Late at night on April 17 the Arab media outlets reported that a mysterious meeting of foreign ministers of the Council of the Arab States of the Persian Gulf had succeeded. The outlets stated that the parties involved "agreed on the roadmap of implementation of the Riyadh agreement." Nobody has mentioned the subject of the agreement in question and what this roadmap is all about. The reporters have only stated the issues were related to the foreign policy of the GCC and regional security, and that the agreement based on the Charter of the GCC. One would be surprised if it were otherwise!

The gratitude that Foreign Ministers of the Gulf expressed to Kuwait hint about the content of the document and the problems that were discussed.

As it may be known, Kuwait had previously assumed the role of arbitrator between Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Qatar during their talks. The former three countries have recalled their ambassadors from this tiny "gas power" on March 5 in protest against the unprecedented public support Doha had been showing to the "Muslim Brotherhood". Another indirect proof of this version was a piece published by the Qatar News Agency that stated that Qatar's Minister of Foreign Affairs Khalid bin Mohammed took part in the meeting of foreign ministers of the GCC countries. This was the first visit of Qatari Foreign Minister to Saudi Arabia since the beginning of the diplomatic crisis. It's curious that for all this time the Qatari ambassador remained in Riyadh and has not been recalled.

The Meeting

Later on April 19 Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sabah Al Ahmed decided to make comments about the results of the meeting along with the GCC Secretary General Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayan. But in his statement the Kuwaiti chief diplomat wasn't very specific, he only said that the GCC agreed to develop a "collective framework within which countries - members of the GCC would not violate the interests, security matters and stability of its members and that they won't encroach upon the sovereignty of each other". GCC Secretary General didn't add much value to these words, saying that there's a new committee (or commission) to be formed within the Council, which "will discuss implementation matters of the measures introduced by the document signed in Riyadh". This new body will be held responsible for the preparation of a report which will be submitted to the members of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the GCC during their next meeting in May.

All those who have been closely following the developments in the Persian Gulf are aware of the fact that the contradictions between Doha and Riyadh have been accumulating for a long time until they had recently reached its peak. During the height of the "Arab Spring" revolutions - in 2011 and partly in early 2012 - Saudi Arabia and Qatar had been providing, in a close alliance with Turkey, financial support to the forces that were actively fighting for power in the countries that were swept by destabilization and unrest. But Qatar with the full support of Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan vigorously promoted the supporters of the "Association of Muslim brothers" and its quest in such countries as Libya, Tunisia and Egypt. It is a known fact that Qatar - together with Turkey - participated in the creation of the Syrian National Council, that was at first dominated by the representatives of the "Muslim Brotherhood".
However, the cooperation between the two Wahhabi monarchies didn’t last for long. Saudi authorities, who have grown accustomed to perceiving themselves as the blue blood of the Arab and Muslim worlds, with growing amazement looked at how this tiny Qatar was aggressively taking the leadership in the Arab League and trying to establish itself as an arbiter of the countries forming the GCC.

The Point of Discord

Indeed, Qatar was taking full advantage of it enormous financial fortune that came in handy during the election of the former Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi, along with its propaganda capabilities that were provided by the TV channel "Al Jazeera". During the first stages of the “Arab Spring” this channel was governing the minds of the Arab world, promoting the idea that the then rulers of the Middle East had overstayed their welcome. This channel transmitted the speeches given by the “Muslim Brotherhood” members without any limit, primarily the ones delivered by the well-known Egyptian radical preacher Yusuf al-Qaradawi.

The turning point came in June 2013 when Qatari Emir Hamad was widely criticized by a number of states, including Saudi Arabia, and was forced to step down, leaving behind a replacement - the young Prince Tamim . Saudi Arabia expected than this new leader would bring a change in Doha’s policy, that Qatar would abandon any attempts to attain dominance in the Arab League and the GCC.

And Doha began to behave modestly in the Arab world , but it has not abandoned the idea of supporting the "Muslim Brotherhood". Moreover, the Qatari channel "Al Jazeera" became increasingly hostile to Saudi Arabia, especially after the summer of 2013 when the pet project of Doha – the creation of a “Brotherhood” led Egypt miserably failed. When the power in Egypt returned to the army, "Al Jazeera", instead of accusing the Egyptian people in this "misfortune", decided to push blame to Saudi Arabia, calling the whole incident a “military coup”.

The Last Straw

This was the last straw for the House of Saud, which had concluded that the "Muslim Brotherhood" is a terrorist organization that posses a great danger for the whole region and Saudi Arabia itself. Thus Saudi authorities have declared a merciless war on this group across the whole Middle East. In February of this year it was declared a terrorist group in Saudi Arabia (as in the UAE) and now any member of this group can easily be convicted for 5 to 20 years in prison for his affiliations. It's only natural that the anger of the Saudi monarchy would reach the main sponsor of the “Brotherhood” in the region — Doha. Starting in March of this year Qatar began experiencing an unprecedented political pressure, the external manifestation of which was the above-mentioned recall of ambassadors of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain from the Qatari capital.

Now, as it turns out , all the while behind the scenes there were tense negotiations that culminated in an agreement that hasn't yet been voiced.

And that's just on 19-20 April that the Saudi media began to show some signs of "leakage" about the nature of this agreement between Qatar and the other GCC countries.

A famous columnist of the “Al-Hayat” newspaper Khaled Dakhil states that the lengthy negotiations that took place on April 17 in Riyadh were related to the foreign and security policies of Qatar and the impact of those on the neighboring countries. Still the columnist has an impression that the agreement was partial and there’s still a number of contested positions. Therefore, he underlines, the final statement of foreign ministers of the GCC looks very controversial . On the one hand it says that allegedly a certain framework that must ensure a peaceful cooperation was implemented and on the other - the agreement stated that "the policy of any of the GCC countries (Qatar is implied here) will not affect the interests , safety and stability of the member states and will not affect the sovereignty of any of them". It is not clear how one can implement a "collective framework" while leaving intact the sovereignty of all the states of the GCC . After all, the Council has yet failed to provide a framework for a state’s perseverance of sovereign policy and the delegation of its authority to the governing bodies of the Council, for this reason it has recently been in a really bad shape.

The Substance
Khaled Dakhil, stipulating that his information - a mixture of accurate data and assumptions (he says that they are based on the information provided by to some Omani sources), says that the agenda of the Council meeting was related to the points of discord Qatar had with other countries of the GCC (Saudi Arabia and the UAE), and the unfolding propaganda campaign started by Qatar, and the support it has been providing to the “Muslim Brotherhood”. All of these concerns are detrimental to the safety of the Gulf countries, so putting the agenda more broadly - the theme of non-interference in the internal affairs of the GCC members was dominant. Allegedly, according to the information from the same sources, the Council meeting didn’t solve all the problems but some points of discord were resolved, but some”. According to the "Al-Hayat" newspaper and the "Arab News" outlets the Council meeting in Riyadh of last week failed to provide answers to the following questions:

1. That Qatar must exile 15 members of the "Muslim Brotherhood", all of which are the citizens of the GCC countries (5 were born in the UAE, 2 in Saudi Arabia, and the rest come from Bahrain and Yemen).

2. Doha must promise that the "Al Jazeera" channel will refrain from harassing Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt, also it must stop the propaganda campaign about the alleged “military coup” in Egypt.

3. Egyptian opposition members must be banned from all Qatari media outlets.

According to other sources, it seems that the GCC countries have reached an agreement with Qatar relating to the support it has been providing to the “Muslim Brotherhood”. Thus Qatar must abandon all of its support to the movement as a whole and that Qatar will take a neutral standing in respect of the events that are taking place in Egypt. Thus Qatar will not be able to carry on incitements against the Egyptian Marshal Abdel- Fattah Al-Sisi during the upcoming elections in Egypt. Additionally the sources say that Qatar will be forced to close some of the research centers it has been housing, including the "Rand Corporation", that was spreading ideas and political strategies that did not coincide with the positions of the GCC.

Observers in the Persian Gulf are wondering whether the agreement reached would put an end to the sharp contradictions between the leading states of the Persian Gulf, or we are witnessing an attempt to bring together a patch quilt that is gradually falling apart in order “to prevent the discord in the GCC from turning into a gaping loophole, which would allow the GCC enemies to pressure its members in a difficult period”.

Soon we will be able to witness the efficiency and effectiveness of the agreements in question, so one would be able to tell how far-reaching they really were. It is already clear that the Riyadh authorities are adamant in its intentions to pursue its police, hence it will not allow the "Muslim Brotherhood" to become a major political force in the region, despite the numerous attempts the latter have made over the years. To achieve its goals, the Saudi monarchy seem to be decisive to ensure that Qatar would cease supporting the “Brotherhood” once and for all.

The main question is whether the United States will agree with the Saudi policy of containing Qatar, since the largest US military base in the region is in Qatar. On top of all of this many experts believe that the White House has had an ability to directly affect Doha's decision making. What could indicate a serious discord between Riyadh and Washington better? And, above all - we see yet another failure of the US foreign policy, that seems to be always betting "on the wrong horse" ...

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