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Research 2

Reforms in the Gulf countries to achieve first-world status

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Introduction:

Political and economic reforms are considered the main essence of the political transformation process in different systems of government, as they are seen as a pivotal pillar for achieving progress and stability in the country. The signs of political reform of a democratic nature were first launched in Western political systems, in which the economic reform process was closely linked to the concept of the market economy and its mechanisms, and after the destruction of the countries as a result of the Second World War, two global economic movements emerged that were completely different in terms of economic orientations, mechanisms and policies followed.

The Western mainstream, led by the United States, established the economic foundations of a free-market system based on capitalist rules that regulate the economy through business competition and innovation, while the Eastern camp adopted a socialist approach based on central planning and collective management of economic resources.

Despite the sharp polarization between these two systems, the repercussions of the global debt crisis that hit many developing countries had a major impact on the overall global economy. These economic crises pushed developing countries to implement economic reforms supported by international economic organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These organizations set strict conditions as a basis for obtaining grants and financial loans, which eventually led to major shifts in the economic policies of debtor countries, especially at the end of the 1980s.

Similarly, these transformations included the countries of the socialist camp, including the Russian Federation, which gradually began to implement comprehensive reforms aimed at improving the economic structure and restructuring the political system. In terms of political reform, theoretical efforts centered on supporting democratic institutions, promoting human rights, the rule of law, and respecting the principles of transparency and community participation. These values were included in international charters and declarations and became an integral part of the reform plans adopted by international institutions to promote sustainable development and deepen democratic frameworks at the global level.

These principles and policies are elaborated on in the following paragraphs to explore their role and impact in creating a more stable and prosperous future for societies.

Search issue:

Many recent studies and writings have addressed the issue of economic reforms as a direct response to the global policy trends promoted by international economic and financial organizations. However, these writings seem to have focused mainly on adopting these prescriptions without devoting sufficient attention to the new trends that redefine economic policy in the context of developing countries. On the other hand, some other writings have addressed this topic from historical or political angles, which has caused the theses on this topic to fall into a clear issue at the level of analysis and in-depth details on this vital topic.

This disparate approach has led to the absence of a unified methodology for understanding the nature of economic reforms as a contemporary issue that requires careful and thoughtful analysis. This shortcoming is particularly evident in the failure to provide clear data on how the risks resulting from these reforms can be managed or to find comprehensive solutions to the issues associated with them.

In light of these data, the current research attempts to address this gap by questioning the fundamental issues related to this topic, and among the main questions it seeks to ask: What is the exact concept of political and economic reforms in their current context? What are the tools and mechanisms they rely on to bring about fundamental changes in political and economic structures? How are these reforms reflected on social and economic conditions, especially in developing countries? What is the depth of their impact on the future of the economies of these countries in light of the complex challenges they face?

The relevance of the study:

The importance of this study stands out in that it addresses a modern topic centered on important contemporary issues, as it seeks to answer multiple issues raised by a large number of writers and researchers belonging to various schools of thought. These issues relate to topics that still lack complete or conclusive answers, as there are still theoretical and practical issues that require further study and clarification. In addition, this field is witnessing a diversity of jurisprudence offered by political economy specialists who seek to achieve a broader vision by extracting specific aspects from the experiences of some countries and attempting to generalize them as solutions to issues that have so far remained untested or insufficiently mature.

The study aims to provide knowledge content and data that can play an important role in forming guiding convictions for the coming stages, contributing to supporting efforts to build the economies of developing countries, in an attempt to bridge the gap between what is theoretically proposed and what can be practically applied, while maintaining flexible and open horizons to achieve future aspirations.

Objectives of the study:

The study focuses on highlighting the importance of discussing political and economic reforms as a modern theoretical framework that aims to address imbalances in undeveloped economic structures in developing countries. It also seeks to provide vocabulary and tools that support the review of data, statistics and practical experiences that can contribute to overcoming the shortcomings and gaps associated with economic and political growth. The study also deals with reviewing the experiences of countries that have followed this approach, highlighting the positive and negative aspects of it.

First article

The concept of political and economic reform

First: The concept of repair:

Reform, in all its dimensions, aims to provide a comprehensive and in-depth vision that allows full knowledge of its concept and its various dimensions, and the language, with its terms and concepts, shows that reform carries variable and diverse meanings that appear in multiple contexts, whether through dictionaries or specialized literature, we find that these concepts reflect diverse visions of reform mechanisms and align with the needs of entities that suffer from certain issues in their workflow, as approaches are adopted that differ relatively from one concept to another.(1)

For this reason, we have emerged multiple types of reforms such as political, economic, administrative, social, cultural and other fields, and with regard to the definition of reform in language (Reform), it means improving or making something more good, in other words, reform means returning something to a better situation after its corruption, with the aim of making a positive change in what exists, the process is characterized by reconstruction or correction if there is a defect or corruption that should be corrected.(2)

(1) Imad Abdul Raziq al-Sheikh Daoud, Corruption and Reform, Arab Writers Union Publications, Damascus, 1st edition, 2003, p. 35.

(2) Mohamed Mahmoud al-Sayed, The Concept of Political Reform, Al-Hiwar al-Momtaden, No. 55, 2011.

Secondly: The concept of political reform:

It refers to all steps and efforts that require implementation primarily by a variety of actors, including governments and governmental institutions, as well as civil society with its various components, as well as private sector organizations and companies. These efforts are managed indirectly and directly at the same time with the aim of achieving tangible and sustainable progress at the level of societies and nations, which requires a confident pace and thoughtful methodology that avoids any delay or hesitation in taking the necessary actions. This strategy is concerned with moving societies forward by building advanced political systems that bear a democratic character and seek to achieve the values of justice and effective participation in a way that ensures harmony between different sectors and levels, leading to a better future that reflects the real capabilities and potential of all parties in society.(3)

The Dictionary of Political Terms defines “political reform” as a process aimed at improving the political system by confronting corruption and authoritarianism. Political reform is an essential element to consolidate the principles of good governance, as it is associated with a set of values and practices such as the rule of law, transparency, popular participation in decision-making, achieving justice, improving administrative effectiveness and efficiency, enhancing accountability, and renewing the vision and strategies associated with the management of public affairs.(4)

This reform includes developing a clear vision of a political process characterized by correcting its constitutional and legal formulations in a way that ensures a general consensus on the laws and constitutions in force. It is also based on strengthening the rule of law, achieving the separation of powers and defining the relationships between them in order to create a balanced and more effective system. This approach is considered one of the pillars adopted by the United Nations Program on Good Governance in the Arab States to promote effective and inclusive governance.

(3) Mohammed Abdullah Yassin, The American policy towards political reform in the Middle East, Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, No. 26, 2010, p. 72.

(4) Ismail Ali Saad, Society and Politics: Theoretical and Applied Studies, Dar Al-Maarifa Al-Jami'a, Alexandria, 1st edition, 1983, p. 212.

The conclusion emphasizes that any reform process must be based on a set of foundations and conditions that ensure its effectiveness and the achievement of its goals. In this context, the following elements must be taken into account:

First, there must be a context or an anomalous and deviant situation that clearly calls for reform. In the absence of this anomaly, the need for reform loses any justification, which may make it unnecessary and closer to being a useless intellectual luxury. This anomaly can be represented by the absence of justice, lack of freedom, widespread poverty, and deteriorating political and security conditions. The existence of a specific defect helps to recognize the issues and diagnose the points of failure in order to choose the appropriate solutions to the challenges facing the state and achieve the desired change effectively.(5)

Second: Reform should be directed towards improvement and positive development, aiming to eliminate tyranny and replace it with freedom, and replace injustice with justice, chaos with order, fear with security, and illiteracy with science and education. From this perspective, reform becomes an essential tool for achieving stability and improving the quality of life within society, ensuring its development and prosperity at all levels.(6)

Third: The concept of economic reform:

The concept of economic reform includes addressing the imbalances that the country suffers from in the economic sector, and directly addressing the economic and social issues and crises that negatively affect the national economy, especially the productive sector, and these crises hinder the achievement of sustainable economic growth and keep pace with advanced economies.(7)

(5) Adel Abdul Latif, Political reform in the Arab countries in the light of international standards and regional speculation in international projects to combat corruption and call for political and economic reform in the Arab countries, research of the symposium organized by the Arab Anti-Corruption Organization, Beirut, T1, 2006, p. 88.

(6) Abdullah Muhammad Abdul Rahman, Political Sociology, The evolutionary arising, the modern contemporary trends, Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya, Beirut, T1, 2001, p. 199.

(7) Nader Farjani, Al-Hakam al-Saleh, Rifa'ah al-Arabs in Al-Hakam in the Arab Countries, Al-Mustaqbal al-Arabi, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, Issue 256, 2000, p. 16.

Economic reform is understood as a comprehensive rebalancing of economic, fiscal and monetary conditions, in addition to promoting stability in terms of exchange rates and income. It also includes the long-term restructuring of productive units with the aim of increasing production capacity, improving production rates, and stimulating the economy to achieve sustainable and measured growth. (8)

In addition, the reform focuses on diversifying the various economic sectors to achieve real and tangible development in these sectors, while avoiding dependence on a specific sector only. This requires developing clear development plans for educational institutions to encourage innovation, support scientific research, and provide an environment capable of creating qualified scientific cadres that effectively contribute to the management of official state institutions with high efficiency and accuracy.(9)

The economic reform steps include the following points:

- 1.Thoughtful and gradual reform: The economic reform process must be directed according to logical priorities and carried out in an integrated and careful coordination. Taking hasty or ill-considered measures can lead to unsatisfactory results, so attention should be paid to defining the areas and steps of reform accurately and carefully to ensure the achievement of the desired goals in a comprehensive and orderly manner.
- 2.Adapting to the dynamics of change: Economic reform is a changing process influenced by many social and political factors, so it is necessary to use flexible and dynamic methods and mechanisms that are compatible with the ebb and flow of the reform process, and these methods must take into account the surrounding circumstances, so that solutions are designed that interact positively with reality and are commensurate with its changing needs.
- 3.There are no magic solutions: The success or failure of reform policies depends largely on the efficiency of the country's political apparatus and the ability of the specialized technical cadres that lead the transformation processes. This economic, social and political transformation requires careful planning and collective efforts based on a clear vision and effective implementation mechanisms to achieve the required change.

(8) Amin Awwad Al-Mashafi, Political Reform, Meaning and Concept, Jordanian newspaper Al-Dustour, Issue 6, 2011.

(9) Adeeb Qasim Shindi, The Iraqi Economy to Where, Dar Al-Rahab, Najaf, 1st edition, 2011, p. 303.

Second article

Political Situation in the Gulf States

Since its establishment in 1981, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has been able to maintain its existence and continuity until today, reflecting the importance of the idea represented in it and the absence of any current alternative that parallels its role in the regional scene. Despite this, there are clear differences in the policies of the GCC countries, whether in their positions on international and regional issues or in their relations with neighboring countries, but these differences have not led to undermining the existence of the council or its vital role.

The importance of preserving the GCC is clear in light of the nature of the deep cooperation between its states and the similar social and cultural characteristics that unite them. The urgent need to preserve this grouping not only stems from the success of the Council compared to other Arab unitary experiences that witnessed multiple stumbles, but it is also reinforced by the growing disillusionment with the role played by the Arab League, especially as shown during recent meetings and the decisions that resulted in unfulfilling aspirations. In addition, the importance of the Council emerges from another angle, as the United States views it as a vital tool serving its interests.⁽¹⁰⁾

This study does not have the space to provide a comprehensive and detailed review of all the achievements made by the Council in its various fields, whether at the political, economic or social levels. However, it can be said that the main focus is on the political aspect, as the failures and challenges faced by the Council in this area are clearly visible, which will be addressed and discussed in more detail in the following context.

First: Political challenges:

Since the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the region has not enjoyed real and sustainable political stability. The announcement of the GCC's establishment coincided with the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War, known as the First Gulf War, which lasted eight years until the end of the 1980s. This long conflict left deep imprints on regional politics, and although the period of relative calm that followed the end of the war was short and of limited impact.

(10) Sadiq Muhammad Tawfiq, Development in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, World of Knowledge, No. 109, 1986, p. 104.

As the region entered the last decade of the twentieth century, another profound crisis exploded, affecting not only the Arab Gulf states but the Arab world as a whole. This crisis opened the door to new conflicts and plunged the region into a continuous spiral of wars, divisions, and foreign interventions that have not subsided since the early 1990s. While these crises are growing, especially with the increasing US threats directed towards Iraq at the time and the declared and vague desires to break up the Iraqi state into multiple entities, it is clear that this spiral carries with it a serious danger that complicates the chances of achieving political stability.

Security challenges:

The Gulf political process involves many issues, most notably issues related to national security. The security challenge, which was the main motivation behind the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), remains at the top of the political priorities of the Arab Gulf states.

With regard to the position of the GCC countries on Arab and international issues, the presence of these countries within the GCC has not had a clear impact on the positions of other Arab countries, especially with regard to the Palestinian issue, as the GCC countries have taken political positions in harmony with the orientations of Arab countries with close relations with the West and the United States of America, and it cannot be said that the political achievements of these countries differ significantly from the achievements of the rest of the Arab countries.(11)

The Council's international influence:

At the international level, the influence of the GCC states remains limited and close to the general Arab situation, which suffers from great weakness in the global arena. These states have no significant influence in international politics, and even for those who believe that oil represents a political tool in the hands of these states, the situation seems different. Oil-exporting countries are fully aware that they depend heavily on the revenues from this resource for their political, economic, and social survival.(12)

(11) Tanira Bakr Misbah, "The Strategic Development of Power Interests and its Impact on Gulf Security," *Journal of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies*, No. 46, 1986, p. 89.

(12) Keshk Ashraf, *The Gulf and the International Ocean in Search of a Unified Strategy*, *International Politics*, Issue 171, 2008, p. 203.

The political achievements of the GCC at the Arab level remain significantly limited, as the GCC has not been able to excel or create a remarkable distinction in common regional issues compared to the rest of the Arab countries. However, the field of financial donations and economic assistance was a clear exception, as it was a distinct tool for Gulf political influence during certain periods. However, this field witnessed a significant decline after the second Gulf War, and this decline in the level of support reflected the Gulf states' dissatisfaction with some poor Arab countries that adopted neutral positions or showed sympathy for Iraq.(13)

Second: economic challenges:

The GCC countries lack any real influence in the political arena, and even for those who see oil as a tool of political leverage, the reality is that oil-exporting countries are fully aware that they cannot do without oil revenues for their economic survival(14) .

When reviewing the economic achievements of the GCC countries, it is clear to see how much facilitation has been done to enhance cooperation between these countries, such as reducing taxes and customs, facilitating freedom of movement and mobility, in addition to facilitating the passage of goods between the GCC countries. These countries were characterized by the launch of joint economic projects that support economic integration between them, and although the details of these projects do not need an extensive discussion here, a set of salient points deserve focus when evaluating this tangible economic progress in the region, including the following:

- The similarity of the economies of these countries reduces the economic viability of joint ventures when viewed from a cost-benefit perspective, as most of these economies rely heavily on oil revenues, while most joint ventures focus on consumer aspects, making competitive returns unlikely.
- The economic dependence of the GCC countries on the outside world deprives the agreements between these countries of any real economic value, as they rely heavily on importing most of their needs from abroad and do not have products that can form the basis for exchange between them.
- Many international agreements related to economic affairs offer alternative opportunities for many countries, providing more favorable terms and facilities than are currently available, especially under the World Trade Organization (WTO) system.
- The lack of diversification of income sources and the almost complete dependence on oil revenues reinforces individualism and selfishness in international relations, which has negative effects on the level of cooperation among GCC countries, especially with the escalation of competition for oil markets. This situation becomes more complicated in light of the decline in oil prices, which adds new challenges to these countries, especially with the emergence of emerging oil powers in the global market, especially in the Caspian Sea region.(15)

(13) Abtahi Mohammad Ali, "Iran and International Relations" in Gulf Future Challenges, Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, Abu Dhabi, 1st edition, 2008, p. 110.

(14) Haqi Saad, Principles of International Relations, Wael Publishing House, Jordan, 3rd edition, Jordan, 3rd edition, 2006, p. 78.

(15) Al-Thani, Fahd bin Abdulrahman, Development Strategy in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, Dar Al-Shorouk for Publishing and Distribution, 1st edition, 2001, p. 165.

Despite the progress achieved, most of the economic achievements associated with the GCC remain limited to formal and facilitative aspects, instead of focusing on productive projects capable of competing internationally. This issue adds to the list of challenges facing the GCC countries, especially since many of them suffer from clear economic pressures, as evidenced by the efforts made to localize jobs as a result of high unemployment rates, in addition to reducing government spending and laying off a large number of Arab and Western workers in favor of relying on low-cost Asian labor. (16)

Third article

Gulf countries' efforts in political and economic reforms

The Arabian Gulf region occupies a pivotal strategic position in the system of international politics, due to its enormous potential associated with its huge reserves of energy sources such as oil and gas, as well as its unique geographical location, which gives it geostrategic and economic importance with great influence. These factors have made the issue of ensuring security, stability and balance of power in the region a top priority on the foreign policy agenda of the United States of America. It should be noted that the challenges facing this region are complex and stem from a highly volatile geostrategic reality characterized by rapid changes and internal and external divisions.

Given this volatile nature, addressing the issue of regional security requires a comprehensive approach that aims to identify the various sources of threat, in addition to exploring appropriate mechanisms to confront them and develop effective protection strategies. Despite the relative decline in the threat posed by extremist terrorist organizations, especially after the relative elimination of ISIS in both Iraq and Syria, as well as the curtailment of Al Qaeda activity in Yemen and some other regions in the Middle East, the threat of terrorism and religious extremism continues, and this threat remains a major element that represents a concrete threat to the security and stability of the region.(17)

(16) Al-Issawi Ashraf Saad, A Comparative Reading of the Impact of the Second and Third Gulf Wars on the Security of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, Gulf Research Center, Dubai, 1st edition, 2007, p. 145.

(17) Osama al-Khouli and others, Arabs to Where, the Arab Future Book Series, Center for Studies of Arab Unity, Beirut, T1, 2002, p. 108.

First: Political reforms:

The political reforms required to meet the current challenges are increasingly important not only at the local level, but also for the international community as a whole. This approach is based on the premise that achieving a prosperous and sustainable economic system requires reforms at the political level. In today's changing world, the interconnectedness between politics and economics is more evident and influential than ever before, and thought leaders and decision-makers in the Gulf countries need to recognize and capitalize on this deep interconnectedness. (18)

The implementation of thoughtful and appropriate policy reforms could contribute significantly to a more sustainable and smooth development. Such reforms could help overcome the challenges associated with the “rentier economy” situation that relies heavily on oil wealth, and instead contribute to the establishment of a balanced economic model that relies on diversification of resources and enhanced stability. (19)

Democracy has become a global issue in the 21st century, gaining global attention and becoming a pivotal issue affecting humanity in general. Since the end of the Cold War, the concept of “democratic peace” has emerged, the basis of which goes back to the German philosopher Emanuel. Democracy not only plays a role in addressing security challenges and preventing wars, but also contributes to creating a favorable environment for the development of a free market system. (20)

In order to achieve the desired political reform in a sustainable and comprehensive manner, work must be done to develop the educational system, as it is the foundation that determines the nature of the visions, values and behaviors adopted by social elites. The educational system plays a pivotal role in shaping the consciousness of individuals and groups, as it is the main means of transferring ideas and developing a deep and sustainable democratic culture that contributes to qualifying elites capable of leading political and social transformations. (21)

(18) Ali Khalifa Al-Sabah, *What After Oil: The Status of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries and an Attempt to Foresee Future Prospects*, Center for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies, Kuwait, 2001, p. 88.

(19) Abdulaziz bin Badr Al Saud, *op. cit.* p. 102.

(20) Osama Abdel Rahman and others, *The Arab Gulf and Democracy Toward a Future Vision to Enhance Democratic Endeavors*, edited by Ali Khalifa Al-Kuwari, Center for Studies of Arab Unity, Beirut, T1, 2002, p. 28.

(21) Osama Abdel Rahman et al, *op. cit.* p. 39.

If the educational systems in the Gulf countries, for example, are able to adopt a culture of democracy within a clear and specific framework aimed at preparing enlightened elites who possess a comprehensive vision of these values, this will lead to laying the foundations for deep structural reforms affecting both the state and society, so that leaders, decision-makers and members of society more broadly can adapt to the changing circumstances and challenges imposed by regional and international transformations, thus contributing to achieving stability and sustainable development. (22)

In this context, practical steps should be taken immediately to enhance local popular participation in the political decision-making process. This can be achieved by broadening the base of popular engagement through building effective and strong civil society institutions, as well as organizing fair and transparent legislative and executive elections that include all segments of society without exception. It is also necessary to work on integrating all sects and social segments without discrimination into the political process to ensure fair and balanced representation that contributes to strengthening national unity and stability.

The principles of transparency, independence and impartiality of the judiciary must be emphasized, in addition to ensuring the separation of the three powers: legislative, executive and judicial, so that each side works independently and effectively without interference affecting the performance of the other. For legislative oversight to be effective, it must form solid foundations to ensure the accountability of the executive authority and monitor its performance in line with the aspirations and higher interests of society. (23)

In this context, it is important to note that political reform does not mean implementing radical and sudden internal changes, nor does it refer to very slow internal transformations. Rather, it requires political systems to take a decisive stance on moving towards change, while identifying pivotal sectors that can form the basis of this transformation. This should be done in a gradual and systematic manner, characterized by clarity of goals and vision. (24)

The Gulf region today is home to a large segment of the middle class that has emerged strongly over the past three decades. This class has been able to reach high levels of university and advanced education, and this educational advancement has enhanced their ability to actively participate in, and sometimes even lead, the processes of social and economic transformation. This process naturally includes civil society actors that have evolved and formed over the course of these three decades. (25)

However, the scene in the Gulf countries is characterized by a remarkable paradox. The activities of civil society are subject to strict supervision by governments, which seek to regulate it in a way that preserves their interests and strengthens the role of the state, yet this civil society has the potential and capabilities to play pivotal roles that contribute to supporting the state and complement its efforts, making it a flexible and adaptable partner that can adapt to changes and a driving force that can work in balance between the ambitions of the state and the needs of society.

(22) Al-Naggar Ahmed Sayed, Egypt, Iran and Turkey, Economic Reality and European Relations, Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Cairo, 2003, p. 110.

(23) Ali Khalifa Al-Kuwari, "Toward a Comprehensive Concept of Democracy in Arab Countries," Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi, No. 338, 2007, p. 45.

(24) Mouloud Tabib, Political Sociology, Publications Seventh of April University, Zawiyah, Libya, 2007, p. 98.

(25) Nayef Ali Obeid, The Gulf Cooperation Council in a Changing World: A Study of Internal Developments and External Relations 1990-2005, Gulf Research Center, Dubai, 2007, p. 116.

Second: Economic reforms:

The process of economic reform should start from the highest level in each country, but at the same time it must be in line with the integrated collective framework, and to achieve this, a set of measures are adopted that balance the country's individual goals and interests with the collective orientations:

1. There is an urgent need to adopt a long-term future vision for the authorities responsible for decision-making, as a comprehensive framework must be designed for an economic strategy that contributes to the realization of this vision, and it is important that this vision is integrated and has clear milestones based on thoughtful approaches and methods that are believed and implemented by all participants in the decision-making process, and all groups of society should be involved in an effective manner, so that these different groups are empowered and make them feel that they are real partners in bringing about the desired change, not just passive recipients of measures imposed on them.(26)

2. In reformulating its role in the development process, the state must adopt a new approach based on reducing its dominant role in the exercise of economic activities, whether related to production, trade, financing and employment. This traditional role led to the inflation of the government apparatus, which resulted in a host of negatives, most notably the excessive dependence of citizens and the private sector on government spending, subsidies and assistance, and the marginalization of the role of the private sector in economic activity, making it necessary to reconsider this strategy to enhance the role of the private sector and balance economic roles among the various entities.(27)

3. Developing the private sector by gradually shifting from a universal to a selective subsidy policy, while promoting integration between the private and public sectors to achieve higher levels of efficiency and sustainable development.

(26) Ali Khalifa Al-Kuwari, *op. cit.* p. 51.

(27) Amin Saati, *The Gulf Cooperation Council and its Future*, Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, Cairo, 1997, p. 40.

4. Preparation for this change must be done in a deliberate manner and over a sufficient time frame to minimize the burden on groups that may be affected by these policies. It also requires an integrated media plan that accompanies the implementation process, which is concerned with taking the pulse of the street and clarifying the dimensions and reasons for this change, with the aim of achieving the greatest possible collective consensus on these decisions.

5. To provide the appropriate political environment that paves the way for the success of reform policies and the realization of their desired goals, utmost importance should be given to applying the principles of transparency and accountability practices in all aspects of government performance, as these principles constitute the solid base and solid foundation from which any effective reform efforts are launched, and it is worth noting that development experiences in many countries of the world have failed, and sometimes completely failed, due to the prevalence of corruption in its various forms and mismanagement that affected various state sectors, and thus the absence of these essential points led to the waste of resources and their misuse, which hindered progress and development.

Conclusion:

The establishment of a federal entity for the Gulf states has long been a popular demand united by all the peoples of the Gulf Cooperation Council, driven by logical reasons related to a common history, deep-rooted culture and interconnected human relations. However, with the increasing depth of transformations and changes in the global political scene, the idea of establishing a Gulf union has become an urgent necessity that can no longer be postponed, as the threats and dangers facing the Gulf states take on an existential character that affects the continuity of the Arab Gulf in its current form, and there is no meaningful way to address these challenges except by establishing a strong and effective Gulf union, regardless of the form that this union may take.

The Gulf Arab states face ongoing internal, regional and international challenges, making it necessary to seek to build a strong federal entity based on foundations compatible with the renewed cultural heritage. This approach takes into account the supreme interests of the peoples of the Gulf, based on a scientific and realistic vision of the current and future changes in the region. The need for these efforts increases in light of the phenomenon known as the "Arab Spring" and the spread of its effects in many Arab countries, in addition to the importance of strengthening cooperation and multiple similarities between the Gulf states and their peoples due to common factors of convergence.

In general, this study sought to provide a comprehensive and detailed explanation of the concept of political and economic reform, with a focus on exploring the most prominent challenges facing the Gulf countries in this context. The study also addressed how to address these challenges through deliberate strategies and effective mechanisms aimed at enhancing their capabilities to achieve sustainable development and keep pace with regional and international transformations.



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