revolution, in comparison with the rest of uprisings that arose in Iran in the last century, is the doctrinal and Islamic feature of the Revolution.[39] In order to highlight this doctrinal feature, this preamble tackles the formation of armed forces under the title of "The Islamic Army" by saying: when forming and mobilizing the armed forces that protect the country's interest, faith and belief must serve as a foundation and a base. Thus, the Iranian Army and Revolutionary Guard are formed on the aforementioned objective. Armed forces are not only responsible for protecting and guarding the borders,

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[36] Hamid Algar, *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*. Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1980, 13.

[37] Algar, *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 26.

[38] "Iran Chamber Society," Iranian Laws & Government, April 14, 2015. http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution.php.

[39] Ibid.

but also bear the burden of their divine mission, namely Jihad in the cause of Allah and struggling to spread the provisions of Islamic Law worldwide.[40] In addition, Article 144 of the Iranian Constitution states that "the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran must be an Islamic army."[41] It should be a doctrinal and popular army. It must include only individuals who believe in the objectives of the Islamic Revolution and sacrifice themselves to achieve these objectives.

These transcripts emphasize that the Iranian ideology is not only a national or racial ideology looking forward to restore the glories of the ancient Persian Empire, but also it is a dogmatic and sectarian ideology that goes beyond the concept of those national ideologies and limited ambitions. In order to achieve its doctrinal aspirations not only the national ones, it was necessary to form a creed army that takes on global divine tasks beyond the scope of defending homeland or maintaining national security.

2.   The Political Dimension and its Intellectual System

Khomeini preached *velayat-e faqih*, a revolutionary theory, which means the direct supervision of the cleric (jurist) to ensure legitimacy in the Islamic society and the state. This is because the traditional Shiite rhetoric grants full legitimacy only to infallibles, which is the only qualification for achieving legitimacy over the people within the Islamic community. Export of this revolution theory occupies the central priority for *velayat-e faqih* to achieve the desired Shiite universality even at the expense of Iranian people and their welfare. Ayatullah al-Uzma Imam Khomeini emphasizes this by asking the Iranian public to be patient about not meeting their needs in order that the country's officials are devoted for their Grand Mission which is represented in spreading the Shia doctrine worldwide.

Therefore, Iran depends on carrying out its strategies by various, integrated means and mechanisms. These fall into what is known as "The Principle of Exporting Revolution," which means the endeavor to wage similar revolutions in Islamic countries in order to unite them under the leadership of *velayat-e faqih* in preparation for the

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Algar, *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 79.

establishment of the promised State of Ahl al-Bayt (People of the House).[42] At the same time, export of revolution is utilized as a means to protect the Revolution on its own ground. Iran will not be secure from conspiracies weaved by great powers unless similar revolutions break out in the Islamic World. It is worth mentioning that the doctrine of export of revolution permits all possible methods from persuasion to force. However, the use of this power, especially the latter depends on practice on competence and opportunity circumstances—and political will.[43] Thus, the Iranian regime also depends on exporting its revolution through influence and persuasion, especially after its defeat in the war against Iraq. Khomeini was forced by virtue of the International Resolution No. 598 to ceasefire which he expressed by saying: "Accepting this resolution is just like drinking poison."[44] This has led the regime to reorganize its strategic priorities and focus on achieving self-sufficiency, especially in military fields, and developing it traditional and unconventional industries. Along with this, it resorts to exporting its revolution through what is called the Cultural Revolution.

3.   The Cultural and Media Dimension

After its revolution triumphed, Iran established a supreme council of the Cultural Revolution, to extend the active centers in cultural aspects abroad. The Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) was established in order to unite the policies and coordinate the cultural and media activities abroad, spread Shiism, support Shiite associations and activists, and coordinate Shiite efforts abroad.[45] This Organization has representatives in 44 countries all over the world. Its most important subordinate divisions are "Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly."[46]

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[42] Mabon, *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East*, 50.

[43] Shmuel Bar, "Iranian Terrorist Policy and Export of Revolution," Paper presented at the Ninth Annual Herzliya Conference on the Balance of Israel's National Security and Resilience, Herzliya, Israel, February 2–4, 2009. http://www.herzliyaconference.org/_uploads/2903iranian.pdf.

[44] Peter Galbraith, *The End of Iraq: How American Incompetence Created a War without End*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007. 29.

[45] Bar, "Iranian Terrorist Policy and Export of Revolution," 14.

[46] Ibid.

Exporting the Revolution depends on the cooperation and coordination with the Shias abroad such as cooperating with Shiite Iraqi, Lebanese, and Gulf parties to spread Shiism in Islamic countries. Exporting the Revolution through traditional and modern media, the leaders of Iranian Regime, primarily Khomeini, recognize the significance of the various media in spreading Shiism and its cultures, ideas, and trends. Iran tends to export its Cultural Revolution through persuasive means and mechanisms.

a.   Spreading Shiism

The International Center for Islamic Studies is responsible of the academic preparation of groups of Shiite's Iranian emissaries and preachers.[47] This explains the huge number of Shiite's preacher and activists at the outset of the Iranian Revolution. Iranian preachers and emissaries abroad, try to lead the Muslim world citizens to be attracted to embrace Shiism.[48] They are being qualified scholastically in Hawzas and Qom in order to be prepared to spread Shiism. The diplomatic business and Iranian embassies abroad: Iranian embassies and their cultural missions play a remarkable role in exporting the Revolution and spreading Shiism in the countries where they are. The cultural counsels in all Iranian embassies follow religious departments which are dominated by the extreme-right party in Iran.[49]

Dissemination of Islamic slogans, by taking over the Islamic Nation's causes, supports various Sunni movements and organizations. Iran tends to propagate Islamic slogans such as Islamic Unity claims to support international Islamic causes such as the case of Palestine. Iran also supports opponent movements and Sunni liberation movements such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine, in order to improve its image, promote its model, and spread Shiism among Sunnis. Thus, a number of the cadres in the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine have embraced Shiism.[50] Annual conferences and forums and international assemblages: The Iranian Regime interest in such activities, in

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[47] Juan Cole, "Iran and Islam," The Iran Primer, accessed December 7, 2015, http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-islam.

[48] Bar, "Iranian Terrorist Policy and Export of Revolution," 3.

[49] Bar, "Iranian Terrorist Policy and Export of Revolution, 14.

[50] Bar, "Iranian Terrorist Policy and Export of Revolution," 9–11.

order to export its Revolution, is evident because of their huge numbers and the great attention and budgets paid to them.

The Hajj and Umrah Seasons are another way that Iran spreads Shiism. The idea of politicizing Hajj is associated with exporting the Revolution because the Two Holy Mosques, during Hajj season, are the best place and time for this theological activity. The idea of politicizing Hajj is not new when they decided that one of the requirements of Hajj is to declare the disassociation from polytheists through rallies and mob demonstrations. It is a mean that enables them take over the Two Holy Mosques, and this is what Khomeini has done recently.[51] Therefore, Iran considers Hajj a unique occasion to spread Shiism and export the Revolution. Hence, Iran has established the "Iranian Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization," which is sponsored by the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei. He expressed that the continuation of cultural programs will turn Hajj into on ideal and unique opportunity to spread the principles of Islam and the Iranian Revolution.[52]

b.   *Economic Dimensions*

Iran occupies an excellent geostrategic site because it is situated between the most important areas of producing oil and natural gas energy in the world, the Arabian Gulf in the south and Central Asia in the north including the Caspian Sea. Iran owns enormous resources of energy. Iran is a primary producer of oil, and it owns the world's second-largest natural gas reserve. Iran overlooks the Strait of Hormuz through which the Arabian Gulf states' oil is exported abroad. It also controls the most important waterway in the world for transferring energy. Iran constitutes the most secure and economical land passage for transferring the gas and oil of the Caspian Sea.[53] Iran employs all these

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[51] Khomeini, Imam, Hajj from the Viewpoint of Imam Khomeini, Tehran, Iran: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works (International Affairs Department), 2010, http://en.imam-khomeini.ir/en/c5_3158/Book/English/Hajj_From_The_Viewpoint_Of_Imam_Khomeini_s_.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Azadegan Foundation, "Iran's Critical Geo-Strategic Environment," April 23, 2015, http://azadeganiran.com/GeoStrategic.asp.

factors to promote its role in influencing this vital commodity. Producing and transferring oil in order to control its prices and flow, impose Iran as a regional and global power.

Iran's endeavor to take control of the richest area of energy in the world is not to increase its wealth and achieve welfare and development for its people. It desires to make use of this area of influence in order to strangle the Arabian Gulf states and destroy their vital driving powers. This is to meet the requirements to establish the Iranian expansionary project in this area. Iran wants to launch itself as a regional and international power. Iran has emphasized that its dominance over the Arabian Gulf states equals the dominance over half the world.[54] The other dominance over the half of the world would be realized in a subsequent stage through taking control of the area of the Caspian Sea and Central Asia.

B.   IRAN'S CURRENT TARGETING OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Iranian strategic tendencies and reflect a vision to establish an International Shiite State on the debris of the Islamic World. Specifically, Iran focuses on Saudi Arabia apart from other countries. In spite of justifying this with declared political interests such as the case of Gulf security and the Palestinian Case, fundamental reasons behind this relate to Saudi Arabia other than other countries. This explains the Iranian tendency of targeting Saudi Arabia.

Undoubtedly, the Islamic conquest and the elimination of the Persian Empire in the era of Caliph Umar bin al-Khattab caused malice and hostility toward Arabs in general, and toward the Arabs conquerors that belong to the Arabian Peninsula and Hijaz in particular.[55] This historical fact has caused Shias' memories and feelings of sorrow, resentment, and subjugation towards this country and its people. It also evokes a security obsession and prospective apprehension, especially given the current successors following the Islamic guided methodology which was accepted and followed by the

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[54] Mabon, *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East*, 49.

[55] Islam for Life, "Khalifa Umar Bin Al-Khattab," A Persian Stabbed Umar, 2014. http://www.islamforlife.co.uk/khalifa_umar_bin_al.htm.

pioneer conquerors. Today's rulers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are the grandchildren of the Caliphs, and within Islam this is what the aforementioned events reinforce.

If Iran takes control of the Two Holy Mosques, it would be able to spread Shiism and publicize the Guardianship of the Jurist widely among pilgrims and visitors of Kaaba.[56] At the same time, Iran would be able to besiege the reformative call and try to prevent it from influencing pilgrims in general and the people of the Twelver faith in particular. The foregoing suggests that Saudi Arabia is targeted by Iran in several interconnected ways: religious, political, security, military, economic, media, and social; and these have created multiple impacts—domestically, regionally and globally. These challenges are exacerbated by the current revolution in information and communication technology[57] and as a whole endeavor to achieve two purposes: to unsettle Saudi national security locally, and besiege its power abroad.

1.   Doctrinal Targeting

(1)   Discredit Saudi Arabia as a Muslim World leader

The Iranian project has launched many campaigns against Saudi Arabia in particular that spring from the Shiite belief which regards Sunni Islam with all its different doctrines and countries as its primary enemy. The welfare of Iranians is sacrificed for the sake of establishing the international Shiite entity as supposed in its forecasts and myths. Iranian religious leaders realize that the Sunnis represent a vital trend which is considered the most dangerous and threatening not only for this project, but also for the heart of the Shiite ideology which constitutes the keystones and foundations of the whole Iranian strategy.[58]

These disparaging campaigns aim at achieving the following objectives:

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[56] Mabon, *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East*, 52.

[57] Mabon, *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East*, 189–216.

[58] Max Fisher, "Why Sunnis and Shiites Are Fighting, Explained in Two Minutes," *Washington Post*, January 22, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/01/22/why-sunnis-and-shias-are-fighting-explained-in-two-minutes/

- Isolating the Saudi Arabian's Sunni Islamic environment by depicting it as an invented new doctrine that is irrelevant to the known Islamic doctrines.
- Making Muslim people oppose Saudi Arabia and its Islamic call by claiming that Muslims who follow the Sunni creed will be declared disbelievers.
- Making the international community oppose Saudi Arabia call and symbols by accusing it unjustly of terrorism and supporting terrorists.

(2)   Use of Hajj and Umrah Seasons in Order to Deliver Chaos and Disorder

Iran's actions to make use of the Hajj season constitute one of the most important and dangerous Iranian challenges. The importance of this challenge comes from the importance of the ritual itself and its place and time because this challenge is periodic and happens annually. Iran insists on politicizing this ritual and defaces its religious features through inventions and innovations which breach the sacredness of the place and time. Moreover, this will lead to chaos and disturbances.[59]

Iran's endeavors to achieve objectives over the Hajj period can be centralized around the following:

- Spread Shiism among pilgrims and to build the promised Shiit state to be joined by Muslims from all over the world. Downsizing the Saudi efforts exerted to spread the proper Islamic faith.
- Unsettling security and spreading uneasiness in the Two Holy Mosques.
- Publicizing its fanatic regime and aggressive policies.
- Gradually continuing to impose pressures and raising the level of demands in order to reach its purpose in internationalizing the Two Holy Mosques.

(3)   The Endeavor to Make Sunni Muslims Embrace Shiism

Iran employs its economic relations and aid to grant other countries in exporting its Revolution to spread Shiism and prove to the Iranian model in such countries. Ariel Farrar Wellman, a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) notes that "on the sidelines of November 2009's Organization of Islamic Conference economic summit, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad met with Comoros President Abdullah

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[59] Ekhtiari Amiri Reza, Ku Hasnita Binti Ku Samsu, and Hassan Gholipour Fereidouni, "The Hajj and Iran's Foreign Policy towards Saudi Arabia," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 46, no. 6 (December 2011): 678–690, http://jas.sagepub.com/content/46/6/678.full.pdf+html.

Mohamed Sambi to discuss the expansion of bilateral relations."[60] Iran has introduced industry aid and develops political relations with Comoros which is a Sunni majority country in order to achieve the goal of spreading Shiism.

(4)   Humanitarian and Relief Aids for the Distressed

Iran exploits the need of the distressed in Islamic countries in order to make them embrace Shiism by providing them with humanitarian aid. In this regard, the relationship between Iran and Zimbabwe and the mutual official visits witness the attempts to exploit towards furthering its revolutionary principles. This instance depicts how Iranians started to use their economic power and humanitarian aid in order to use the poor population in Africa to exploit the need of the hungry people to eat in order to spread Shiism; this happens in Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, Mali, and Ghana.[61]

(5)   The Personal Funding of Individuals

Iran provides generous financial support to every influential figure who works to serve Iran's trends. Ayatollah Qomi Athari emphasizes this Iranian commitment – in his speech at the International Conference of Fridays and Groups Imams, which was held in Qom with the attendance of scholars from 40 countries by saying, "Scholars, do not worry about the financial resources which will help you lead Khomeini revolutions in your countries, we have prepared a fund for financial aids from the Iranian energy revenues in order to help scholars topple the government of their countries."[62]

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[60] Ariel Farrar Wellman, "Comoros-Iran Foreign Relations," Iran Tracker, March 02, 2010, http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/comoros-iran-foreign-relations.

[61] Ariel Farrar Wellman, "Zimbabwe-Iran Foreign Relations," Zimbabwe-Iran Foreign Relations, May 09, 2010, http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/zimbabwe-iran-foreign-relations.

[62] U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Targets Key Al-Qaida Funding and Support Network Using Iran as a Critical Transit Point," July 28, 2011, http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1261.aspx.

2. Political Targeting

(1)   Attracting and Mobilizing International Powers in the Region

Because of provocative Iranian policies and aggressive trends since the triumph of Khomeini's Revolution, Saudi Arabia has welcomed Khomeini's returning to his country and forming the Iranian government headed by Khomeini who has received congratulatory letter from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on this occasion.[63] Saudi Arabia also has sent another congratulatory letter to the Iranian government on establishing the Islamic Republic of Iran.[64] However, since the overthrow of Mahdi Bazargan's moderate government following the occupation of the American Embassy in Tehran, aggressive declarations against the Arabian Gulf countries started threatening to export the Revolution and overthrow their governments. This has pushed Saudi Arabia to embrace conservative attitudes towards Iran which has become a revolutionary power that threatens the region. In addition to its hostile attitude, the provocative act of occupying the American Embassy.[65] This has led to increase the American presence in the region and changed the theory of the American administrations about Arabian Gulf security which was held by three U.S presidents: Nixon, Carter and Reagan.[66]

(2)   Direct Intervention in the Region

There are many examples of Iran direct intervention in the region, such as the intervention in Bahrain, occupation of Emirates islands, direct intervention in Iraq and Syria, the endeavor to unsettle the relations among Gulf Cooperation Council States, and the increasing Iranian demographic danger in some Gulf countries.[67] Iran exertion is to overwhelm and suppress Saudi Arabia with a Shiite crescent.[68] This Shiite crescent

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[63] Nadav Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985, 353–354.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security.*, 234–235

[66] Randy B. Bell, "Expansion of American Persian Gulf Policy by Three Presidents," Global Security, 1990, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1990/BRB.htm.

[67] Cordesman. "Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the clash within a civilization. "

[68] Khashoggi, "Saudi Arabia, Facing Tough and Tougher Choices.

extends from Iraq in the north, Gulf countries in the east, and Yemen in the south through Houthis in North Yemen. The danger of Shiite increases with mobilizing the Shiite presence inside. Seemingly, Iran employs the Islamic speech and the sloganeering of Islamic slogans to revolutionize peoples in the region, provoke them against their governments, and spread chaos.

(3)   Nuclear Program Challenges

The concern of Arabian Gulf countries, primarily Saudi Arabia, is ascribed in the fact that Iran Nuclear Program of, is meant for peaceful purposes as Iran claims. INP will end up in Iran's possession of nuclear powers. Iran will be able to make a nuclear bomb or what is so called in the unofficial Gulf milieus the "Shiite Bomb."[69] This will lead other countries to endeavor to possess nuclear powers in order to maintain the military strategic balance in the region.

In addition, there is a hazardous environmental challenge represented in the radio pollution. Any leak from the Iranian nuclear reactor in Bushehr which is at the closest coast to the Arabian Gulf countries. It is not unlikely that Iran will exploit its nuclear power in order to impose its sovereignty in the region and obtain the Western recognition of its dominant role.

(4)   Economic Targeting

Iran's taking control of the world's resources of energy is done to target Saudi Arabia and try to dominate its national decisions. Iran desires to gain hegemony over the greatest source of natural resources. This will provide Iran with the strongest weapons in the region. Iran sought to achieve sovereignty in the international political view in order to pass over its policies and identify its expansionary projects. Moreover, Iran will earn enormous financial resources. Another significant aspect of Iran pursuit of economic targeting is the domination of the Two Holy Mosques—Mecca and Medina.[70] Iran

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[69] Mabon, *Saudi Arabia and Iran: Soft Power Rivalry in the Middle East*, 62.

[70] Ahmed Maher, "The Economics of Hajj: Money and Pilgrimage." BBC News, October 25, 2012. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-20067809.

considers itself a true believer and intends to control these two holy mosques. The control of these mosques will give economic and political advantages to Iran.

Iran continuously threatens to occupy energy-rich gulf area to control the greatest energy resources of the world. The occupation of gulf area will render Iran enormous advantage in the security sector at the global level. Iran would bargain her enhanced role to improve its image and relations with the world and regional powers.

3.   Security Targeting

(1)   Mobilizing the Shiite Minorities

Iran makes use of the Shiite minorities in the Islamic World; the percentage of these minorities ranges between 10–12%, and about 120 million Shiites of which the people of the Twelver faith constitutes about 80–90% and the rest are Isma'ilists, Druzes, and Nusayris.[71] Since the "Islamic Revolution," Iran has adopted the policy of exporting the Shiite revolution to the Arab and Muslim world.

Iran desire to export Shiism to Arab and other Muslim countries was blocked by Iraq during Saddam Hussein's rule. However, after the occupation of Iraq and subsequent domination by the Shite enhanced Iran's influence in the region and facilitated spread of Shiism. After consolidating its hold in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, Iran used her sympathizers to create unrest in Yemen. For instance, Iran supported Houthis, a sub branch of Shite, to overthrow Yemeni President Saleh in bloody civil war. Iran provided weapons and guidance to Houthi rebels. Iran support to Houthis in Yemen is part of its overall strategy to control the Arab world.

It is generally believed that shite minority population that lives in other countries, outside Iran are not loyal to their own country as much they are loyal to Iran. Iran cultivates shite minority to support Iranian ideology of domination of Muslim world, through spread of Iran's brand of Islam—Shiism. It is the most dangerous and sensitive matter because it falls in the category of crimes against the state. These loyal minorities such as the Houthis in Yemen have turned from a religious movement into a political

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[71] Religion Facts, "Shia Islam," April 30, 2015, http://www.religionfacts.com/shia.

movement due to the support of Iran. Houthis have become military arm of Iran, similar to Hezbollah in Lebanon. While Iran employs shite minority to work against their own states, however; Iran brutally suppresses minorities in in Iran, especially the Sunni Muslims.

(2)   Moving the Shiites Inside

Shiite minority belongs to the Twelvers in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; this minority is centralized in al-Ahsa, al-Qatif, and some of their small villages in the Eastern Province. Moreover, there are small numbers in some villages of the holy city of Medina. The Iranian Islamic revolution, stemmed from Khomeini thoughts, has impacted the Shiite minority negatively in Saudi Arabia. Iran claimed the support of this minority in order to create instability within Saudi Arabia. Iran has sought to undermine the legitimacy of the government of Saudi Arabia. Such Iranian rhetoric is a form of political targeting to depict Khomeini's regime as the leader of the Muslim world.

In the mid of 1980s, the Iranian revolutionary regime established the military wing in the Arabian Peninsula. Khomeini called it the Hezbollah of Hijaz. This extremist group is responsible for terrorist operations in Saudi Arabia, in coordination with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps. Hezbollah Hijaz (Saudi Hezbollah) is the military arm of the Islamic revolution regime in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Hezbollah challenges the legitimacy of the government of Saudi Arabia. It is founded by opponents of Saudi Shiites with the support of Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah of Lebanon. The aim of Khomeini in launching such militant movement was to weaken the Saudi government, and reduce Al-Saud religious status in the region.

C.   CONCLUSION

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, formerly unequaled in its influence over the Middle East, is challenged by the growing Islamic Republic of Iran. Each implements their own leading methods and philosophies when it comes to approaching Middle Eastern issues due to their distinct cultural backgrounds. The Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979 damaged the Iran -Saudi Arabia relations of coordination and cooperation that had existed between the two monarchies before the revolution. The Nixon doctrine

during the seventies gave incentive to Saudi Arabia and Iran as power pillars in the region to fill the security void in the Arabian Gulf region. The Iranian Revolution changed the two countries into rivals, struggling for supremacy and hegemony in the region. The resulting impasse created a regional bipolarity as well as ideological and political battle, with Iran pursuing a Shiite pole and Saudi Arabia on the vanguard of Sunni ideology. Consequently, Tehran propagates a politico-religious model of Islam different from that supported by Saudi Arabia as genuine for the Muslim world.

Iran's efforts to spread its cultural and political power stem largely from its export of revolution. Its constitution calls for an Islamic army, Iran combines nationalism with dogmatism and sectarianism and aims to spread its beliefs of Shiism beyond its state borders in order to gain more leverage over other Islamic states like Saudi Arabia. Iran has been known to provide financial and humanitarian aid to Sunni Muslims in an attempt to get them to embrace Shiism, all while discrediting Saudi Arabia as an Arab or Islamic leader. Furthermore, Iran imposes upon the sovereignty of other states in the area and, in its export of revolution, undermines the power of other states in order to spread its own ideology.

The decline or increase in the Iranian role in the Middle East seems to shuffle the cards in the region, and will determine the future shape of the Saudi Arabia-Iran relations. It is important that these relations take the form of relationship-oriented competition and more away from outright obvious hostility. Furthermore, perhaps this will lead to bilateral cooperation, resolve the hanging issues. Cooperation depends on the smart resources of Iran and Saudi Arabia, and is a more realistic approach to the future of relations between the two countries. Saudi Arabia ought to utilize its soft power resources, means and tools to come together to ease the tension with Iran. Soft power appeal is one of the most modern theories that have been implemented by many countries in the world to move forward for more cooperative and peaceful relationship-oriented competition.

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III.   ORIGIN OF SAUDI SOFT POWER

Soft power is the political and cultural values, media capabilities, scientific and intellectual exchange and foreign policy that are capable of building bridges and linkages and alliances. The hard power needs both military and economic forces in order to enable any country to pursue with its political objectives. Saudi soft powers played different roles in Saudi life; particularly in its integration with the policies of the Kingdom in various fields. In facing the Iranian challenges based on doctrinal basics, these soft powers should play effective role. Therefore, this chapter addresses two issues: the first: origin of Saudi soft powers, the second is: their role in achieving Saudi strategy.

Saudi Arabia has abundant amount of soft power sources with excellent resources. It also has several means and various tools. The sources and resources call the availability of power components and causes. Means or tools incite methods of using this power and ability to employ it. The concept of soft power includes two aspects: possessing of power causes and the employment of these causes in controlling the will and deeds of others.[72] For instance, the human development and relief aids, are considered among the sources and resources of its soft power. Its tools and means are represented, respectfully, in the organizations that provide quality products and media that promotes and publicize them.[73] The media machine is the most important axes in wars. The U.S emphasizes this on clear and strong platforms that pumps such culture to the people of the world to achieve to achieve what the U.S intends to do.

A.   SOURCES OF SAUDI SOFT POWER

As previously mentioned, several factors contribute to Saudi Arabia's soft power. While some of these factors are material resources and so are tangible and visible, others are not, but their effects are equally strong. The most remarkable of those, which

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[72] Nye, Soft Power: *The Means to Success in World Politics*, 6.

[73] Khalid Al-Yahya, and Nathalie Fustier,"Saudi Arabia as a Humanitarian Donor: High Potential, Little Institutionalization," Global Public Policy Institute, March 4, 2011, http://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2011/al-yahya-fustier_2011_saudi-arabia-as-humanitarian-donor_gppi.pdf.

collectively could be termed as moral sources of soft power, include Islamic doctrine, Islamic values, cohesion and adhesion among the Kingdom inhabitants, and international weight and regional clout.

The most remarkable sources can be mentioned as moral sources of soft power:

(1)   Prevalence of Islamic Doctrine

It is the origin and the greatest resource of Saudi Arabia's soft power because it is the cradle of Islam and in the location of the two holy shrines where Muslims worldwide go for pilgrimage, at least once in their life time. A place the a place that assembles mammoth crowd of Islamic worshipers every year will no doubt exert reasonable influence within the middle east and across the globe. The religious significance of the Kingdom thus enriches its soft power capacity and enhances its ability to confront Iran' challenges within the Middle East region.[74] On top of these is the pure monotheistic Sunni doctrine, the sect to which most Muslims belong and which act as a basis of brotherhood among Muslims. Iran is predominantly Shia. The disproportionate size of Sunni population worldwide over Shia population gives Saudi Arabia a latent but very potent soft power over Iran in the Region. Therefore, these unique historical enrichments constitute source of moral soft power that support the Kingdom's ability to exert great influence within the region.

(2)   Values System

Values are considered as the accepted measure or standard for conduct and behaviors, in a group, organization or society. Therefore, it provides a basis for measuring whether something within a sociological setting is good or bad. Values can be categorized as ethical, Social, economic, cultural, political and religious. Saudi values are generally derived from Islam. Considering the influence of the religion on people, and the significance of Saudi Arabia as where the holy land located, Islam values plays a significant role in attracting more public support of government decisions both at the

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[74] Rubin, "A Typology of Soft Powers in Middle East Politics," 10, http://www.researchgate.net/publication/260979451_A_Typology_of_Soft_Powers_in_Middle_East_Politics.

domestic and international levels. Such public support of the government is no doubt a source of power for Saudi Arabia in the Middle East, including its relation with Iran. Saudi Arabia and its system of prevailing values contribute substantial amount in its soft power system.[75]

(3)   Harmony among Inhabitants of the Kingdom

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is generally homogenous society. This is because it has a dominant (Arab), religion (Islam) and language (Arabic). Similarly, Saudi people hold common traditions and cultural values that have not only created harmonious co-existence of the people, but also a strong sense of nationalism and loyalty to the country.[76] When compared to most other societies in the Middle East where heterogeneity has water down cohesiveness. Saudi Arabia's homogenous society is considered a positive attribute and a strong source of its soft power. Unlike other societies that suffer from differences in these values among individuals of their communities, Saudi Arabia' soft power has a local and international supporters for its role. International weight and capacity

(4)   International Weight and Capacity

Saudi Arabia's foreign policy emphasizes mutual solidarity, peaceful co-existence, global stability, and support for and aid to other countries under crisis within or outside the Middle East. Internally, such foreign policy is derived from suitable and supportive environment for national dialogue among individuals and classes of the society.[77] The Saudi government established King Abdul Aziz Center for National Dialogue (KACND) in 2003.[78] The establishment of the King Abdul Aziz Center for National Dialogue (KACND) is to reinforce the role of civil community and

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[75] Anthony, Shoult and Sami T. Salman, *Doing Business with Saudi Arabia*, London: Kogan Page, 1999, 16.

[76] Shoult and Salman, *Doing Business with Saudi Arabia*, 10.

[77] Mark Thompson, "Assessing the Impact of Saudi Arabia's National Dialogue: The Controversial Case of the Cultural Discourse," Taylor & Francis Online, December 15, 2011, 164–165, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/21534764.2011.628497.

[78] Ibid.

organizations in achieving justice, equality, and freedom of expression within the framework of Saudi cultural system. Internationally, Saudi Arabia calls for dialogue among followers of all religions and civilizations as a sustainable way of settling disputes. Accordingly, the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) was established to facilitate and sustain this effort.[79] KAICIID provides the Saudi government with practical processes of how to achieve understanding and peaceful coexistence among people. The Center is designed to encourage religious consecration and spiritual piety of individuals and communities in order to renounce violence and extremism. KAICIID sets out to encourage and promote dialogue, understanding, respect, and cooperation among the people, and to stimulate justice, peace and reconciliation in order to eradicate violence and religious conflicts."[80]

B.   MATERIAL SOURCES FOR SAUDI SOFT POWER

1.   The Two Holy Mosques in Mecca and Medina

The Saudi government continues to develop the holy mosques sites, and the services provided to pilgrims and visitors in order to ensure the performance of rituals smoothly and easily. Every year, approximately three million people from all parts of the world visit Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj.[81] These people return to their respective countries with positive image of the development works the government of Saudi Arabia undertakes to improve the services at two the holy sites. During the last decade, the Government of Saudi Arabia deals with different set of people with changed mindset due Global War on Terror (GWOT). The fair dealings of Saudi government to the people with different beliefs that annually visit Mecca and Medina gives positive and soft image of the people and government of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia annually coexists with the international political and economic developments and their impact on the pilgrimage

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[79] "E KAICIID,"Establishment Agreement (EN)," February 02, 2015, http://www.kaiciid.org/node/2001.

[80] Ibid.

[81] CNN Library, "Hajj Pilgrimage Fast Facts," October 12, 2015, http://www.cnn.com/2013/06/21/world/hajj-fast-facts/.

seasons, affecting and are affected by the evaluation of the success of pilgrimages seasons every year. Every year during the last decade, political repercussions in the world stand out in the seasons of Hajj, especially, after the September events, the United States and the war on terror, the future of Iraq and other Muslim political issues. Necessitating, The Saudi government to deal with different types of people in a political wisdom and vision to help in drawing the right image of Saudi Arabia as the Arab and Muslim leader.

2. Financial and Economic Power

An IMF country report in 2014 on Saudi Arabia economic and financial developments emphasized that Saudi Arabia has grown very strong in terms of growth rates in recent years, taking advantage of high oil prices, the strength of private sector activity, and government spending. The Saudi economy has an influential role in the global oil market system and its stability.[82] The Kingdom occupies the first place worldwide in exporting petroleum and its reserves, and the fifth place in natural gas reserves. Moreover, the Kingdom is considered one of the most important members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, and the greatest production swinger in affecting the prices of this strategic international commodity; which supports its soft power on all regional and international levels.[83]

Saudi Arabia's participation in the G 20 Summit as a member is because of its status as an important player in the energy market, as well as the large volumes of international trade and higher financial resources, which impact on the global financial system.[84] The expansion of the Saudi economic role in the region contributed to the classification of the Kingdom among the top emerging economies of the world along with major emerging countries such as China, India and Turkey. This positive outlook is

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[82] Alfred, Kammer, and Traa Bob, SAUDI ARABIA (IMF Country Report no. 14/292), Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, September 2014, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2014/cr14292.pdf.

[83] Andrew. Butter, "U.S. Shale Oil is the New Swing-Producer: Output Forecast to 2020 Will Make Saudi Arabia Very Happy," The Market Oracle, December 1, 2014, http://www.marketoracle.co.uk/Article48439.html.

[84] Sven Behrendt, "The G20 and Saudi Arabia's Changing Foreign Policy Agenda," Carnegie Middle East Center, September 21, 2009, http://carnegie-mec.org/2009/09/21/g20-and-saudi-arabia-s-changing-foreign-policy-agenda.

representative of the economic weight of the Kingdom as a center player in the Gulf region, the Middle East and the entire Arab nations.

Another aspect of the financial power that Saudi Arabia enjoys is the initiative to lend loans to help poor countries to develop themselves. A significant body is the Saudi Fund for development which contributes through the provision of loans and funds and its activities have no defined limits geographically.[85] The main objective of the Fund is to donate to development projects in developing countries by granting loans to those countries. The organization deals directly with the governments of developing countries to help finance most prioritized development projects. A typical example of project where Saudi Arabia has contributed significantly is the Marawi Dam in the Republic of Sudan, a project that is considered a model for Arab economic cooperation.[86] Apart from bringing economic and social benefits to the people of Sudan, the Sudanese government is hopeful that the program will provoke a cultural shift along the line of social and urban renaissance in the country.

3.   Kingdom of Humanity

Saudi Arabia is a leading nation in humanitarian assistance, providing for the needy in most countries of the world. In the last three decades Saudi Arabia has made remarkable strides, not only in terms of relief work and humanitarian assistance, but also in fostering regional and international cooperation. Such facts are clear according to the latest data released by the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, which imply that Saudi Arabia is the first country in the Arab and Muslim in the proportion of its gross domestic product GDP.[87]

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[85] The Saudi Fund for Development. "What IS SFD?." September 5, 2009. http://www.sfd.gov.sa/webcenter/faces/oracle/webcenter/page/scopedMD/.

[86] "Marawi Dam in the Republic of Sudan," March 12, 2010, http://www.sfd.gov.sa.

[87] Al-Yahya and Fustier, "Saudi Arabia as a Humanitarian Donor: High Potential, Little Institutionalization, 4.

Saudi Arabia's humanitarian assistance has reached more than 80 countries through different official and unofficial agencies.[88] WFP Executive Director, Ertharin Cousin, called Saudi "Kingdom of Humanity" because of the state's contributions to resolve food crisis across the globe.[89] The humanitarian reputation Saudi Arabia has succeeded in building for itself is a form of soft power because such gestures have the capacity to win the hearts and mind of recipient governments and their people.[90] Furthermore, Saudi Arabia could use its humanitarian aids to exert influence and control events beyond Arab and Muslim countries.

C.   MEANINGS AND TOOLS OF SAUDI SOFT POWER

Meanings of Islamic *Da'wah*—missionary work:

- King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Glorious Qur'an, its translations, records and distribution in different countries of the world exemplifies a strong tool for exercising Saudi Arabia's soft power.[91] This is in view of the influence Islam has on its true followers. The establishment of the complex came in fulfillment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's leading role in serving Islam and Muslims, and an extension to what Saudi Arabia has been honored by as the custodian of the holy shrines. All these facts reflect the leading role of Saudi Arabia in serving Islam, Muslims and care of Holy Quran.

- The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Dawah and Guidance is another soft power tool.[92] The Ministry, which was established in 1994 is responsible for the developments of mosques and endowments in all Muslim countries; the advocacy and attention to Islamic issues globally; communication with the Islamic associations centers, and cooperation with them as appointed by Muslims values to spread such values worldwide; the supervision of the Islamic centers to help Islamic

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[88] Al-Yahya and Fustier, "Saudi Arabia as a Humanitarian Donor: High Potential, Little Institutionalization, 7.

[89] "Saudi Arabia's 'Generosity' Vital to Save Lives: U.N. Official," *AL ARABIYA NEWS*, December 14, 2012, http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/12/14/255052.html.

[90] Al-Yahya and Fustier, "Saudi Arabia as a Humanitarian Donor: High Potential, Little Institutionalization, 9.

[91] King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Glorious Qur'an, "The Aims of the Complex," May 28, 2015, http://qurancomplex.gov.sa/Display.asp?section=7&l=eng&f=nobza02&trans.

[92] The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, "About the Ministry," May 28, 2015, http://www.moia.gov.sa/Eng/menu/pages/about.aspx.

minorities and communities abroad; coordinate the efforts and support the Islamic organizations, universities and institutions, and to highlight the role of the Kingdom in supporting all Muslim countries concerning Islamic issues. Coordinating the efforts and support the Islamic organizations, universities and institutions, to highlight the role of the Kingdom in supporting all Muslim countries in all Islamic issues. The mission of this Ministry is to contribute to the achievement of Islamic solidarity and interdependence. Serving Muslims around the globe in all aspects of their life, the ministry addresses all issues that Muslims face through their life.

The foregoing suggests that the mission of the two Dawah bodies mentioned above is to encourage worldwide Islamic solidarity and interdependence among Muslims while attending to their needs and welfare. Similarly, the two Islamic Dawah bodies are established to propagate the right understanding of Islam' strand "Sunnah" throughout the Arab world and other Muslim countries, especially among those countries already under Iranian influence or about to be. These initiatives give Saudi Arabia the soft power to win the heart and minds of the Muslim people all around the globe.

D.   MEDIA AND CULTURAL MEANS

Joseph Nye explains that soft power is based on informational, cultural, commercial influences, public relations, and all other resources that do not fall within the classified military capabilities of an organization or state, which he refers to as hard power. The government needs to explore and convey positive and soft image of the Kingdom by focusing on media and culture. Iran, being opposed to Saudi belief, has effectively used to projects its liberal image and revolutionary ideas. The Government of Saudi Arabia must counter Iranian propaganda through effective use of media and its rich Arab culture.

Nye perceives that the feasibility of soft power depends on the credibility of the media, especially in light of large number and diversity of these means and the frenetic competition is imposed on the recipient. The receiver often finds the most credible means, and the build-up relation between them serves the concept of soft power.

The Saudi Ministry of Information was created in 1962. However, in 2003, the responsibility of propagating the country's cultural heritage was included as part of the

Ministry's responsibility.[93] Accordingly, it became known as the Ministry of Culture and Information with responsibility to administer the Kingdom's print and electronic media. Additionally, the Ministry is saddled with the responsibility to coordinate the Kingdom's relations with international press.[94]

The Saudi media, throughout its history has been an influential strategic tool in the internal and foreign policy of the Kingdom. Saudi media and culture has the ability to address ongoing media attacks from abroad and the ability to use the Saudi media and cultural machines as an intermediary to generate a national sense and national belonging. More important, the Saudi media and culture are unique tools to fight extremist thoughts and a catalyst to spread the different aspects of the Saudi culture. Saudi media policy continues to be the engine for all business and media activities. Saudi media policy continues to be the engine for all business and media activities issued or deal with by the Kingdom. The Kingdom media policy is carefully considered, which is in consistent with the direction of the Kingdom and its Islamic identity.

E.   POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC MEANS

Indisputably, Saudi Arabia exerts soft power and role of global leadership, not only in the field of oil or the international economy, but its contribution to stability and peace in the Middle East region.[95] Many Arab countries have suffered and still suffering from continuous armed conflicts due to insurgent political movement within their societies, and the Arab-Israeli conflict, however, Saudi Arabia has always served as a safe home for all the Arabs and Muslims from all part of the world.[96]

During the seventy-year history of the US-Saudi alliance, the beginning of relations between the two countries developed slowly, but the bilateral relationship

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[93] SAMIRAD (Saudi Arabia Market Information Resource), "Ministry of Culture and Information," May 28, 2015, http://www.saudinf.com/main/c6e.htm.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Giulio Gallarotti and Isam Yahia Al-Filali, "Saudi Arabia's Soft Power," International Studies 49, No. 3–4 (July 2012), 238, http://isq.sagepub.com/content/49/3-4/233.abstract.

[96] Ibid.

during the seventy years moved towards optimization.[97] The U.S and Saudi Arabia have faced different political difficulties and ultimately have overcome them, because the U.S government is well aware of the importance of the international and regional weight of the Kingdom.

The relationship between the two countries is not just a friendship, but rather a long-term strategic relationship. In Middle East region, and in terms of political, economic, and security policies, Saudi Arabia is the only country in the region to assure the United States such trust.[98] Realizing their mutual importance, the two countries have agreed that their strategic alliance must continue to grow in strength not withstanding their differences.

Iran is trying to expand its influence in Middle East for a long time, but the Kingdom is the main bulwark against this expansion, with Saudi Arabia's commitment to non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.[99] Saudi Arabia has always denounced the violence and all the means of disturbing international security and peace and to emphasize the principle of peaceful coexistence among the nations of the world.[100]

Saudi Arabia desires the stability of world oil markets, and strives for the development of international trade on a fair basis and foundations of free market economics. It is also committed to the rules of international law and international treaties and conventions.[101]

Diplomacy is based on official contacts between the states. Nye explains Diplomacy in which public opinion plays significant role. States and countries try to persuade the subjects of the other countries to shape their opinions to achieve their political, military, and economic objectives. For example, during the Cold War, the west

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[97] Alfred B, Prados, and Blanchard Christopher M, Saudi Arabia: Current Issues and U.S. Relations (CRS Order Code IB93113), Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2007, 2.

[98] Prados and Christopher, Saudi Arabia: Current Issues and U.S. Relations, 3.

[99] Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the clash within a civilization. "

[100] Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, "Foreign Relations," June 04, 2015, https://www.saudiembassy.net/issues/foreign-relations/.

[101] Ibid.

shaped the world opinion in favor of capitalism against the communism. The goal of diplomacy is to market the foreign policy of a state to the public opinion in other countries in normal times on one hand, but in times of crisis it is more concentrated in mobilizing the national political and military capabilities to defend its interests. Conferences, exchanging delegations, and official visits are vital part of the effective diplomacy. The number of Saudi diplomatic missions abroad amounted to 156 mission and there are 130 foreign missions in the Kingdom from different countries of the world.[102] In addition, the Kingdom joined many Arabic, Islamic, regional and international organizations like Muslim World League, Gulf Cooperation Council, and Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Saudi Arabia has always directed its diplomatic efforts to spread the positive image of the Kingdom throughout the World.

F.   EDUCATIONAL MEANS

Saudi Arabia has increased its global markets after the 1970s oil crises. The oil market started to boom again that enabled Saudi Arabia a wealthy fortune of economy that enabled it to spread out its soft power. Such soft power includes the education part, which enabled Saudi Arabia to deliver the Islamic fundamentalism worldwide in order to preserve its position as a leader in the Muslim and Arab world.

According to Wager Cooper & Yue, generally, Saudi Arabia reached out to the world throughout creating large numbers of Islamic institutions, center, mosques, schools and colleges. For instance, Saudi Arabia financed the Islamic institutions in the Africa, Far East, Russia, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Isles of Fiji, North and South America and Canada.[103] In fact, part of the Kingdom's educational program was established by King Fahad's donation program, which focused on delivering a translated copy of Holy Quran to pilgrims visiting Saudi Arabia within their languages, as well as

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[102] Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Diplomatic Missions," Accessed December 7, 2015.
http://www.mofa.gov.sa/sites/mofaen/aboutMinistry/HeadsOfMissionsAbroad/Pages/default.aspx.

[103] William, W.Cooper, and Piyu Yue, *Challenges of the Muslim world: Present, future and past*. Vol. 19, Emerald Group Publishing, 2008, 198–199.

delivering copies of the Holy Quran to civil and governmental organizations worldwide.[104]

The authors point out that the Saudi academic programs globally were designed to deliver the Muslim children and youth with the opportunity to be taught and enhanced in their responsibility in the Islamic principles, culture, and language while they are living abroad within their society.[105] For instance, as part of the Saudi academic programs worldwide, the initiation of the Islamic academy in Washington, DC, that holds over one thousand students with a cost of over 100 million Saudi Riyals. Also, king Fahad academy in London that hosts a large number of international students. These academies including the one in Moscow, target to sponsor Islamic religion and culture for the people who live in those countries.[106]

Finally, it is important to stress on the fact that the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has utilized a huge part of its capital to serve as educational programs as part of its soft power system. Such programs provide the Saudi soft power a greater image of cradling Islam and its culture in the Arab, Muslim, and non-Muslim nations.

G.   THE ROLE OF SOFT POWER IN ACHIEVING SAUDI STRATEGY

In order to quell the threats Iran poses towards the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and in order to gain as much leverage as possible over this belligerent nation, Saudis must unleash their inherent wealth of soft power over Iran. As evident in its post-Revolution constitution, Iran has constructed a state around doctrinal and secular foundations. Calling for an "Islamic Army," Iran's Constitution transcends beyond traditional nationalist ideologies by strictly asking its citizens to adhere to values stemming from its Islamic Revolution. Iran asks its inhabitants to give up their personal needs in order to allow Iranian leaders to fulfill their visions of establishing a worldwide Shiite order. In an effort to gain further international power and to convert Sunni Muslims to their Shiite

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[104] Cooper and Yue, *Challenges of the Muslim world: Present, future and past,* 199–200.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid.

faith, Iran systematically targets the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a state that embodies and defines the traditional lifestyle of Sunni Muslims.

Iran primarily relies on its exportation of revolution to combat Saudi Arabia's influence in the Middle East. If other revolutions take place in the region, powers like Saudi Arabia will be less likely to thwart Iran's plans. Iran uses organizations like the Islamic Culture and Relations Organizations and its supreme council of Cultural Revolution to spread its Shiite cause through the media.[107] Geographically, Iran controls the Arabian Gulf in the South and the Caspian Sea in the North. As Iran controls much of the world's oil and natural gas, the state also has an economic edge over its neighbors, and Iran seeks to use its economic position as a means of economic warfare rather than as a means of bettering its own economy. Iran hopes to discredit Saudi Arabia as a Muslim world-leader and encourage Sunni Muslims to embrace Shiism by practicing forms of clientelism and providing humanitarian aid to Sunni Muslims in distress. Iran is not afraid to impose upon the sovereignty of other states in order to meet these goals. In addition, the state has begun intimidating other world powers with its nuclear energy program that, if unmonitored, could prove to have bellicose motives.

To combat these challenges, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should reform the ancient teachings from which it derives much of its power, by emphasizing values of moderation, tolerance and dialogue to disconnect Shiites in Saudi Arabia from those in Iran. The Kingdom should hold further lectures, lessons, forums and conferences to stimulate domestic intellect and to give the world a way to learn about its culture and society. These symposiums could perhaps take place in the two holy mosques, giving these important buildings further use. The Kingdom should also make use of its many scholars who are able to speak foreign languages, as these academics can teach foreign territories about Saudi Arabian culture. As it is 2015, Saudi Arabia should also look into using Internet technologies to spreading information in addition to printing more magazines, and the Kingdom should also reconsider its current rules regarding women's rights of employment, participation and endowment. Saudi Arabia should attract foreign

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107 Bar, "Iranian Terrorist Policy and Export of Revolution, 14.

students to its land by enacting fellowships to encourage the intellectual side of its nation. The Kingdom ought to continue its domestic and political reforms, strengthen its radio broadcast programs, and employ further soft economic powers like controlling oil prices or influencing Iran's relationships with China and Russia in order to prevent Iran from taking on extremist policies. The Kingdom should combat Shiite terrorism and up its humanitarian aid to combat Iranians that are gaining support by doing the same. Saudi scholars, most importantly, need to receive funding allowing them to research properly different forms of soft power and the various ways their Kingdom can triumph over the threats Iran poses it.

H.   CONCLUSION

Saudi Arabia is embodies countless forms of soft power it can use to combat Iran as Iran continues to strive for more regional and international power. Perhaps most obvious is the Kingdom's abundance of soft power derived from a moral standpoint, as the Kingdom holds the original monotheistic Sunni Muslim doctrine and Sunnis are the majority of the Muslim faith. As a nation, Saudi Arabia is an example of harmony and has vast international weight as a Muslima, world, and regional leader. The Kingdom boasts the material soft powers of its two holy mosques, which can be used to hold conferences represent culture, as well as the material soft powers that come hand in hand with being a world-leader in the exportation of natural gas, oil, and loans to underdeveloped states in need of assistance.

Saudi Arabia is a leader when it comes to humanitarian relief work, assisting over 80 states across the world and arguably leading the effort to combat famine around the world. Additional soft powers include Saudi Arabia's political friendship with the United States and its controlling of the media through its Ministry of Information. The Kingdom's expansive educational system also helps wage power over Iran through enlightening the masses of its history, culture and teachings. Saudi Arabia, should it wish to limit Iran's influence over the Muslim community or the international arena, needs to take advantage of the various soft powers it has, by spreading its own teachings and funding research that will help it find better ways to exert its soft power.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSION

A number of useful conclusions could be reached from the study:

Spread Shiism amongst Sunni followers through Iran's claims of their love for *Al-Bait*. This is to gain Sunnis sympathy in favor of the Shiite and acceptance of governance of the Faqih. Iran has always ensured gradual embracing of Shi'ism especially through the provision aids and assistance in an attempt to convert Sunnis to the Shiite doctrine.

Endorse the Twelvers doctrine among the different Shiites strains and connect them politically with Faqih governance in Tehran as the Shiite political center of the world. In line with this philosophy, a Shiite state must be obeyed in all political viewpoints. This is also based on the concept of the absence of the Imam *Hidden Imam*.[108] Taha Ali Alsawah in his book Al-Azhar's position on the Shia Twelver stated an example of this is what was issued by some Al-Azhar scholars in 2008. In an official statement, they outlined the reality of the division between Shiites regarding the religion as a whole, as well as its branches. The statement revealed the following: the attempts at rapprochement between Shiites and Sunnis are useless against the insistence of the Shiites to pursue their objectives of Shiite doctrine expansion and the political dominance of Iran. The time has come for Islamic scholars to explain and advise the Islamic leaders of the risks of the Shiites' expansion. The Shiites have allocated billions of dollars to their efforts with the intention of encouraging Sunnis to convert to Shiism and destroy the Sunni states. Announcing that, the Persian dominance has been practicing in the name of resistance as in Lebanon, or in the name of revolution as in Iran or the elimination of discrimination and persecution as in Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.[109]

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[108] Bar, "Iranian Terrorist Policy and Export of Revolution, 5.

[109] Taha Alsawah, *Al-Azhar's position on the Shia Twelver (*Maoqif Alazhar Alshareaf Min Alshia Alethniashriah), Dar Alyousr, Egypt, 2010, http://download-islamic-pdf-ebooks.com/freedownload8813. 277–280.

The main Iranian challenges are rooted in the Shiite branch of Islam—the sectarian orientation on which Iran is founded. Accordingly, Iran's basic political motivation is based on its Shiite sectarian doctrine rather than the repeated claims that it stems from Persian nationalism. Also, Iran's constitution supports the claims that Iranian challenges are based on the Shiite sectarian doctrine and partly served the purpose of achieving these sectarian goals. Furthermore, Iranian ideology is not a Persian national ideology aiming only to restore the glories of the defunct Iranian empire. Rather, it is a sectarian religious ideology that transcends greatly from the concept of nationalist ideologies, with limited aspiration for nationalist goals, objectives, or inclinations. This desire necessitated the establishment of a sectarian army to shoulder international revolutionary duties which go beyond the scope of defending the country or the achievement of national security from the rest of the globe.

Iran's current constitution emphasizes more on sectarianism rather than nationalism. This is affirmed in Article 15 of the constitution, which makes the Persian Language the official language of the country.[110] The decision to have a Persian official language alongside a sectarian national ideology is contradictory. A nationalist ideology reinforced by a Persian national language, or a sectarian national ideology alongside the Arabic Language would have served the country better. If Iran could reinforce its current sectarian ideology with Arabic as the official language as other Shiite population in the Middle East, there will be better cohesion, solidarity, and understanding within the region due to commonality of language. Again, the provision in Article 115 of the Iranian constitution that the president must be of Persian nationality and believe in the official *madhhab* (Shiite doctrine of the Twelvers) is a source of conflict in the region considering the fact that Iran comprises other ethnic nationalities.[111] This provision, which was included in the Iranian constitution by Grand Ayatollah Khomeini after the Iranian Revolution of 1979, disenfranchises other eligible candidates that might want to run for president.

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[110] Hamid, *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 34.

[111] Ibid, 70.

It is worth mentioning that Khomeini's revolution was no more than a Shiite religious revolution against the Persian nationalism which was not the case during the reign of the Shah of Iran. This is represented by the Twelvers concept based on Khomeini's Faqih governance and the domination of its supporters over mainstream fundamentalists. The import of this is that a Shiite Iran is more dangerous in the Middle East than a Persian Iran. This is because a Shiite Iran is evidently and visibly based on aggressive and extremist ideological concepts as the world is experiencing today. Iranian rhetoric and speeches is most times characterized by emotion-laden propaganda, hostility and aggression since the 1979 revolution, simplifying Saudi Arabia's soft power drive.

The Faqih governance and its domination over internal and external Iranian affairs were based on three components: intellectual; concept-sharing of globalizing revolution, and Islamic unity (along Shiite doctrine). These concepts, which aims to position Iran to dominate Islamic countries under the flag of the Twelvers Shiite and to formulate one nation under the governance of the Faqih, converges into what experts call an exportation of revolution. The exportation of revolution is a group of means, mechanisms and political strategies, on which Iran intends to achieve dual aims of attack and defense, internally and externally. Through the exportation of revolution in targeting and disturbing other states, Iran aims to create suitable opportunities for replacing the governments of these states with pro-Shiite governments. At the very least, Iran can dominate their national politics in preparation for Shiite expansion. By so doing Iran can protect its interests and achieve the required security for the expansion of its revolutionary regime through the grant of protection. This is based on the concept that attack is the best form of defense. Through this dual objective inherent in the concept of the exportation of revolution, can be recognized the significance of revolutionary guard to shoulder the major responsibilities of Iran's revolution exportation in addition to protecting the revolutionary regime.

There is need to differentiate between two key components of Iran's exportation of revolution. One is related to the thoughts it intends to export, while the other is concerned with the means of exporting these thoughts. The exportation of revolution is dynamic and fluid—ranging from military and security, through political, to economic

dimensions. Also, there are other components of the exportation that are dependent on domestic, regional and international factors. The Khomeini regime depended on the exportation of revolution by articulating these components in the use of proxy forces to replace the ruling Ba'ath regime in Iraq with a Shiite government after military option failed in the Iran—Iraq war. The formation of Hezbollah Al-Hejaz by Iran in 1987 and its activities in the region since then lays credence to this claim. Currently, Iran's also uses proxy forces like the Houthis in Yemen to gain dominance over the Arab countries. These proxy forces shield Iran from attack by adversary nations because any attack or aggression on Iran from any power in the region or internationally will be greeted by a corresponding attack from its proxies such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen. In addition, this action is intended to enhance its security and defense, and to prevent other international powers from choosing a military action. Again, by so doing Iran intends to divert international attention from its nuclear program.

In the light of the foregoing, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through its genuine Islamic symbolism, its adoption of the Islamic concept, and its leadership of the centrist Sunni sectarian ideology has come to represent the most dangerous enemy of the Iranian Shiite ideological and sectarian project. Saudi Arabia would have to bring its soft power to bear to effectively confront the well-articulated Iranian revolutionary trajectory within the Middle East. The Shiite loyalty created by the Khomeini regime after it took over the government in Iran created problems in the Arab and Muslim countries. One of the most significant discoveries of this study is the conjugation between the Shiites' existence and the unrest, disturbance, and chaos it creates in the Sunni countries where Shiite minorities reside. The foregoing suggests that the priority of loyalty to Shiite doctrine over national loyalty by Shiite minorities in the Arab and Muslim countries other than Iran is the most dangerous problem facing Shiites minorities. Loyalists to the Faqih governance in Iran most times run counter to the laws of the countries where minority Shiites exist.

The Iranian targeting of Saudi Arabia is the result of several key factors. Saudi Arabia represents the most superiorly acceptable Islamic Sunni state because of its historical Islamic precedence, and the holiness of its geographical area, as well as its political and economic position within and outside the region. In addition, the state

follows a very specific, respected Sunni doctrine, which disagrees with the Iranian Shiite doctrine. Furthermore, the Kingdom commands heavy regional and global acceptance, and outstanding status in the world community due to its moderate policies, peaceful disposition, and continued support of other states. These exceptional and sterling national qualities annoy Iran and stand as an obstacle that limits Iran's ability to project power and influence. Consequently, Iran attempts to undermine Saudi's leading role in both the Arabic and Islamic worlds and its viability in international relations.

Soft power and its elements enable Saudi Arabia to face the Iranian challenges with efficiency and professionalism. Besides, Saudi Arabia is a country that is unified and linked as one body due to its common ethnicity and religion. The origin of Saudi soft power is illustrated in its Islamic acceptance among the Arab and Muslim World. Consequently, Saudi Arabia's influence is based on power of attraction and persuasion of Arabs and Muslims. Accordingly, Saudi Arabia must continue to coordinate its soft power in order consolidate on the gains made so far. It could be useful to propose the establishment of higher council to plan and organize soft power different activities.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study proposes the activation of Saudi soft power as a complementary system to confront Iranian challenges. This should include programs and practical mechanisms that can support inherent strength, weaknesses, opportunity, and threats in transforming Iran's strengths into weakness and limit its available chances of projecting power.

Saudi soft power should start with future perception generated from the roots of reforming its Islamic teachings. This is the basis on which the Kingdom was founded *ab initio*. It is also the source from which Saudi Arabia derives its legitimacy summarized in the proclamation of Islam. The Kingdom must assume the responsibilities of its proclamation of Islam and direct this not only to the Arab and Muslim Worlds but to all around the globe.

Saudi Arabia needs to consolidate loyalty among its citizen, especially among students through the demonstration of achievements, developments and its position in the international community. In addition, The Kingdom must instill values and moderation,

tolerance, dialogue and acceptance of others and avoid extremity in views or stand-up points. Saudi Arabia must indirectly work to disconnect Shiites minority from Iran's influence and the Faqih system in Tehran. Awareness programs directed at the Shiite communities explaining the risks of following the Khomeini rule and its revolutionary principles should be organized regularly within and outside Saudi Arabia. These programs should address the untrue idea of the Faqih and the promised state.

Saudi Arabia must concentrate on identifying the dangers of the Faqih governance ideologies towards Shiite minorities in the long run. The Kingdom must draw attention to Iran's targeting of Saudi Arabia, confirming that this targeting in reality is targeting Islam, Muslim nations, and their innocent citizens. Meeting such goals will require Saudi Arabia's cooperation with different states, groups, and Islamic organizations against Iranian revolutionary expansion. Saudi Arabia must configure a proclamation axis, its programs and means (short, middle and long terms). Also, it would be worthy holding proclamation lectures, forums, symposia, and conferences within and outside the Kingdom, and to gain from them intense international participation.

Saudi Arabia should also consider generating qualified preachers and increasing their numbers according to well-articulated and future oriented plans. Also, there is need to increase the publication and distribution of various printed religious materials to aid the preachers and spread of Islamic piety, morals, values, and principles. The Kingdom should also utilize Friday preaching, hajj and Umrah seasons to increase the number of endowment centers in and outside the Kingdom. Furthermore, the two holy mosques could be used to intensify lessons and guidance to the millions of pilgrims that visit the country each year. The Imams of the two holy mosques could be effectively utilized by organizing periodical visits to Muslim states and their endowment centers. Saudi Arabia should arrange other periodic programs where elites and intellectuals from various countries convene in the two holy mosques. The Kingdom needs to establish effective Islamic centers in Muslim countries, where there are minority Muslim communities, in order to educate these minorities to eschew suspicious activities.

The Kingdom's status as the original symbol of Islamic religion and center could be utilized to win the hearts and minds of Muslims. Being the location of the two holy mosques, the Kingdom regularly receives delegations of prominent Islamic figures from all over the world. Saudi Arabia could take advantage of the import of these visits to strengthen its soft power policies against Iranian challenges. Foreign graduates from its universities, colleges and institutes could be indoctrinated to serve and propagate Saudi soft power policies. In this modern era, it would also be wise to consider the utilization of electronic techniques, such as the Internet or electronic books, in different languages actualize this effort. Also, Saudi Arabia must consider following the rest of the world regarding women employment endowment and the necessity of women's participation in Saudi political and social life.

Saudi Arabia educational and cultural programs, in order to combat Iran, should establish scientific research centers to detect social and cultural phenomena and find suitable solutions. The Kingdom should also consider the expansion of sponsorship study programs and attract foreign students to study in the Kingdom to prepare, qualify them in order to follow up with them after graduation, particularly those from Iran and Asian countries to illustrate the positive image of the Kingdom.

An increase in the number of universities, schools, educational institutes abroad, particularly in countries neighboring Iran, and in developed countries as in the African continent, would also give Saudi Arabia an upper hand over Iran. These programs should hold debates and host scientific forums that encourage the participation of Arabic and Islamic elites, scientist, intellectuals, and cultural leaders to promote and grant opportunities that bolster the exchange ideas and the utilization of experiences gained at these conferences.

Such programs would also benefit from the establishment of communication and translation centers in order to select books, periodicals, and translate them into different local languages of the Muslim nations. Programs ought to explain Islamic teachings and simplify them, making them suitable for Muslim minority audiences in their native languages. Educational and cultural programs are responsible for holding forums, debates

and scientific conferences with the participation of intellectuals and intellectual Iranian Shiites opposing the Faqih governance, to make use of their views and thoughts.

Information programs ought to strengthen the broadcasts of Saudi radio stations, particularly the Quran Kareem, to ensure that they reach the largest audience of Muslim and other countries possible. Such programs should also support effective media in major countries which have regional and international influences (Radios, newspapers, channels, Internet, etc.). The Saudi government ought to expand the establishment of different mass media, newspapers, radio stations, air channels and websites in different languages. These establishments can then follow up on what is produced by different mass media organizations and reply to Shiite and Iranian views, identifying their lies and false information. Saudi Arabia should endorse mass media programs to enforce home country belongingness and defuse work information disseminated by Iran and supporters inside and outside of the Kingdom. The establishment of an air channel hosted under the Persian language addressed to an exclusively Iranian audience would also support the Saudi cause. Programs can co-operate with space channels and others of the mass media to defuse internal beliefs and contain the Shiite, Iranian expansion.

Politically, Saudi Arabia should continue its domestic political and economic reform. Further measures include activating the rule of foreign embassies and consulates to criticize Iran's plans to expand Shiism. Saudi Arabia should ensure excellent political relations with other countries, downsizing and surrounding the Iranian danger. The Kingdom should utilize its own status and its outstanding role in regional and international organizations to enforce the Saudi view point on the issue.

Further efforts should include the formation of an alliance against Iran with states surrounding Iran. Saudi Arabia should also utilize its economic capabilities to influence Iran's relations with other countries, particularly intellectual ones like Russia and China. Finally, one last political measure should involve the strengthening of moderate Shiites locally and abroad and encouraging their support against Iranian Shiite extremists.

Saudi Arabia should utilize their investments abroad to combat Iranian influence. Controlling oil prices could effectively pressure the Iranian regime and limit its extremist

policies. All states should take advantage of the aid and support provided to their countries to stop the Shiite expansion and downsize Iranian rule. Islamic humanitarian aid, along with its foreign establishments, should be reactivated according to certain controlled mechanisms, such as regards for supervision on the type of work and management of financial resources. Saudi Arabia ought to expand Islamic humanitarian aid and rescue Muslims in disasters and fulfill the needs of cloths, medicines and life important needs, to cut the roads for Iranians who usually misuse this to publicize Shiism.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should activate the participation of its security forces to develop security measures to confine terror activists, particularly those caused by Iranian Shiites in the eastern providence of the Kingdom or other crises during hajj and Umrah season. Saudi Arabia should work to dry the sources of Shiite extremist organizations in order to control the infiltration of Saudi money particularly from the donations which are leaking into terrorists group such as the Houthis in Yemen and Hezbollah in Lebanon that are obviously supported by Iran. Finally, Saudi Arabia ought to cooperate with security forces in neighboring countries to limit Shiite terrorism and its cooperation with Iranian regime.

Saudi Arabians should utilize the Iranian challenges as an opportunity to develop its capabilities and skills in dominating the region. Saudi Arabia must reinforce its national unity and encourage coherent community through the unification of the various facets of its society and balancing of rights and duties among the people. This should include the Shiite population within the Kingdom as disincentive against Iran's political ideology. There is also the need to establish a research center where Iran and its religious and political ideologies could be properly studied in order to establish the best courses of action against it. Amongst others, the research center should be able to establish the factors responsible for Shiite expansion as a precursor to effective employment of Saudi soft power.

The Kingdom should invest significantly in the development of its armed forces as deterrence to Iran. This is because soft power by itself might not be enough to achieve Saudi's strategic goals in the region. Accordingly, Saudi Arabia should embrace smart power, which is a combination of soft and hard powers in the right proportion.

Saudi Arabia should embark on a serious campaign against Iran through the electronic and print media to sensitize Muslims all over the world on the destructive political and religious trajectory pursued by that country within the region. Alongside, the Kingdom should intensify its endowments strategy to win the hearts and minds of Muslims—whether Shiite or Sunni, or any other Islamic division. Local Shiite leaders could be exploited to provide effective leadership among Shiite regions to calm the already tense situation. Finally, Saudi Arabia should intensify its diplomatic efforts to make more friends within the region, especially with those states within and outside the region that have the potential to negatively impact its security and stability.

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