

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Foreign Policy of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Member States Toward Iran's Nuclear Program

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence, “On one hand, these countries are concerned about the disruption of the regional balance of power...” is conceptually sound but stylistically heavy. Consider breaking this into two clearer sentences for better readability.

The introduction does not justify why the GCC's policy toward Iran deserves special academic attention. Please briefly reference gaps in current literature or misconceptions in prevailing narratives.

In the sentence, “Data were collected through the review of official documents, diplomatic statements, international resolutions...,” the methodology remains vague. Clarify how sources were selected and what criteria were used to ensure credibility.

The phrase “employed all available diplomatic, economic, and media tools...” is too broad. Include specific examples (e.g., Saudi Arabia's lobbying in the IAEA or arms deals post-2015) to support this claim.

The conclusion summarizes findings but does not offer specific policy recommendations or projections. Add a paragraph discussing future regional scenarios or policy implications for Iran–GCC relations.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The discussion of offensive realism is comprehensive, but it lacks references to more recent applications in Middle Eastern security studies. Including updated sources or critical responses to Mearsheimer's theory could improve the analytical depth.

The subsection on "The Role of Regional Organizations in Security Provision" remains too general. Please include specific mechanisms the GCC has used (e.g., joint defense declarations, Peninsula Shield Force deployments) to address Iranian threats.

While the paper poses important research questions, it fails to articulate a working hypothesis or proposition derived from theory. I recommend adding a clear hypothesis statement before the literature review.

Oman's mediation role in the JCPOA is mentioned but underdeveloped. Please expand on its strategic significance and how it contrasted with the policies of other GCC members.

Given the nuanced comparisons across member states, a visual matrix or table summarizing each country's policy orientation (e.g., adversarial, balanced, cooperative) would enhance clarity and reader comprehension.

The balance of threat theory is introduced well but inconsistently applied in the empirical sections. I recommend directly connecting this framework to specific GCC actions, such as Bahrain's hosting of U.S. forces.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.