

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Formation of Qatar's Foreign Policy

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Abstract

This scientific article examines the formation of the foreign policy of the State of Qatar, its role in regional and global processes, and the political, economic, and cultural factors involved. It provides a comprehensive and thorough modern analytical overview of the historical roots, main principles, diplomatic achievements, and significant recent developments in Qatar's foreign policy. The article also analyzes in detail the changes in the balance of power in the Middle East, Qatar's contemporary approaches oriented toward stability and security, diplomatic activity, mediation, and mechanisms for enhancing the country's image.

KEY WORDS

Qatar, foreign policy, Middle East, diplomacy, energy, security, blockade, mass media, international cooperation, mediation.

INTRODUCTION

After gaining independence, Qatar's foreign policy found its place amid unfavorable regional factors and has successfully passed political and economic tests of time. Today Qatar is recognized as an important geopolitical and economic actor not only in the Middle East but worldwide. The formation of its foreign policy, beginning from the early years of independence, is distinguished by the pragmatic, balanced, open, and future-oriented initiatives put forward by political leaders. Qatar has simultaneously taken an active part in numerous international and regional organizations and has been able to gain prestige and trust in the field of global and regional diplomacy.

In the first stage after independence the country succeeded in forming the most favorable external environment for its existence; later this served as a solid foundation for active cooperation, economic development, and international solidarity within the political sphere. Diverse factors and historical circumstances are reflected in the process of formation of Qatar's foreign policy. For example, after emerging from colonial dependence, preserving and

strengthening state sovereignty, preventing threats from abroad, and ensuring internal stability became areas of special attention. Over the years the country conducted balanced external relations with both the Arab world and Western states. At the same time, by effectively managing its natural wealth and developing modern infrastructure, a new political image of the country was created. The present appearance of Qatar's foreign policy consists of several stages, each of which emerged against the background of complex problems in the regional and global context.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The formation of Qatar's foreign policy began at the end of the nineteenth century, when the territory had the status of a British protectorate. In those years international relations were conducted on the basis of Britain's imperial interests. After independence, however, Qatar began to shape its foreign policy independently and actively. In the first stage the main task consisted of protecting the inviolability of the country's borders and confirming political sovereignty.

Precisely in this period Qatar became an active participant in the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other major international organizations.

The leaders who created Qatar's foreign policy set as their main goals the country's security, firm political governance, and economic stability. In this process particular attention was paid to conducting a balanced foreign policy—that is, developing traditional ties with the Arab world while at the same time strengthening cooperation with the West. From the 1980s onward, pragmatism, the striving to guarantee national interests on an international basis, openness, and stability became the main principles of Qatar's foreign policy. In the first stage Qatar showed activity in the spheres most important to it: energy, economic cooperation, and military security. In the energy sector Qatar strengthened its place in the international economy by exporting gas and oil. At the same time, the principle of continuity of internal stability, democracy, and economic reforms was advanced as the main goal of foreign policy.

Qatar's foreign policy has been formed, both in its initial stages and up to the present, on the basis of several main principles. First of all these are the principles of preserving and strengthening sovereignty and state independence, observing the principle of compromise and respect with all neighboring states in the region, participating equally and actively in the activities of international organizations, preventing military clashes, and giving priority to diplomatic solutions. Another important aspect of Qatar's foreign policy is playing an active diplomatic mediation role for social and political stability in the region. Through its economic strength and energy wealth the country expanded international ties and connected itself with external markets with the help of capital and foreign investment. Through a policy of openness to the whole world Qatar tried to harmonize the results of internal reforms and external cooperation. In this process Qatar became recognized internationally as a stable state and distinguished itself by its desire to contribute to regional security as well as by humanitarian and peace-loving initiatives.

DISCUSSION

One of the most significant aspects of Qatar's foreign policy is the skill of mediation in global and regional diplomacy. Qatar opened the possibility of mediating on issues that were contradictory among many states and of using itself as a

negotiating platform. Qatar also mediated in negotiations concerning Libya, Darfur in Sudan, the Palestine–Israel problem, and Afghanistan. The country's diplomacy gained the trust of the world community in modern mechanisms of conducting negotiations, creating a neutral environment, and striving toward a positive result. The growth of Qatar's activity in the arena of international organizations showed that the country possesses a clear foreign-policy strategy. Active participation as an initiator within the UN, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the League of Arab States, and the Gulf Cooperation Council, contributing to the security of the Middle East, contributing to stability, and participating in investment projects are considered important directions of Qatar's foreign policy [1].

Qatar is a state that has actively developed its foreign policy not only in diplomacy but also in the economic sphere. Fuel resources—natural gas and oil—became the economic foundation of Qatar's foreign policy. In the twenty-first century Qatar occupies first place in the world in liquefied natural gas exports, which gave it the opportunity to occupy an important place in global economic policy. Through “investment diplomacy” the State of Qatar spread its economic power onto the global stage and strengthened its status as a reliable partner in the markets of Europe, Asia, and America. Through its export strategy Qatar diversified its economic partners, mastered new markets, and directed large volumes of capital into investment projects. The country became one of the main drivers of economic stability and development in the Middle East. Qatari sovereign wealth funds, active participation in strategic projects, and innovative economic models expanded the country's foreign-policy resources.

The most testing period of Qatar's foreign policy in the last decade is the diplomatic crisis—the blockade—that arose in 2017. The rupture of diplomatic, economic, and transport ties against the country by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt caused fundamental changes in Qatar's foreign policy. As a result of this blockade Qatar demonstrated its economic and political strength and stability.

Qatar drew several main lessons from this crisis. First, diversification in foreign policy was strengthened and special attention was paid to expanding the circle of partners. Second, internal economic reforms were carried out rapidly: food-security strategies, national production sectors, and multi-directional export lines developed. In emerging from the blockade Qatar's foreign policy entered a new stage based on

the principles of multilateralism, pragmatism, and openness. By 2021 the diplomatic blockade was officially ended and Qatar succeeded in restoring its diplomatic relations. In this process new foreign-policy strategies were developed—that is, not remaining dependent on only one or two main partners, attracting global markets and investment, developing digital diplomacy, and paying more attention to social reforms and international sports projects [2].

RESULTS

In Qatar's foreign policy special place was given to the use of modern communications and the media space. The Al Jazeera television channel is actively used as global journalism, modern diplomacy, and an influential foreign-policy instrument. With the help of this media empire Qatar gained the opportunity to advance its point of view on various international contradictions and conflicts on a world scale and to promote human rights and freedoms, social reforms, and cultural changes. In addition, through international sports and cultural events (including the 2022 FIFA World Cup) Qatar strengthened its cultural brand and significantly raised its foreign-policy image.

A distinctive system of balanced alliances has been formed in Qatar's foreign policy. The country is steadily expanding strategic cooperation with Turkey and the United States. While cooperation with Turkey in the military, economic, and cultural spheres deepened still further during the blockade, military cooperation and security ties with the United States serve as the main geopolitical guarantee for Qatar. The Al Udeid military base further increases the guarantee of the country's security. In the five-year period (2018–2024) the strong positions of the State of Qatar in foreign policy are clearly visible precisely because they are based on international cooperation and because the country relies on many global reforms, innovative technologies, and leading states in energy security.

Sports diplomacy also acquired special importance in the formation of Qatar's foreign policy. By successfully hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup the country is striving to become a sports and cultural center of the region. Successes in the sports sphere, investment in world-scale sports infrastructure, and hosting various international sports competitions enabled Qatar to strengthen its global brand and foreign-policy image. Through a series of reforms in sport, science, and culture, international cooperation programs, and initiatives for

developing talented youth, Qatar is entering new stages of external and internal development [3].

Issues of security and regional stability have always been a priority in the formation of Qatar's foreign policy. Territorial threats, foreign pressure, and geopolitical changes constantly prompted Qatar to seek a pragmatic approach, openness, and diplomatic balance in foreign policy. Being informed and prepared for political changes in the Middle East, strengthening military potential, and solving problems by purely diplomatic methods are among the important facets of Qatar's foreign policy. In particular, the experience of the blockade taught Qatar always to protect its independence and sovereignty and to increase economic and political endurance against any threat or danger.

In the last five years innovative approaches have intensified in Qatar's foreign policy in order to ensure state stability and close cooperation with the world community. Through reforms in the fields of artificial intelligence, digital diplomacy, green energy, advanced infrastructure, and the digital economy, Qatar is taking its foreign policy to new stages. The country is effectively using its natural wealth with the help of various technologies for the country's stability and international economic cooperation [4].

The formation of Qatar's foreign policy is a complex process that arose under the influence of many historical, political, and economic factors. Since gaining independence this country has been striving to conduct an active and independent foreign policy on the regional and global scale. Qatar's unique geographic location, natural wealth, and small population have always compelled it to protect itself from the pressure of large states and neighbors. For this reason the Qatari leadership uses great caution and pragmatism in its foreign policy.

For a long time the country has tried to ensure its political and economic security, strengthen its sovereignty, and amplify its voice in the global sphere. Qatar's foreign policy is always distinguished by being balanced and multi-vector. Thereby the country strives to establish strategic and proportionate relations with the Arab world, Western states, and the countries of Asia and Africa. Qatar also stands out in the international community by its independent views and occupies a new and sometimes different position from traditional ideas on many political issues. The country participates as an active member in prestigious international organizations and contributes to the solution of global problems through its initiatives.

Another main direction in Qatar's foreign policy is ensuring the peaceful resolution of conflicts and crises in the region. In this regard the country has presented itself as a mediator and negotiator and has participated in the resolution of many wars and disputes. Qatar uses both diplomatic activity and strategic policy in the energy sector to raise its prestige and reputation. The country's natural wealth, in particular the possibility of exporting gas, has helped it achieve financial independence and conduct a broader foreign policy.

The formation of Qatar's foreign policy also remained stable and consistent despite many external pressures and economic and political blockades. In this process the country tried to expand its diplomatic circle, showed dynamic cooperation with developing states and international organizations, and always advanced its national interests. Qatar is also actively participating in global and regional security, humanitarian aid, and cultural and information policy.

In conclusion it can be noted that as a result of the formation of Qatar's foreign policy the country was able to present itself as a reliable and balanced partner not only at the regional level but also worldwide. Today Qatar is recognized as a state that advances many international initiatives, mediates in overcoming crises, and possesses a strategic role in the energy sector. At the same time the country is actively adapting its foreign policy to the demands of the time and to changes in world politics. Thus, independence, pragmatism, and global cooperation played an important role as the main principles in the formation and development of Qatar's foreign policy.

Statistical data on Qatar's foreign policy and economic potential help to understand better the country's opportunities and its position on the international stage. In recent decades Qatar has been recorded as one of the states with the highest rates of economic growth. Large natural-gas reserves are the basis of this development, and today Qatar occupies one of the leading places in the world in liquefied natural gas exports. The country's population has grown significantly and at present the majority of the population consists of foreign workers. A large part of Qatar's population lives in the city of Doha, while the rest live in other cities and regions. The country's gross domestic product is one of the highest among the states of the Arabian Peninsula; in particular, GDP per capita is also distinguished by being quite high.

If we examine the directions of Qatar's foreign trade, the country mainly conducts trade through the export of gas, oil,

and their products. A large part of the income from exports falls to the energy sector. One of the main export markets is the states of Asia, followed by the states of Europe and the American continent. Qatar is directing the income received from energy exports toward developing internal infrastructure, forming new industrial sectors, and investment projects. The country's budget is growing at a stable level every year and the funds allocated to social spheres are also high. Great attention is paid to education, healthcare, infrastructure, and technological development. Qatar is recorded as a stably developing state in several international ratings. For example, it occupies high places in the Human Development Index and in ratings of economic freedom and security.

The tourism sector has also been developing rapidly in recent years. By holding large sports and cultural events Qatar is attracting more foreign tourists. As a result of the development of the hotel and service sector in the country, economic incomes are expanding still further. At the same time, although the main part of the Qatari state budget consists of income from exports, considerable work is also being done in the direction of diversification of the internal economy. In foreign policy Qatar is a member of many international organizations and through them is expanding diplomatic and economic cooperation. The volume of exports that the country puts onto the international market every year and the number of foreign projects in which capital is invested continue to grow. Qatar is raising its prestige in international organizations and making a large contribution to peacekeeping and humanitarian aid. At the same time the constant strengthening of Qatar's indicator of economic stability and the level of foreign-policy leadership is causing the country to become an even stronger and more independent state. Large economic projects, trade, and investment partnerships are considered important statistical criteria on which the country's foreign policy relies. The country's place and potential on the global stage are also clearly manifested through statistical figures, which give an idea of the success and prospects of Qatar's foreign policy [5].

CONCLUSION

The formation of Qatar's foreign policy is distinguished in modern diplomacy by stability, balance, openness, and pragmatism. Since gaining independence Qatar has been able to deepen its place in the world through its natural resources, economic opportunities, modern diplomatic approaches, and activity in the mass media in foreign policy. Against the

background of complex changes in the Middle East and the global community, Qatar's foreign policy always relies on the principles of balance, mediation, humanitarianism, and cultural diplomacy. In a period when competition and cooperation with competitive states in the region are steadily intensifying, the future success of Qatar's foreign policy will continue to depend precisely on openness, modernization and innovation, internal economic stability, and international cooperation. Qatari diplomacy continues to develop as a state capable of speaking its word in an even more literate, digital, and stable environment.

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