

Abbas Busafwan

BAHRAIN'S MONARCHY

Dreams Turn to Nightmares



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Published by



BAHRAIN CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN LONDON
مركز البحوث والدراسات في لندن

bcs1.org.uk

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2016

ISBN 978-0-9931648-0-4



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Acknowledgment

This book was first published in Arabic in February 2015 by the Bahrain Centre for Studies in London (BCSL) with the title of: "The Structure of Tyranny in Bahrain: A Read in the Balances of Power of the Ruling Family".

Now has come the English version of the book. The completion of both, the Arabic & English, versions of the book could not have been possible without the participation and assistance of so many people whose names may not all be enumerated. Their contributions are sincerely appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. I would though like to express my deep appreciation and indebtedness particularly to the following: Dr. Ali Al-Faraj, Dr. Salah Al Bander, Dr. Saeed Al-Shehabi, Dr. Talib Al-Shayeb, Asma Darwish, and Karen Dabrowska.

Great appreciation is also extended to my family in Bahrain and in London for their patience, numerous support and understanding.

Dedication

To the martyrs of the Pearl Revolution, may they always be remembered.

Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 01: HYPOTHESIS, The King is the Cause of the Crisis	7
1. A study of the Motives calling for the Fall of the Monarchy	7
Chapter 02: The Prime Minister... The Cortex of Dictatorship	25
2. The King Stifles the Prime Minister in his "Constitutional" Den	25
3. The King and the Prime Minister: The Public Clash	45
4. Sunni Groups are not Loyal to the Prime Minister	53
5. Consensus on Removing the Prime Minister	59
Chapter 03: The Crown Prince, the Advocate of His Father's Approach	65
6. What is said about the Exclusion of the Crown Prince	65
7. The Hidden Conflict: the Future of the Mandate of the Covenant in Bahrain	71
Chapter 04: Chapter Four: The Rule of Militancy... A Review of the King's Speeches	87
8. Power Parity Produces Inertia	87
9. It is Not the Time Yet for Democracy!	91
10. King Hamad and the People 'Face to Face'	97
Chapter 05: Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) and the Dismantling of the Infrastructure of Tyranny	101
11. Bassiouni's Recommendations: A Recipe to Bring Down the Regime	101
Chapter 06: A Future Vision	113
12. Possible Scenarios of Settlement	113
Conclusion	143
Appendix	147

Introduction

The international media usually holds the Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa (1935, ...) accountable for the corruption and dictatorship dominating Bahrain. He is perceived as an impediment to the assumed democratic development adopted by the King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa (1950, ...), and his eldest son the Crown Prince Salman (1969, ...).

The main discourse of the opposition (Al Wefaq and other political societies) usually focuses on the slogan "Step down Khalifa". This sentiment is also welcomed in the West as King Hamad, has instigated a number of constitutional and political procedures, including the restructuring of the ruling elite, in order to limit the powers of his uncle, Shaikh Khalifa.

In recent years the non-licensed political groups (Al Wafa, Haq and Al Ahrar) or what is known in Bahrain as the forces of "objection", alongside active youth groups, who started the uprising of February 14, 2011, adopted the slogan "Down with Hamad" by passing the slogan "step down Khalifa". The political societies preferred working within the project of King Hamad that was promising, according to the various

justifications for engaging in it.

The chapters of this book compare the actions of King Hamad, and those of his uncle, in an attempt to test the following hypothesis: King Hamad bears complete responsibility for the ongoing deterioration in Bahrain, and not the Prime Minister, who is a dictator.

As a journalist and observer of the political scene during the past fifteen years, who closely witnessed the course of events, I can state that the notorious Prime Minister is not responsible for the path taken by Bahrain in the last fifteen years when King Hamad took over the reins of power and the initiative⁽¹⁾ in the country.

This may not be known to the public, the diplomatic corps and those concerned about the Bahraini case during the early years of the reign of the new king. Over the years I encountered a lot of opposition when I advanced the hypothesis that the prime minister has no power whatsoever.

It seems likely that some parties in the opposition are aware that the Prime Minister has been outside the circle of decision making since the king first became ensconced in the royal palace. The minister of his office became Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the strong man in the country.

However, the understanding of the opposition societies in the balance of power in government circles, and the nature of their understanding of the regional and international vision of Bahrain, in addition to the usual thinking of the official opposition which is characterized by caution⁽²⁾, prompts the opposition to demanding the stepping down of the Prime Minister, rejecting the slogan of "Down with Hamad" , to

1 To be a governor does not mean to be in control of the political decision, as in the case of the Amir Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, who was a "ceremonial" prince while his brother, Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman was the actual decision maker. In the case of King Hamad -and the group that obeys his orders- he has the power to make a decision already.

2 In its expression of the public position and political demands, the official opposition led by Al Wefaq make sure to avoid an open war with the regime, and to maintain a good relationship with the West, unlike the "radical/objection" groups who focus their energies on the political demand, and rarely take into account the local and international contexts

avoid open confrontation with the regime.

The reader will find in the following chapters observations and analysis of the overall steps and projects carried out by the king, which he sought to implement in the first decade of his reign, (what writers call the strategy of Hamad). It is believed that this strategy produced a massive popular revolution, essentially rejecting this monopolistic, exclusionary, Bandari strategy (relative to Al Bandar report).

The reign of Sheikh Khalifa of Bahrain was based on an iron fist between the years of 1971 and 1999⁽³⁾. During this time he skillfully manipulated the different interests of groups and strata of the people. This enabled him to neutralize the technocrats, the middle class, the traders, and the traditional families and prevent them from firmly engaging against his tyranny.

However, the “cleansing” practices of King Hamad towards the opposition and large sections society, issuing a constitution without consultation, permitting wide scale naturalization of foreigners, and targeting anyone with a different point of view, because he believed that the Shiites constitute a strategic threat to the regime, contributed to a shift in public opinion from venerating the king in 2001⁽⁴⁾ to calling for his overthrow in 2011.

The King has chosen the doctrine of “walking on the edge of the abyss,” and adopting a policy of “either me or the opposition.” He succeeded at the beginning of his reign in paralyzing his opponents when he stunned them in 2001, by adopting a series of affirmative historic actions⁽⁵⁾, as they were described at the time. The opposition was confused as it felt

3 Sheikh Khalifa was appointed as prime minister in August 15, 1971, and officially ruled the country until King Hamad held his position as the prince of Bahrain in March 1999.

4 The (Prince) Hamad visited Sitra Island -which is a major stronghold of the opposition- in February 2001, as part of a campaign to promote his new policies then, and he was warmly welcomed by the residents there, and attempts were recorded to hold up his car as an expression of welcoming the visions of the new ruler.

5 Emptying the prisons, allowing those displaced from the country to return, abolishing the law and courts of the security state, allowing partisan political action, and promising of the return of the democratic life.

it had to keep pace with the rapidly introduced concessions. But the king's strategy was exposed when he stopped the ball he set in motion and reversed the security and political situation to that of the 1950s when the national movement called for a full democratic system⁽⁶⁾.

In contrast to what is believed, the slogan of "Down with Hamad" has been raised on the first day of the events of 14 February (2011). These were the words of the mother of Ali Mushaima⁽⁷⁾, near the Salmaniya Medical Complex SMC gate⁽⁸⁾, where this slogan was continually chanted.

The coming chapters will analyze the visions of the king regarding himself and the army, what he thinks of his kingdom, and the convergence of some of his speeches during the crisis, showing that he refused democracy, moderation and popular participation in the decision making process.

In the light of these complexities, the Crown Prince played different roles but he always remained faithful to his father's approach. In the first stage of his reign his father used him to undermine his uncle, the Prime Minister, and entrusted him with managing the economic file, as well as using him during the months of February and March 2011 to absorb the anger of the protesters and explore their intentions, under the guise of dialogue.

Since the demolition of the Pearl Roundabout on 18 March 2011, the Crown Prince, has played a role described as the "Senior Director of the Public Relations" of the ruling family, and a strong defender of the dictatorship-based approach in a liberal way due to his failure during the past ten years to establish deep and broad relationships with the tribes and traders. He only has good relations with an isolated elite.

The displacement of Sheikh Khalifa, which is imminent either by a royal

6 For more details on the events of the fifties of the last century, see: Abdul Rahman Al Baker, *from Bahrain to exile*.

7 Shot and killed by shotgun in February 14, 2011, and is seen as the first victim of regime's violence in the last uprising.

8 It is not surprising that the workers in this hospital have been punished, because it has embraced the first political slogans against the king in this public manner.

process or by God's will, will continue to be a reminder that the political system in Bahrain is hard to reform, and that the Prime Minister is its cortex.

However, the King's goal of the declaration of the "reform project" as a ploy for re-concentrating power in his hand, away from the Prime Minister, and not for the creation of a popular partnership and a democratic life, has become clear. Given his strategy which harmed the historical experience of Bahrain in a way that no other Khalifi ruler did before, and after his failure to contain the movement of 14 February, the scenario of overthrowing King Hamad cannot be excluded. This is verified by the experience of history when the first Hamad⁽⁹⁾ (1872-1942) replaced his father Sheikh Isa bin Ali⁽¹⁰⁾ (1847-1932) in the twenties of the last century, by a British decision, after popular and bitter complaints of corruption and human rights violations, while the Saudi family -the main obstacle to a real change in Bahrain- isolated the second king of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Saud bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (1902-1969), in 1963.

9 Sheikh Hamad bin Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa ruled Bahrain between 1923 -1942.

10 Shaikh Isa bin Ali bin Khalifa bin Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh, the first ruler of the tribe of Al-Khalifa in Bahrain). He ruled Bahrain between 1869-1923.

Chapter 01

HYPOTHESIS: The King is the Cause of the Crisis

1. A study of the Motives calling for the Fall of the Monarchy

As the King seems to be at the center of the exclusionary policies, the most common and popular slogan has become: “Down with Hamad,” instead of “Step down Khalifa”.

In this chapter, I would like to answer a significant question: Why did large and varied elements of society mobilize and go out and protest in an unprecedented way on February 14, 2011, while the middle class, traders and the elite did not engage in a similar way in the events of the nineties (1994-1998), during which a demand was made to return to the constitution of 1973⁽¹⁾?

1 A constitution of the State of Bahrain was put by the “Constituent Assembly”, and issued by the late Amir Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and Bahrain has seen it as the compatible and committed Constitution.

I think the biggest catalyst for vast protests is related to the fundamental difference between the rule of the late Amir Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa⁽²⁾ (1933–1999), and his son the present King Hamad⁽³⁾.

The premise upon which this chapter is based is that the reign of King Hamad, who took power in March 1999, was based on the total exclusion of large and popular sectors, the opposition, parliament, the political societies, civil societies and labor unions, and the traditional/family/tribal and religious gatherings. These elements have reacted by seeking the exclusion of King Hamad and the Al-Khalifa family from the political scene. The popular will was reflected by the two main slogans:

The first slogan of the uprising: “Down with Hamad,” or “the people want to overthrow the regime”. The demand for a Republic raised by youth groups, and by what is known in Bahrain as the forces of “objection”, which include the non-licensed wings of the Alliance of the Republic: the Al Wafa movement chaired by of Abdul Wahab Hussein, the Haq movement led by Hassan Mushaima, and the London-based Bahrain Freedom Movement led by Saeed Al-Shehabi⁽⁴⁾, as well as the human rights activist Abdul Hadi Al Khawaja⁽⁵⁾.

2 The first governor of the State of Bahrain after its independence in August 15, 1971. He ruled the country between the years 1961–1999.

3 several reasons can be pointed out, related to the media and communications revolution, and the that the Bahrainis were inspired by the Arab Spring revolutions, in addition to the presence of the official opposition on the ground, and its deep experience with the regime. As well as the youth formation, that was surprising to everyone, and the women and the middle class exceptional role, and most importantly, the influential engagement of the technocrats who I call them “the mind of the revolution”. All of these and other inputs played a remarkable role in the uprising, while the violent security option imposed an expansion of the anti-regime positions.

4 Abdul Wahab Hussein, Mushaima and Al Khawaja are sentenced to life of imprisonment, while Al-Shihabi was sentenced in absentia to 15 years of imprisonment. They were arrested on March 17, 2011, for the charge of changing the regime; where Amnesty International considers them as prisoners of conscience.

5 Al Khawaja resigned from his position being in charge of the Middle East in “Frontline” human rights organization, to engage in the “Revolution” he was awaiting for many years.

The second slogan is the call for a constitutional monarchy, under which the Royal Institution turns to the margins of political action, and executive powers are withdrawn from the hand of the king. This demand is adopted by the licensed official opposition, especially the Al Wefaq National Islamic Society⁽⁶⁾, and its five partners: the National Democratic Action Society (WAAD), the Nationalist Democratic Assembly, the Unitary National Democratic Assembly, Al Ekha National Society, as well as the Democratic Progressive Tribune.

Both slogans reduce or eliminate the powers of the ruling family. This is the very essence of the movement's demand for change and democracy. The uprisings of the nineties called for politics to be modeled on the basis of the 1973 Constitution, which can be considered a replica of the Constitution of Kuwait (1962).

In the cases of Kuwait and Bahrain the Constitution gives extensive powers to the head of state (the Prince), who is "The head of the state, whose self shall not be touched" and "the prince could appoint by an Amiri Order, the Chairman of the traditional Consultative Board, and remove him from office"⁽⁷⁾, in contrast to legislative and regulatory powers of parliament⁽⁸⁾ that is able to paralyze the work of the government, even if it is not determining its starting course.

The events of the nineties came in response to what I call the marginalization (not exclusion) of the popular sectors and parties in the 70s, 80s and 90s. Perhaps that is why they called to break the monopoly of the ruling family on political decision making on the basis of a return to the Constitution of 1973, but the events of 2011 called for the an exclusion.

The difference may be noted between the political marginalization adopted by the Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa,

6 Al Wefaq Islamic National society was established in 2001, and is considered the mainstream for Shiite groups in Bahrain, and is led by Sheikh Ali Salman, who owes allegiance to Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassem, is sees him as the spiritual father for Al Wefaq.

7 To review the powers of the Amir of Bahrain, see Article (33) of the Constitution of 1973.

8 Consists of two thirds elected and one third appointed (the Minister).

who was the real ruler during the reign of his brother Sheikh Isa, and the policy of exclusion and “cleansing” followed by King Hamad, as outlined below.

a. The Constitution

The Constitution of 1973 was written by a half elected and half appointed team. It was perceived as an acceptable Constitution, still remaining positive to the late Amir and his brother Sheikh Khalifa. Unfortunately, the most important articles of the constitution were suspended, and parliament was dissolved in August 1975, after about a year and a half after its election. This practically ended the partnership in governance⁹. Yet, the brothers, Isa and Khalifa have “maintained” the Constitution of 1973, as the country’s ruling constitution, with laws issued in its name, and the country ran in accordance with its provisions.

Of course Sheikh Khalifa was not applying the Constitution, but he did not dare to overturn it. Even when the appointed Shura Council was formed in the mid-nineties of last century, in the wake of the war to liberate Kuwait from Saddam Hussein’s army, and in response to protests demanding the return of the lumpy Constitution, the legal outcomes were not to abolish the constitutional provisions that established the parliament with effective legislative and control powers. The Shura Council was established without constitutional provisions. The opposition’s response was that the government can form Shura councils or advisory bodies but they are not a substitute for an elected representative institution.

However, the constitutional changes made solely by King Hamad, when he issued the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain on 14 February 2002, without consulting the opposition and all political groups,

9 The immediate cause to solve the elected Council is the refusal of the latter the Law of the State Security, but it is believed that there are economic reasons as well, given the outbreak of the Lebanese war (April 1975), and the decision to transfer the financial sector from Beirut to Manama, that it is no coincidence that the parliament is dissolved (August 1975) after four months of the start of the outbreak of the war in Lebanon, and this means that the regional situation plays a role in the course of events, and the struggle for wealth is part of the intense rivalry between the leaders of the ruling family.

and without a referendum of the people, seriously undermined the political process. It certainly appeared that the king wanted a formula in which the people's opinion counted for nothing. The provisions of the Constitution of 2002, transformed the head of the state into an absolute ruler⁽¹⁰⁾.

There was a transition from the stage of marginalization that violated the written Constitution (1975-2001), to the stage of approved exclusion in the 2002 constitution!

The difference seems clear between an authority that violates the Constitution and does not apply its provisions making decisions by itself, as the Prime Minister did during the reign of his brother Isa, and a monopolistic authority in accordance with the constitution!

b. The Cabinet

The composition of government reflects, in general, the vision of the state's head of the government of the country and the balance of power. The Council of Ministers was not important in government in the period from 1975 to 1999, as the Prime Minister was the decision maker.

One third of the ministers were from the Al-Khalifa family, one-third were Sunnis, and one-third were Shiites⁽¹¹⁾. (See table: 1)

It is true that a quota system was in place but the quotas did not alter the equation of power which was monopolized by the ruling family. The quota system, as a political idea, is close to the democratic equation of democracy and is like voting.

Quotas, among other controls, may maintain the country's stability. There was a deviation from the quota system on the eve of the uprising of February 14, 2011: The Council of Ministers had 25 members: eight Sunnis, five Shiites and the rest from the Al-Khalifa family who filled

10 According to articles (33-43) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain for the year 2002, the King is the Supreme Commander of the Defense Force, and the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, and appoints the prime minister, ministers, and members of the Shura, and "his self shall not be touched".

11 This formulation was not maintained all the time, especially after 1995.

key government positions⁽¹²⁾.

This was an intelligent way of excluding the elite, the technocrats, the tribes, and powerful families and traders, who also engaged in the events of February 14, in favor of the desire to bring about real reforms within the ruling establishment, as long as they could not benefit from them.

Table (1): The cabinet when Prince Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, chaired the country March 1999

	Person	Position	Al Khalifa	Sunni	Shiite
1	Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa	Prime Minister	*		
2	Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs	*		
3	Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa	Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister	*		
4	Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa	Minister of the Interior	*		
5	Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa	Minister of Transport	*		
6	Jawad Salem Al Orayedh	Minister of State			*
7	Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa	Minister of Housing	*		
8	Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa	Minister of Defense	*		

12 According to a report issued by the Bahrain Center for Human Rights BCHR in 2003, under the title of: "Discrimination, the unwritten law", of 572 senior posts the Shiite citizens are running 18%, see page 10 of the report, and it can be said that this ratio has come down now to less than 10%.

9	Mohammed Ebrahim Al-Mutawa	Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Information		*	
10	Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa	Minister of Oil and Industry	*		
11	Ali Saleh Al Saleh	Minister of Commerce			*
12	Abdulla Juma'a	Minister of Electricity and Water		*	
13	Abdulaziz Mohammed Al Fadhel	Minister of Education		*	
14	Ebrahim Abdelkarim	Minister of Finance and National Economy		*	
15	Abdulnabi Abdulla Al Shoala	Minister of Labor and Social Affairs			*
16	Majed Jawad Al Jishi	Minister of Works and Agriculture			*
17	Faisal Radhi Al Mosawi	Minister of Health			*
Total			8	4	5

Table (2): The cabinet on the eve of February 14, 2011⁽²⁴⁾

	Person	Position	Al Khalifa	Sunni	Shiite
1	Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa	Prime Minister	*		
2	Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa	Deputy Prime Minister	*		

3	Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa	Deputy Prime Minister	*		
4	Jawad bin Salem Al Orayedh	Deputy Prime Minister			*
5	Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa	Deputy Prime Minister	*		
6	Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al-Mutawa	Minister of State for Follow Up Affairs		*	
7	Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa	Minister of State for Defense	*		
8	Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Al Fadhel	Minister of Shura and Representatives Affairs		*	
9	Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa	Minister of the Interior	*		
10	Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa	Minister of Foreign Affairs	*		
11	Hassan bin Abdullah Fakhro	Minister of Industry and Commerce		*	
12	Fahmi bin Ali Al Jowder	Minister of Electricity and Water Affairs		*	
13	Ibrahim bin Khalifa Al Khalifa	Minister of Housing	*		

14	Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa	Minister of Finance	*		
15	Majed bin Ali Al-Naimi	Minister of Education		*	
16	Majid bin Mohsin Al Alawi	Minister of Labor			*
17	Abdulhussain bin Ali Mirza	Minister of Oil and Gas Affairs			*
18	Fatima Mohammad Al Balooshi Minister of Social Development			*	
19	Ahmed bin Attiallah Al Khalifa	Minister for Cabinet Affairs	*		
20	Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa	Minister of Justice, Islamic and Endowments Affairs	*		
21	Nizar bin Sadiq Al Baharna	Minister of State for Foreign Affairs			*
22	May Mohammed Al Khalifa	Minister of Culture	*		
23	Faisal Yaqoob Al Hamar	Minister of Health		*	
24	Juma'a Bin Ahmed Al Kaabi	Minister of Municipal and Urban Planning Affairs		*	
25	Essam Abdullah bin Khalaf	Minister of Works			*
Total			12	8	5

c. The “Cleansing”

The “Bandar report” prepared by the former adviser for strategic affairs at the Royal Court the British-Sudanese Dr. Salah Al Bandar, did not leave space for doubt about the exclusionary “strategies” of King Hamad of large segments of the population who were deprived of self-realization, based on considerations of opinion and religious differences.

We received a copy of the report about six weeks prior to the expulsion of the adviser Salah Al Bandar from Bahrain. It was a very scary moment. The inability of the political forces to distribute that serious report was quickly clear, at the moment preceding the parliamentary elections in 2006⁽¹³⁾. Therefore, the writer decided, as a journalist, to leak the report to an entity to ensure it was widely distributed. That was history being made so I will comment on the report with reference to my meetings with its writer at his residence in Bahrain during the summer of 2006⁽¹⁴⁾.

The “Bandar report” was written after studying the Shiite experience in Bahrain. It concluded that the current strength of the opposition, and its backbone Al Wefaq and the Shiite public, can be attributed to:

1. A powerful religious authority (Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassem), in contrast to the dispersion of the Sunni religious leaders, who are pro-government.
2. A semi-total control by the opposition of the institutions of civil society (human rights associations, trade unions, lawyers and doctors associations, etc...), and thousands of religious institutions (mosques, and Matams). This made it easier for the opposition to mobilize citizens against the authorities.
3. The influence of Shiite citizenship (automatically seen by the government as opposition) in some vital sectors in the country, such as health, the media and small and medium enterprises.

13 The political opposition forces thought that raising the issue may lead to damage to the electoral process, which was the opposition societies' brigade then. And perhaps some of the parties believed that leaking the report was an official conspiracy.

14 Al Bandar had predicted action would be taken against him, therefore forwarded his report to a number of foreign embassies.

- I. Existence of a social safety network, founded on active charitable funds in every Shiite village which were considered a danger because in addition to their welfare role they:
- II. Help students complete their undergraduate and graduate studies, which is seen as an “ambitious” program for the formation of a Shiite elite (i.e. opposition).
- III. Organize collective weddings for young people who get married late due to financial constrain. This leads to an increase in the number of Shiite citizens (opponents from the regime's perspective).
- IV. Control by many Shiite commercial dealers of the grocery market which is viewed as an impending danger by the regime as it strengthens Shiite traders and individuals from whom Sunni loyalists are forced to buy.

I can enumerate other plausible points. The Hamad strategy, as exposed by the Bandar report, was to regard every normal act of development of the Shiite community, as an attempt to strengthen the opposition.

This included the setting up of kindergartens, universities, hospitals, medical clinics, a newspaper, or a large or small investment business. Therefore, the regime felt it had to oppose these development activities following a policy of “drying up the water springs”, “shrinking resources” and “reducing opportunities.”

This jaundiced view of community activities led to a hidden war initiated by the authorities led by Sheikh Ahmed Attiallah Al Khalifa⁽¹⁵⁾, to stop

15 Appointed in April 2011 as an Advisor to follow-up Affairs in Royal Court, “and is responsible to follow up the implementation of the royal instructions and directives, as stated in the decree of his appointment (see: Al Wasat, April 8, 2011). He was the minister for the Council of Ministers since 2005, was dismissed from the cabinet on 26 February 2011, after about ten days from the start of the uprising in February 14 (2011), in a shy attempt to calm down the situation, as being one of the “aggravation” ministers in the opposition eyes. He was the managing director of “Al Bandar report”. Re-appointing to be the consultant of the Royal Court after the demolition of the pearl Roundabout, reflected the official’s opposite course of militancy in dealing with the protest movement.

the perceived “Shiite expansion.”

This necessitated the monitoring of normal social activities and re-classifying them as acts which damage the security and safety of the state. The response to the Bandar report was an action plan which called for:

1. Containing the growing “advancement of the Shiite” (opposition) within a broader policy to crack down on freedom, contain Parliament, penetrate the institutions of active civil society, and reduce job opportunities, promotion and commercial activities of the Shiite citizens (automatically perceived as opponents by the regime).
2. Working on the advancement of the Sunni sectors of society which are perceived as pro-regime through imitating some of the Shiite activities and structures, by adopting certain measures including:
 1. Working on the formation of a pro-Sunni religious authority in opposition to the Shiite religious reference. The “Al Bandar report” suggests the name of Dr. Abdullatif Al Mahmood to lead this authority. In order to make this happen a controversy has been created about the division of the Sunni groups, and the necessity for creating a solitary authority⁽¹⁶⁾.
 2. Establishing of government-funded NGOs and civil societies, such as the “the Bahraini Jurists Society” and “Bahrain Human Rights Watch Society,” while efforts continued to contain the active independent associations and adopt measures against them. These included dissolution of the Teachers Society, doctors and lawyers associations, and the Bahrain Society for Human Rights as well as impeding the activities of charitable funds, and issuing laws for the division of labour unions. The government was correct in assuming they would be supportive of any democratic movements, as the uprising of February 14 (2011) revealed.

¹⁶ Ghassan Al-Shihabi, *the legality of the demand of a Sunni religious reference*, Al Waqt newspaper, September 24, 2006.

3. Encouraging the voices of the loyal groups⁽¹⁷⁾: Establishing the pro-Al-Watan newspaper (in opposition to Al Wasat Independent newspaper), setting up electronic forums (such as the pro-Bahrain Forum⁽¹⁸⁾ in opposition to Bahrain online⁽¹⁹⁾), in order to spread sectarianism, and encourage loyal groups to express their views. The main difference between Al Wasat and Al Watan newspapers for example, is that the first was founded due to the initiative of Sunni and Shiite investors and politicians, in 2002, and the second was launched and adopted, in 2005, by the Royal Court, which funds and runs it, through Sheikh Ahmed Attiallah Al Khalifa. This also applies to electronic forums and civil society organisations.
4. Increasing scholarships for Sunnis who are seen as pro-government by the Defense, Interior and Service ministries, in addition to the Ministry of Education⁽²⁰⁾.
5. Supporting collective marriages for pro-regime Sunnis in imitation of Shiite practices adopted for economic reasons.
6. Increasing the number of pro-regime Sunnis in the civil service, corporations, trade and economic sectors.

The Al Bandar report documented the frantic quest of the Royal Court to control the public space, over and above the control of the executive, judicial and legislative powers, as was prevalent during the reign of Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman.

The report also documented the official “plan” to contain Shiite activity which the regime viewed as opposition to its rule.

Among the documents published by the “Al Bandar report”, was a study by the Iraqi researcher and former professor at the University of Bahrain Dr. Nizar al-Ani who was commissioned by the Royal Court.

17 Such as Sheikh Mohammed Khalid, and MP Jassim Al Saeedi.

18 <https://bahrainforums.com>

19 <http://bahrainonline.org>

20 On the issues of discrimination in scholarships, see for example: Al Wasat newspaper, June 12, 2008.

Al-Ani made the following recommendations⁽²¹⁾:

1. "Favour the influential religious leaders among the Sunnis and give them weight in decision-making.
2. "Seek to control the functions of the police, military, and the National Guard, with strong support by the Royal Court due to the plan's strategic role.
3. "Establish a special center to study and monitor the activities carried out by the Shiites".
4. "Alter the demographic balance of the Shiites so that they will not increase to more than 20 - 30% of the population and submerge them in a "Sunni sea."
5. "Empower Arab Sunnis, through increasing their share of senior positions as well as improving their economic status in order to encourage them to increase in numbers and not to migrate to neighboring countries."
6. "The Royal Court should support the Sunnis so the demographic balance is altered in their favour.
7. "Re-write the history of Bahrain and highlight the political, cultural and religious role of Sunni leaders, scientists and thinkers".
8. "Reward and offer incentives to those who have switched from the Shiite sect, and take advantage of information they may be willing to provide.

During the seventies, eighties and nineties the citizens did not feel that their current position or future was threatened. Their revolt was therefore limited to demanding the restoration of the constitution of 1973, which allowed the Al-Khalifa family to remain as the rulers.

But during the reign of King Hamad they became terrified that this strategy did not envisage a better future for them or their children. Hence the slogan: "The people want to overthrow the regime", which was not previously demanded.

21 *Bahrain Center for Human Rights, a summary of recommendations of the secret study prepared by Dr. Ani and implemented by the Bahraini authority in order to exclude the Shiite sect* <http://www.bahrainrights.org/node/652>

d. Naturalization:

The naturalization of Pakistanis, Jordanians, Syrians, Yemenis, and Sudanese to work in the military sector, is a not new policy. It was vigorously pursued during the reign of Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman and his brother, Sheikh Isa.

Nevertheless, King Hamad considered the demographic change as part of the priorities of his “strategy”, which classifies the Shiite citizens as “a strategic threat” to the regime, that should be eliminated from the civilian and military institutions. He put the theory of “drying up the water springs,” into practice through neglect, impoverishment and the withdrawal of influential positions.

According to available figures about 80 thousand people were naturalized⁽²²⁾. The feelings of a citizen can never be described when a foreigner is favored when it comes to services, housing, and employment in the military and non-military sector. Second generation naturalized citizens are also favoured over the indigenous inhabitants.

With the entry of the “global war” pillars against the citizens, the popular feelings of exclusion reached an unprecedented level and produced an extraordinary uprising against the “Hamad Strategy”. The people crossed red lines in calling for the ousting of the regime.

While the King seems to be at the center of this unwise policy, the most widely used popular slogan has become: “Down with Hamad,” instead of “Step down Khalifa” which is favored by official political opposition groups. And there is a difference between the opposition discourses in the nineties of last century, which did not direct any criticism at the head of state, Emir Isa bin Salman. Most of the time the criticism focused on the prime minister. Even though the opposition tried not to criticize King Hamad⁽²³⁾, the feeling is growing day by day that he is responsible for the crisis.

22 Naturalization threatening Bahrain, *Al-Akhbar Lebanese newspaper*, January 14 2010.

23 Usually Al Wefaq leader, Sheikh Ali Salman asks the public not to raise the slogan of “Down with Hamad”, Ayatollah Isa Qassem also called in April 2011 not to raise the slogan of overthrowing as well.

This increases the challenges faced by the country and it limits the ability of the Al Khalifa family, the region and the West to respond to the legitimate aspirations of those seeking change. The king himself could solve the crisis which he caused.

This problem is not facing King Abdullah II and the movement in Jordan, King Mohammed VI in Morocco, or Emir Sabah Al-Ahmed in Kuwait. Slogans have not been directed at the heads of the state in those countries but they are directed directly at King Hamad and he needs to ask himself why this is the case.

In 2002, when the opposition National Movement rejected the new constitution, many thought that the controversial constitutional document could be imposed by security, political, regional, and international force. This was also the sentiment of the opposition forces. It was very strong when Al Wefaq and National Democratic Action Society (WAAD)⁽²⁴⁾-oppositionist societies participated in the parliamentary elections in 2006.

In 2002 the balance of power shifted to the disadvantage of the opposition, especially if it wanted to wage open battles. It had just emerged exhausted from a political conflict which lasted 30 years⁽²⁵⁾ and intensified in 1995 and beyond when the political and security situation worsened with the launch of a popular uprising, demanding the reinstatement of the Constitution of 1973.

Taking into account the mood of the people, the state celebrated the coming of a new king who pledged that “the most beautiful days, are those that we did not live yet”. The national powers thought they were

24 *The National Democratic Action Society (National Democratic Action Society (WAAD)) was founded in 2001, as the first recognized political organization in Bahrain and the Gulf, chaired by the late Abdul Rahman Al-Naimi, the historical leader of the Popular Front, which National Democratic Action Society (WAAD) inherited. National Democratic Action Society (WAAD)'s Secretary General Ebrahim Sharif is imprisoned since March 17, 2011.*

25 *And possibly more, if we take into account that the country is in crisis since the twenties of the last century at least, and may be the period of the Constituent Assembly election (1972) and later the dissolved National Assembly in 1975, is one of the relatively calm periods, which has lasted only for three years, and the arrests against opponents continued.*

being given a new opportunity after the unexpected blow in 2002 when one party issued the constitution. The opposition participated in the elections of 2006, and 2010, only to discover that the parliamentary system and the project itself was sterile.

The participation in parliament highlighted the nature of the problem: the constitution was not popularly adopted and was unable to develop political life. After ten years of actual work based on the constitution and after two parliamentary experiences (2002-2010), and the third (2010-2011), the Constitution of 2002 failed. The ten years spent marketing a reform political project also amounted to nothing. The historical settlement of 2001 may also have been a failure.

No one disputed the eligibility of the Al Khalifa family to rule, until the 1973 Constitution was formally dropped. King Hamad issued a new constitution unilaterally destroying all precedents and historical understandings between the Al Khalifa family and the people and between the king personally and the national movement who signed the 2001 Charter. This project of Prince Hamad was widely supported and the national movement expressed great confidence in his declared and undeclared promises, even before they were submitted to the text of the controversial Charter.

Moreover, the national movement has paid a big price because of the problems associated with returning to the 1973 constitution. King Hamad paid an even bigger price as there is now a lack of confidence in his program. It became clear that King Hamad through the two legislative councils (the appointed Shura and elected Representatives), and dual-elected municipal councils and the assigned provinces was not actually aiming to provide a balance to ensure the continuity of the democratic experiment; rather he wanted to impose a liberal monopoly of power, or what is sometimes referred to in contemporary literature as "the Liberal Dictatorship."

Therefore, the opposition and its audience are frustrated and dissatisfied with the current king⁽³⁹⁾, who has dealt a severe blow to his credibility especially when the army which he leads targeted the protesting citizens at Pearl Roundabout on the morning of February 17, 2011, under his direct orders. Before and after the bloody scene in Pearl Roundabout the king visited the headquarters of the military command.

He did not take any action to deter the military but emphasized the role of the regime's armed forces in protecting security.

In my estimation, the human rights violations after the imposition of the state of emergency in mid-March 2011, showed that the "Hamad strategy" endorses the security solution if the political option is unable to rein in the ambitions of the opposition to run the country.

The Constitution of the State of Kuwait (1962) provided great protection to the ruling Sabah family during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and also during the Arab Spring revolutions. When voices appear to be calling for a constitutional monarchy in Kuwait to remove the Sabah family from the political scene, the voices of the main opposition adhered to the Constitution of 1962, which gives broad powers to the head of state. This was also the case in the 1973 constitution of Bahrain.

The 1973 Bahraini Constitution does not exist, thanks to King Hamad, who chose to remove the popular legitimacy from the Constitution, and select a "strategy" depending on the balance of powers, which is necessarily subject to change. To the Al Khalifa family the following statement is sacrosanct: "Access to the islands of Bahrain was accomplished by the sword ". The Al Khalifas were not welcomed with flowers.

King Hamad made a strategic mistake in missing an exceptional opportunity to issue a compatible constitution, which granted the family an honorable position, and the people sovereign decision-making powers. It is not guaranteed that the balance of power will always favor the Al Khalifa family, as the consensual Constitution guarantees a political life with known inputs and outputs. If the regime chooses to rely on military force and regional support, it exempts the popular majority from any obligations towards it.

Chapter 02

The Prime Minister... The Cortex of Dictatorship

2. The king Stifles the Prime Minister in his “Constitutional” Den

After January 2005, the question whether the Minister was on one side or the other was no longer asked, as everyone had to implement the instructions issued by the Minister of the Royal Court or face dismissal and risk making the sultan angry.

This chapter will focus on the “quiet” and perhaps “slow”, yet, successive and intensive steps of King Hamad to stifle the Prime Minister in his “constitutional” den^[1] (Council of Ministers), through the appointment of persons loyal to the Royal Palace as council members. This happened

1 I say constitutional, given that the Council of Ministers is a constitutional body logically was not solved for example, and this is well understood by the Prime Minister.

in successive steps which were completed in 2005.

Prior to that, I would point out that King Hamad has taken a number of important decisions, in order to control the provisions of the decision making process, including:

First: the announcement of the reform project, particularly the National Action Charter, which earned him:

1. Massive popular support (98.4%), aimed at winning over:
 - . The wing of the prime minister from inside and outside the ruling family, to advance his "strategy", of monopoly which became evident over time.
 - . The wing of the opposition, which appeared confused in front of the king presenting himself as a reformer, through positive projects, while pursuing a controversial policy in 2002. The King used the void, confusion, hesitation, and bewilderment that characterized the performance of the opposition, to his Bandari faith/ideology and strategy (relative to Al Bandar report).

However, it has become clear, even since 2002, and the texts of the Kingdom's new Constitution, that the goal of "the reform project" was not the establishment of democratic life, but inter family rivalry clinched by the King in his personal favor, sometimes by getting rid of opponents outright and sometimes by phasing them out in stages. In all cases that hostility was redirected towards the king by the opposition, and some parties within the ruling family.

2. The King made unprecedented global publicity regarding the situation in Bahrain which has been plagued by instability for a long time. Due to its fragile domestic legitimacy the royal family sees itself in need of regional support and the support of the international community. The international community may not have been convinced about the dictatorship in Bahrain until after the political outcry of February 14th, 2011.

Second: The Objectives of the Constitutional Changes

The King made constitutional changes (2002) to:

1. Install him as an absolute ruler, in contrast to the opposition, the political forces and other parties in the ruling family..

2. Depriving the constitutional powers of the Council of Ministers' (Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman's clique).

Third: Restructuring the mechanism of decision-making

1. Transferring the political and constitutional affairs to the palace.
2. Transferring the economic affairs to the Economic Development Board⁽²⁾.
3. Tightening the king's fist on the Council of Ministers, through the replacement of members of the Council, in stages, with figures loyal to the royal palace rather than to the Prime Minister.

Changes in the Council of Ministers: The Beginning of Courtesy⁽³⁾

The King has worked hard at the beginning of his reign to talk positively about his uncle, the Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa. He was always acknowledging him, in his public speeches, as his late father (Isa bin Salman), glorifying him and extensively commending his efforts, using the words "our dear uncle". With the passage of time

, this form of praise ceased almost completely and the King imitated the style of the Egyptian President Anwar Al Sadat. During his first term in office Sadat glorified his predecessor, Jamal Abdel Nasser echoing the commitment to his approach. Once his position became secure he adopted a hostile stance towards his predecessor.

Despite the tyranny of Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman on the political scene for three decades (the 70s, 80s and 90s), the succession of

2 See, item number 3, *The King and the Prime Minister, the Public Clash*, in this book.

3 This chapter does not discuss ministerial changes to the point of efficiency, or sectarian dimension, and these problems are present. But the chapter discusses the formation of Ministers taking sides of either the Prime Minister or the King.

Prince⁽⁴⁾ Hamad was very smooth after the death of his father Sheikh Isa. Under the leadership of Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman himself, is a proud person to maintain the “traditions” of the tribes and their habits in the inheritance of reign.

In contrast to the shock tactics used to paralyze the opposition (2001), the King chose the style of courtesy, reverence and the policy of containment with regard to the Prime Minister, in order to marginalize him in a more quiet way than that of President Al Sadat in dealing with the “power centers”.

While Al Sadat resolved the battle after nearly two years of his reign in the wake of Abdel Nasser’s death, the Bahraini King gave himself until 2005, to get a grip on the Cabinet, but before that, he deprived the Council of Ministers of its powers and strength.

The Cabinet at the Time when the King Came to Rule

The King ruled on 6 March 1999, and the executive authority/ Government/Council of Ministers was composed of 17 members/ ministers (including the Prime Minister). With the exception of the Minister of Defense Marshal Khalifa bin Ahmed, the other 15 members from the Al Khalifa family were:

- Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs.
- Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior.
- Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Minister of Transport.
- Jawad Salem Al Orayedh, Minister of state.
- Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Minister of Housing.
- Mohammed Ebrahim Al Mutawa, Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Minister of Information.

4 Sheikh Hamad declared himself as a king in February 14, 2002, and gave himself the title of “His Greatness”, but the media pressure made it replaces it with “His Majesty”.

- Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa, Minister of Oil and Industry.
- Ali Saleh Al Saleh, Minister of Commerce.
- Abdullah Juma'a, Minister of Electricity and Water.
- Abdulaziz Mohammed Al Fadhel, Minister of Education.
- Ebrahim Abdelkarim, Minister of Finance and National Economy
- Abdulnabi Abdulla Al Shoala, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs.
- Majed Jawad Al Jishi, Minister of Works and Agriculture.
- Faisal Radhi Al Mosawi, Minister of Health.

The First Ministerial Change: “A Pulse Check”

The King procrastinated until May 1999, and made a very limited cabinet reshuffle, through the appointment of three new ministers. Only one, the Minister of Electricity and Water the late Duaij bin Khalifa Al Khalifa was affiliated to the king. He succeeded Abdullah Juma'a, who was accused of major corruption in establishing Al Hid station. (See Table No. 3 below)

The other two new ministers affiliated with the Prime Minister were Abdullah Saif, who headed the finance and the national economy ministry, and Ali Al Mahroos, who was appointed as Minister of Works and Agriculture. He was quickly ousted due to allegations of corruption.

This pulse check was a sign that Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman was still exerting his influence, but it is also true that the King had chosen to keep up with him.

During the first cabinet reshuffle, two persons were affiliated to the king in the government: the Minister of Defense Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, and the Minister of Electricity and Water Duaij bin Khalifa Al Khalifa. Sixteen ministers were affiliated to the Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa.

Table (3): The Ministerial Cabinet after the First Change conducted by the (Prince) Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, in May 1999

	Person	Position	Affiliated with the King	Affiliated with the Prime Minister	Affiliated with the Crown Prince
1	Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa	Prime Minister			
2	Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs		*	
3	Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa	Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister		*	
4	Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa	Minister of the Interior		*	
5	Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa	Minister of Transport		*	
6	Jawad Salem Al Orayedh	Minister of State		*	
7	Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa	Minister of Housing		*	
8	Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa	Minister of Defense	*		

9	Mohammed Ebrahim Al-Mutawa	Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Information		*	
10	Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa	Minister of Oil and Industry		*	
11	Ali Saleh Al Saleh	Minister of Commerce			
12	Duaij bin Khalifa Al Khalifa	Minister of Electricity and Water	*		
13	Abdullah Hasan Saif	Minister of Finance and National Economy		*	
14	Abdulnabi Abdulla Al Shoala	Minister of Labor and Social Affairs		*	
15	Ali Al Mahroos	Minister of Works		*	
16	Abdulaziz Mohammed Al Fadhel	Minister of Education		*	
17	Faisal Radhi Al Mosawi	Minister of Health		*	
Total			2	15	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of ministers affiliated to the King: 2Number of ministers affiliated to the Prime Minister: 15Number of ministers affiliated to the Crown Prince: 0					

The Second Ministerial Change: An Increase in the Share of the King's Affiliates without Decreasing the Share of the Prime Minister

(Prince) Hamad bin Isa conducted a second ministerial change in April 2001, which seemed timid. It directed the King towards increasing his affiliates in the Council of Ministers, without decreasing the number of ministers affiliated to the Prime Minister.

The most significant observations on this change:

1. The Prime Minister kept the 15 ministers affiliated to him, namely:
 - Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
 - Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa – Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister
 - Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa – Minister of the Interior
 - Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa – Minister of Transport (the eldest son of the prime Minister)
 - Jawad Salem Al Orayedh – Minister of State of Municipalities and Environmental Affairs
 - Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa – Minister of Housing
 - Mohammed Ebrahim Al-Mutawa – Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Information
 - Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa – Minister of Oil
 - Ali Saleh Al Saleh – Minister of Commerce
 - Abdulaziz Mohammed Al Fadhel – Minister of Shura and Representatives Affairs
 - Abdullah Hasan Saif – Minister of Finance and National Economy
 - Abdulnabi Abdulla Al Shoala – Minister of Labor and Social Affairs

- Mohamed Jassim Al Ghatam – Minister of Education
 - Faisal Radhi Al Mosawi – Minister of Health
 - Mohamed Hasan Kamalladin – Minister of State
2. The King increased the number of ministers affiliated to him, namely:
 - Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister of Defense.
 - Duaij bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Minister of Electricity and Water.
 - Nabil Yaqoob Al Hamar, Minister of Information.
 - Mohamed Abdul Ghaffar Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.
 3. The Information Ministry was withdrawn from Mohammad Al Mutawa; instead Nabil Al Hamar the media advisor of the king was commissioned. Al Mutawa is described as the “strong man”, and the right arm of the Prime Minister, especially during the nineties uprising (1994–1999), where decisions were made by the Prime Minister and his assistants.

Perhaps Mohammed Al Mutawa had to pay the price of his close contact with the Prime Minister reducing his powers before anyone else. That has been a bigger pulse check, and perhaps a more visible challenge to the Prime Minister.

However, Al Mutawa has retained his position as Minister for Cabinet Affairs, which gives Sheikh Khalifa reassurance that the goal, as far as possible, is power-sharing.

4. Mohamed Abdul Ghaffar was appointed a Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, in an attempt by the King perhaps to intervene in foreign policy, which was long dominated by the “old” man Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, who later became “a solver of all problems”, and all important committees are referred to him. This may have constituted a rapprochement between the conservative ruling poles, Mohammed bin Mubarak to be a substitute for the Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa. Bin Mubarak

would be willing to take up that position if it was offered to him.

5. Ali Fahmi Al Jowder entered the ministry for the first time as Minister of Works; a figure affiliated with the Crown Prince Sheikh Salman, who at that time was a model of efficiency and an example of the new blood, which heralded the new era, without necessarily forsaking discriminatory tendencies.

The Third Ministerial Change: Enhancing the Presence of the King

The King chose to increase the number of supporters expressing his aspirations through the cabinet change, after the holding of the parliamentary elections in 2002. His share increased to ten ministers, and the Prime Minister's share decreased to 13. The Crown Prince retained one minister affiliated to him.

But the king also reduced the powers of the ministers affiliated to the Prime Minister. He:

Withdrew the Ministry of Justice from the old man Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa, and assigned it to another old man Jawad Salem Al Orayedh.

Removed the businessman Abdalnabi AlSho'alah from his post as Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, and assigned it to the former oppositionist Dr. Majeed Al Alawi, who entered the ministry for the first time.

Withdrew the Ministry of Industry from Sheikh Isa bin Ali AlKhalifa, and assigned it to Dr. Hasan Fakhro, who was affiliated to the reformers and has close contacts with the king and his advisor for economic affairs⁽⁵⁾. But Isa bin Ali retained the Ministry of Oil, and was the Minister of Oil and Industry. But, perhaps the most important point in this change was the removal of the powerful person Khalid bin Abdullah from his post as Minister of Housing, forcing him into virtual retirement.

5 Perhaps assigning Fakhro as a Minister also aims to keep him out of the palace, a policy followed by the Minister of the Royal Court Khalid bin Ahmed for the persons close to the King, as happened with the former Minister Mansoor bin Rajab.

He was appointed Minister of the Court of Sheikh Khalifa due to the prime minister's intercession. It is interesting that the young Fahmi Al Jowder was assigned Ministry of Housing, who was given a cabinet post nearly a year and a half ago.

The number of ministers increased with lack of controls determining the number, under the absolute power of the king in the formation of the ministry. (See Table No. 4)

Table (4): The Cabinet after the Third Ministerial Change conducted by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, on November 11, 2002

	Person	Position	Affiliated with the King	Affiliated with the Prime Minister	Affiliated with the Crown Prince
1	Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa	Prime Minister			
2	Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs		*	
3	Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa	Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister		*	
4	Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa	Minister of the Interior		*	
5	Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa	Minister of Transport		*	
6	Jawad Salem Al Orayedh	Minister of Justice		*	

7	Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa	Minister of the Court of Prime Minister		*	
8	Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa	Minister of Defense	*		
9	Mohammed Ebrahim Al-Mutawa	Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Information		*	
10	Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa	Minister of Oil		*	
11	Ali Saleh Al Saleh	Minister of Commerce		*	
12	Duaij bin Khalifa Al Khalifa	Minister of Electricity and Water	*		
13	Abdulaziz Mohammed Al Fadhel	Minister of Shura and Representative Affairs		*	
14	Abdullah Hasan Saif	Minister of Finance and National Economy		*	
15	Abdelnabi Abdullah Al Shoala	Minister of State		*	
16	Nabil Yaqoob Al Hamar	Minister of Information	*		
17	Fahmi Ali Al Jowder	Minister of Works and Housing			*

18	Mohamed Abdel Ghaffar Abdullah	Minister of State for Foreign Affairs	*		
19	Majed Al Naimi	Minister of Education	*		
20	Khalil Hasan	Minister of Health	*		
21	Hasan Fakhro	Minister of Industry	*		
22	Mohamed Ali Al Shaikh Mansoor Al Sitri	Minister of Municipalities and Agriculture	*		
23	Majid Al Alawi	Minister of Labor and Social Affairs	*		
24	Abdulhussain Ali Mirza	Minister of State	*		
Total			10	12	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of Ministers affiliated to the King: 10Number of Ministers affiliated to the Prime Minister: 12Number of Ministers affiliated to the Crown Prince: 1					

The Control of Interior Ministry

On 22 May 2004, a popular massive rally was held in Manama led by Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim denouncing the bombings that targeted Shiite shrines in Iraq. The public was disgusted that the security forces targeted the licensed march using tear gas and shotguns^[6].

It is interesting and surprising that on the same day King Hamad issued

6 Al Wasat newspaper, May 23, 2004.

a decree appointing Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Minister of the Interior, in place of his predecessor, Khalifa bin Mohammed Al Khalifa.

Much can be said about this but in this chapter it is important to note the displacement of the Minister of the Interior affiliated to the Prime Minister with another affiliated to the king in a manner showing the King as a reformer who stands against the use of violence against protesters. The Prime Minister's wing was portrayed as targeting defenseless people simply for expressing their opinion.

And it is even more exciting as the minister, Khalifa bin Mohammed was part of the main crew –led by Sheikh Khalifa– in the suppression of the nineties protests, who in the eyes of the opposition is accused of human rights violations, and is a hero in the eyes of the royal family. Nevertheless, that did not deter the King from overthrowing him in an “offensive” way, as long as he severed his control over the security forces. Khalifa bin Mohamed was believed to be loyal to the Prime Minister until he lost control due to the advent of the Chief of Staff Defense Force (since 2001) Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Minister of the Interior.

The Fourth Ministerial Change: The King Pounces

The ministerial change on January 14, 2005 can be described as the moment of the King's attack on the Prime Minister, not only in terms of increasing his share to 12 ministers in contrast to 7 affiliated with the Prime Minister (see Table No. 5), but also in terms of the faces emerging from the ministry, who are the fundamental pillars of Sheikh Khalifa's approach.

This time the king took the decision to remove the four characters seen as the striking arms of the Prime Minister:

The removal of Mohamed Al Mutawa from his post as Minister of Cabinet Affairs, and his replacement by Abdul Hussain Mirza, who is a calm and professional person affiliated to the King. This has very significant implications and shows that the king can appoint and dismiss whoever he wants. It also meant that appointing Mirza as Minister of the Cabinet Affairs was the realization that his agenda is now under the eyes and control of the palace. Without a doubt, the appointment of Sheikh Ahmed Attiallah to this post later (September 2005), meant more than

just the appointment of a “professional” person like Mirza, taking into account the important position occupied by Attiallah (the nephew of the Minister of the Royal Court) in making and implementing royal decisions.

The removal of the second important person in the eyes of Sheikh Khalifa, the Minister of Finance and National Economy, Abdullah Hassan Saif, and appointing in his place, Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, who is affiliated to the Crown Prince, assigning to him the Ministry of Finance only. This is supposed to mean that the responsibility for formulating the policy on the national economy had been confirmed to be transmitted to the Economic Development Board, chaired by the Crown Prince.

The removal of Jawad Al Orayedh who has close contact with the Prime Minister from the cabinet.

The removal of the minister Abdulnabi Al Shoala, in a rebuking way. The Bahrain News Agency pointed out his exemption⁽⁷⁾, despite a statement released two days later denying the issue of exemption and paid tribute to the man for what he has achieved on national levels⁽⁸⁾. Interestingly, Mohammed Al Mutawa, Abdullah Saif and Jawad Al Orayedh were appointed as the Prime Minister’s advisors, but not Al Shoala. It is not known whether this reflects royal resentment, given that appointments to the status of minister must be issued by the king.

A remarkable reduction in the powers of the minister Dr. Majeed Al Alawi. After he was the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, he became the Minister of Labour only, while the Social Affairs Ministry was assigned to Dr. Fatima Al Balooshi affiliated to the militants in the Royal Court. Preferably, this is to be discussed in another context rather than the conflict between the king and prime minister to control the composition of the government.

We can talk in another context about other issues related to increasing the number of ministers from the ruling family, reducing the presence of the Shiite ministers, and the lack of efficiency in appointments.

7 See Bahrain News Agency link: <http://www.bna.bh/portal/news/43631>

8 Al Wasat newspaper, January 17, 2005.

Table (5): The Cabinet after the Fourth Ministerial Change conducted by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, in January 2004

	Person	Position	Affiliated with the King	Affiliated with the Prime Minister	Affiliated with the Crown Prince
1	Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa	Prime Minister			
2	Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs		*	
3	Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa	Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister		*	
4	Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa	Minister of the Interior	*		
5	Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa	Minister of Transport		*	
6	Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa	Minister of the Court of the Prime Minister		*	
7	Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa	Minister of Defense	*		
8	Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa	Minister of Oil		*	

9	Ali Saleh Al Saleh	Minister of Municipalities and Agriculture		*	
10	Abdullah bin Salman Al Khalifa	Minister of Electricity and Water	*		
11	Abdulaziz Mohammed Al Fadhel	Minister of Shura and Representative Affairs		*	
12	Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalifa	Minister of Finance and National Economy			*
13	Fatima Al Balooshi	Minister of Social Affairs	*		
14	Fahmi Ali Al Jowder	Minister of Works and Housing			*
15	Mohamed Abdel Ghaffar Abdullah	Minister of Information and Minister of state for Foreign Affairs	*		
16	Majed Al Naimi	Minister of Education	*		
17	Nada Haffadh	Minister of Health	*		
18	Hasan Fakhro	Minister of Industry and Commerce	*		

19	Mohamed Ali Al Shaikh Mansoor Al Sitri	Minister of Justice	*		
20	Majid Al Alawi	Minister of Labor	*		
21	Abdulahussain Ali Mirza	Minister of Cabinet Affairs	*		
Total			11	6	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of ministers affiliated to the King: 11Number of ministers affiliated to the Prime Minister: 6Number of ministers affiliated to the Crown Prince: 2					

The bottom line is that the King publicly started a battle against the prime minister, who gave up in the face of the storm. Yet, he did not resign as the Egyptian centers of power did during the period of Al Sadat, and he also did not accept any alternative position even if the Viceroy who was not mentioned in the Constitution, was seen as a consultant.

The continuous cabinet change dictated the presence of ministers, who were affiliated with the king, while the ministers affiliated with the Prime Minister have become aware of the balance of power, and the Prime Minister himself has become convinced that the authority and power had shifted in form and content, to the new king. After January 2005, and before the question whether the Minister was on one side or the other was no longer asked, since they all had to implement the instructions issued by the Minister of the Royal Court otherwise they could be dismissed and the sultan could become very angry.

Bahrain is usually referenced to the model of the king of Jordan, who "plays with the ministers like dolls." This is the model that the king of Bahrain wanted to apply. Sometimes he changed ministers in a libelous way – for example, the dismissal of the former Minister of Information Jihad Bukamal after about 14 months from the date of his appointment. Bukamal was sacked in November 2008, through news carried by the Bahrain News Agency, and international agencies. The news was confirmed by the King's media adviser Nabil Al Hamar, when

the king was on a business trip to New York⁽⁹⁾. It was as if a catastrophe happened that necessitated sacking Bukamal quickly, and reprimanding him in public⁽¹⁰⁾.

Regardless of whether the dismissal of Bukamal came after Bahrain TV broadcasted an interview with National Democratic Action Society (WAAD)'s Secretary General Ebrahim Sharif in which he spoke of what he called the secret budget of the Royal Court and the arms deals⁽¹¹⁾ or against the background of complaints by workers in Bahrain TV⁽¹²⁾ on the actions carried out by the former Chief Executive of Bahrain Radio and Television, Ahmed Najem (appointed by Bukamal), or for other reasons, the sacking of Bukamal could have been carried out in a more conventional way⁽¹³⁾.

We can also refer to the dismissal of the former Minister of Municipalities Mansoor bin Rajab, in March 2010, as a model for the controversial dismissals, where bin Rajab was accused of money laundering with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard⁽¹⁴⁾. He was defamed in the local media for weeks, in a country not used to raising corruption issues, suggesting that other targets were behind the whole process.

9 See Bahrain News Agency link: <http://www.bna.bh/portal/news/135720>

10 Bukamal was appointed as a member in the Shura Council after he was dismissed from his Ministerial post.

11 To see the interview of Ebrahim Sharif, see the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GWZVBpBuPA&feature=related>

12 For background on the protests, see Al Wasat newspaper, 6 August, 2008. The protests of the television staff coincided with a visit carried out by King Hamad to Turkey, and newspapers in Ankara broadcasted it, which caused the upset of the king.

13 According to other sources the dismissal in this way came due to the refusal of the minister Bukamal the instructions of the Minister of the Royal Court to dismiss Ahmed Najem from his post as chief executive for Bahrain's radio and television. Bukamal said then to the Minister of the Court that he was receiving instructions from the king.

14 Al Wasat Newspaper, March 23, 2010.

3. The King and the Prime Minister: The Public Clash

The King publicly rebuked the Prime Minister, and invited him to “obey” the orders of the Crown Prince, who is mandated by the economic policy-making of the country. Ministers were also threatened with dismissal if they disrupted the decisions of the Crown Prince, and the monopolistic economic decisions.

In the face of the insistence of the opposition for the dismissal of the government (its president and members), the Bahraini authorities find themselves facing a challenging demand as the ruling mentality is committed to keeping the dean of the tribe Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa in office as prime minister, out of respect for tribal traditions. The main powers of the Prime Minister were withdrawn and political, constitutional, and parliamentary affairs were referred to the royal palace, while issues with economic dimensions were referred to the

Economic Development Board⁽¹⁾, chaired by Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

This situation has created dispersion in decisions, the emergence of more than one council of ministers, and perhaps the creation of centers of power, necessitated in some cases by interference from the top of the hierarchy to set its pace, as was the case when the King of Bahrain publicly rebuked his uncle, the Prime Minister, due to a complaint made by Crown Prince Salman of a lack of cooperation by some ministers and government agencies with the Economic Development Board.

Here is a complaint of the Crown Prince, which was broadcasted via the Bahrain News Agency on January 14, 2008. The king responded to this complaint.

The context of the Crown Prince's complaint of the Prime Minister:

His Majesty my dear father, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the beloved King of the country, may God protect him.

Peace, mercy and blessings of Allah

I am pleased to extend my sincere greetings and best wishes for good health and happiness to you, expressing at the same time my pride and my gratitude to your Majesty for the support and assistance in various tasks and responsibilities that were precluded to us in the Economic Development Board, which is always trying to implement your kind guidance for the further development, progress and prosperity of the Kingdom of Bahrain and its people in your blessed reign.

This message comes in the context of our permanent need of wise guidance and the valuable advice of Your Majesty as well as our desire to inform you on the ongoing progress made by the Board

1 Crown Prince Sheikh Salman bin Hamad was appointed as the Chairman of the Economic Development Board in March 3, 2002. The Council was responsible for formulating and overseeing the economic development strategy of Bahrain, and attracting foreign investment to it. In fact, the pluralist institutions that was established, especially those led by the Crown Prince, such as "Mumtalakat" aimed to pull more power from the prime minister, with the latter retaining his formal position.

of responsibilities and tasks that are assigned to us. Besides, the constraints and difficulties facing the Board's work, we have decided to present to Your Majesty, God bless you, with the following issues about which we need your wise guidance as well as to your indispensable support.

Your Majesty,

Your national vision and comprehensive reform project of the Kingdom of Bahrain have raised a lot of hopes with your people, and motivated the faithful ones to achieve the noble visions and aspirations of Your Majesty. It was also honoring us to take part in this integrated reform project, I mean the economic reform project that we sought in the Economic Development Board in order to develop the foundation, and economic plans based on study and research as well as learning from the experiences of those who preceded us, bearing always in mind the noble aspirations of Your Majesty's, which aims to achieve progress and prosperity for our country, wealth and well-being of our honorable people. In spite of the sincere efforts and those good intentions our work in the Economic Development Board did not find an interest among some government officials and that has led to great difficulties in implementing the project which is an essential part of Your Majesty reformist project, God bless you.

Your Majesty,

The efforts of your fellow citizens in the Economic Development Board, and the efforts of everyone involved in the national dialogue have resulted in many achievements which we are proud of. And it was possible for these achievements to expand and grow, if harmony was found between your vision, and the policies pursued by some of our government officials.

As we are presenting the matter to your Majesty in order for you to decide what you see as suitable, we would like to express our readiness to implement all your guidance, which has become for us very necessary and important.

In conclusion, please accept our sincere wishes and lasting pride in your continuing support to us, and asking God to bless you and grant you good health.

Your sincere son

Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander

The king's letter in response to the complaint of the Crown Prince about the lack of cooperation by the prime minister:

Dear son,

Your Highness Sheikh Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Bahrain Defense Force, and the President of the Economic Development Board,

May God bless and protect you.

Peace is upon you and God's mercy and blessings be upon you.

We have examined your sincere and candid letter, about your desire to remove any obstacles from the aspirations of the administration and the resolutions of the Economic Development Board under your leadership, and your willingness to overcome the absence of cooperation between the Council and some government agencies.

As we emphasize trust in your competence and your integrity that you have become known and even known at the national and international level, and cherished by everyone in this beloved country, we see that it is incumbent on the government agencies concerned to exceed the delay and slowdown in implementation, and comply with the guidance in implementation as stated in the decree establishing and organizing the Council, and the decrees amending some provisions, as stated in the text to be «the Council's decisions are binding on ministries, institutions and administrative bodies in the State and shall take the necessary measures for its implementation», as well as loyal and committed to the aspirations of the Economic Development Board, which is already the aspiration of our loyal people to the progress and prosperity for a decent life.

As stated in the decree amendment No. 5 of 2002, as you are free to choose members of ministers and experts, and see in this situation that anyone who is not playing a significant role and doing their work in the Council, then it would negatively affect their position in the cabinet or even in the reshuffle, and at the same time if they prove

an efficiency and provide quality work, then they could be considered in assigning greater responsibilities. Since our comprehensive reform may ensure that, thanks to God, the various dimensions of political, economic and social development, then we want to have an input to the administrative reform of the state, to be the economic decision of the Council of Economic Development, where it became the policies of the national economy of competence, and no longer in the custody of any ministry. We are determined to find a tool to consider the appropriate legal and necessary means to achieve this goal, namely, the unity of the country's economic decision to proceed with the projects aimed to achieve the prosperity of the citizens, without any delay. We wish you to continue your success, and appreciate your sincere efforts to serve the nation.

God bless you and, and help you to serve people, be safe.

Hamad bin Isa, king of Bahrain.

The Royal Step taken against the Prime Minister after the Complaint by the Crown Prince

This was the first time that the Prime Minister got publicly reprimanded, and his call explicitly to "obey" the orders of the Crown Prince, which is mandated by the policy-making not related to the economy of the country, as he was threatened in the event of Minister of being fired if the decisions of the Crown Prince were not followed.

It is likely that this issue arose as the King was terminally ill in the second half of 2007, and his departure for medical treatment brought to the fore the prime minister's attempts to regain some influence, but they have been met harshly by the King, who interfered by:

The appointment of the Crown Prince "His Highness Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Deputy Supreme Commander, to oversee the implementation of public policy and military plans, administrative, economic and financial, Bahrain Defense Force and National Guard, and exercise any other powers conferred upon it by the Supreme Commander." This was in early January 2008^[2].

2 *Al Wasat newspaper, January 7, 2008.*

Expanding the powers of the Economic Development Board which is headed by the Crown Prince, at the same time as marginalizing the largest of the Council of Ministers. The Crown Prince has appointed ten ministers as members of the EDB on January 30. The EDB has become the actual alternative to the Council of Ministers in the resolution service and the country's economic development. It is made up of "the Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Al Salem, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Works, the Minister of Labor, the Minister of Social Development, the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs, the Minister of Municipalities and Agricultural Affairs, the Minister of Information, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Housing"⁽³⁾.

Taking more stringent steps to remove the prime minister's son Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa from the civil aviation sector, which was supervised by him. The Crown Prince was to be responsible for taking the necessary legal and administrative procedures to transform Bahrain International Airport from a subsidiary to a company property, to be part of the private sector, in accordance with the laws adopted in the Kingdom under the direct supervision of the civil aviation authority and a maximum of transparency and disclosure⁽⁴⁾.

On 17 January 2008, it was announced that Bahrain Holdings⁽⁵⁾ (the investment arm of the government in the non-oil sectors) announced the appointment of Sheikh Duaij bin Salman Al Khalifa, as the chairman of the Board of Directors of Bahrain International Airport.

3 Al Wasat newspaper, January 31, 2008.

4 Al Wasat newspaper, January 18, 2008.

5 "Mumtalakat is the investment company for the Kingdom of Bahrain, and was established in June 2006 by Royal Decree as an independent holding company for the government of Bahrain's strategic non-oil and gas related assets. Mumtalakat was created to align and implement the execution of the government's initiatives to pursue value-enhancing opportunities, improve transparency and help achieve operational excellence for its state-owned non-oil and gas related assets. Mumtalakat holds stakes in over 35 commercial enterprises, representing a portfolio value of approximately BD 3.3 billion (U.S.\$8.8 billion) as of June 30, 2011 and spanning a variety of sectors, including aluminum production, financial services, telecommunications, real estate, tourism, transportation, and food production". <http://www.bmhc.bh/en/4/media-centre.aspx>

It could be argued with regard to the status of Ali bin Khalifa, the eldest son of his father, the Prime Minister, that the expression is evident from the place of the marginalized Sheikh Khalifa, who was unable to secure the portfolio of the Ministry of Interior for his son Ali, who is running for the post of Deputy Prime Minister, without any real power. He was the Minister of Transport for 18 years (since 1993), until the last change. He then became deputy prime minister without portfolio of the transport ministry, which has been assigned in March 2011 to Kamal Ahmed, a very close associate of the Crown Prince.

The status of Ali bin Khalifa the eldest son of the PM Khalifa, is just like his father, and remained in the last ten years without any authority after that was removed from the presidency of the telecommunications company named Batelco (the government owns the majority of its shares), and the withdrawal of the telecommunications sector from under his hand after it was opened for private investment, and removed from the Department of Gulf Air, The Bahrain International Airport.

It is clear that the process of restructuring power lasted several years, to make the King axis up (power) instead of the Prime Minister, and will not allow for any changes.

Despite the friendliness lost between the king and prime minister, the issue of the dismissal of Sheikh Khalifa from his post had grave implications and may have been the straw that broke the camel's back given the attitude of the authorities to reject his dismissal and the insistence of the opposition on the appointment as a step to forward in the term of a government that reflects the popular will.

The change of the prime minister will not solve all the problems, but it could remove the biggest obstacle to the launch of a formal dialogue between the opposition and the regime. But the difference might be deeper in the authorities' refusal to give written guarantees to establish a constitutional monarchy.

The agreement to dismiss the prime minister will remain the biggest problem. The other is the insistence of the opposition on the election of a constituent assembly to write a new constitution, and determine the pattern of the next government, or resort to a referendum on the constitution.

However, the central issue in the opposition's insistence on removing Sheikh Khalifa, is the appreciation that such a move could have profound consequences on the structure of the formal decision. If this happened one of the scenarios could be something like what happened in Egypt and Tunisia, when Zine El Abidine and Hosni Mubarak were removed. Subsequent events led to a remarkable change in the structure of the two systems. But there is a difference worth noting here: Sheikh Khalifa is not the first man, nor even the second or third in Bahrain.

The structure of the constitutional order in Bahrain, combines broad powers in the hands of the king⁽⁶⁾, who can keep a grip on the situation without dramatic consequences, as happened in Tunis and Cairo.

This is perhaps why the opposition wants to redraw the powers of the head of state in an attempt to shrink them. This is part of a wider attempt to reduce the powers of the royal family. The opposition wants to change the royal family into a constitutional rather than a governing monarchy. If this does not happen the situation will become complicated and blood will be shed.

6 See articles (33-43) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain 14 February 2002

4. Sunni Groups are not Loyal to the Prime Minister:

The Prime minister was not able to penetrate the Sunni political groups, and societies: (Muslim Brotherhood) and “Salafists” who are faithful to the Palace and the strong man Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed, and his nephew Shaikh Ahmed.

Considered “Hamad Strategies” in the political system of Bahrain include the “presidential strategy”, similar to the system in America: The King, or President makes a decision, and departments of the Executive Council of Ministers apply it, unlike in the existing system in the 1973 Constitution, which can be considered “mixed”, and gives the Council of Ministers wide powers.

The 1973 constitution allowed the Council of Ministers to dominate the affairs of state, according to Article 85/A, which states that “the Council of Ministers and the Ministers dominate in matters related to the interests of the state, and formulate the general policy of the

government to pursue its execution, and oversee the functioning of the government.” In the Constitution of 2002 promulgated by King Hamad the word ‘dominate’ was replaced with the word ‘sponsor’ (Article 47/A), and referred all powers to the king, who is exercising his powers directly, and through his ministers, while the head of state in the 1973 Constitution handles his powers through his Ministers.

In light of the “Hamad Strategies”⁽¹⁾, this was the point of turning Sheikh Khalifa Bahrain’s Prime Minister into the Minister for the affairs of Muharraq city⁽²⁾, or the Minister of Citizens’ affairs. It became clear since the parliamentary elections in 2002, when Sheikh Khalifa began his subsequent visits to Al Muharraq, that decision making powers had been taken away from the Prime Minister who is the chairman of the Government of His Majesty the King, and is committed to the instructions of the head of state. The decision-making mechanism was transferred from the Council of Ministers to the palace. The council of ministers was relegated to implementing policies drawn up by overseas consultants the implementation of those who work in the palace⁽³⁾, and in contrast to the previous prince or ruler of Bahrain, Sheikh Khalifa authority was unlimited during the rule of his brother Sheikh Isa (from 1963 to 1999).

Since 2001 the Prime Minister appeared aware of the concerns of the Sunnis. It was well known among Sunni groups that the King was creating a broad alliance with Shiite groups⁽⁴⁾ and the opposition, which was endorsed in the Charter (2001), as it was not for the Sunni groups loyal to the role in his release (the Charter).

What got more attention at that time was that some Sunni groups could play the role of the opposition to Al-Khalifa. The Sunnis felt they should vote on the charter as the king allowed the Shiite partners to

1 See also number (3) of this book: *The king stifle the Prime Minister in his “constitutional” den*

2 *The second city after the capital Manama, Bahrain, and it was the place of the governor in the first half of the twentieth century.*

3 *Most notably the Royal Court Minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa.*

4 *Abbas Busafwan, Bahrain Mirror: the dialogue is embraced in Al Fateh, June 28, 2012.*

government: he released prisoners, deportees returned and the laws of State Security were negated. There was an agreement to open a newspaper, and a civil project for homes in the North (where the vast majority are Shiite). There was also an agreement to establish a political society (Al Wefaq), heralding the election of parliament, and the activation of the 1973 constitution was not insisted on.

It is "the next catastrophe," in the eyes of some Sunni groups who are loyal to the royal family, which was and still is the biggest beneficiary for governance, since the emergence of the modern state. This was more pronounced in the last ten years. Discrimination was not part of the official policy. The abuse of the Shiite citizens occurred behind closed doors.

In reality, and despite what some loyal Sunnis try to promote, King Hamad worked on excluding the Shiite groups from the Palace and every significant role. Unlike Shaikh Khalifa who did not cut all lines with the Shiite during his reign that practically ended by the 2000s. Khalifa could sense the Sunnis' resentment toward the rise of the Shiite influence by 2001, so he went on speaking on behalf of the Sunnis.

Despite the resentment of some parties in the palace from Sheikh Khalifa's activities in Muharraq, the palace looks at these activities as the space allowed to the Prime Minister who is inactivated, and which are in a proper space. They are in the activation and strengthening of the Sunni sectors which is a critical objective of the palace. The palace was also aware of the modest size of the capital built by Sheikh Khalifa in this sensitive area.

When endowed with the events of February 14, 2011, the reaction of Sheikh Khalifa was offensive, and moved in a manner that recognizes the complexities of the situation, trying to reap what he has sown ten years ago, in Qalali village and Muharraq city⁽⁵⁾.

Sheikh Khalifa was not the one who issued any strategic decision on how to deal with sit-ins at the Pearl Roundabout (February and March 2011). It is true that he was in favor of curbing the demonstrators, but

5 A village located north of the city of Muharraq, and inhabited by the families of the Sunni sect.

he was never a decision-maker in the use of violence, and the decision-maker in a call to the Saudi forces. He did not mind being portrayed as “the bad guy”, and he presented himself as the one who ordered the army to fire on unarmed demonstrators, declared a state of emergency in mid-March 2011, and was behind the demolition of the rotor, and the occupation by the military of Salmaniya hospital. He gave the impression he was behind the formation of national unity headed by Dr. Abdullatif Al Mahmood.

The truth of the matter was that King Hamad and his crew led by the Minister of the Royal Court Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa was the main contributor in the formulation of a “Hamad strategy” or Hamad policies” and their application.

Sheikh Khalifa was not behind any of the important decisions in the process of suppression of advocates of reform, but he wanted to appear like a “bad” man who was against the demands of the opposition, in favor of punishment and restraint, as he did not have anything to lose and the signs that he would be overthrown kept increasing.

However, Sheikh Khalifa faced a man of decision, not just guidance and words: the commander of the army, Field Marshal Khalifa bin Ahmed (brother of the Minister of the Royal council)⁽⁶⁾, who pulled the rug out from the Prime Minister. He was proud of memories of “conquest and invasion”⁽⁷⁾ against the Bahraini people and wanted to ingratiate the loyalists to the King and his crew, not the Prime Minister.

However, after ten years of King Hamad taking over, it became clear that he lost the support of the Shiites. They were opposed to his

6 Born in 1946, professional soldier, he was promoted to the rank of Marshal on 9 February 2011, a few days before the start of the uprising of February 14. He was appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of Bahrain Defense in January (January) 1974, and he served as Commander in Chief of the Bahrain Defense Force in March / March 1988.

7 Perhaps one of the major challenges facing the ruling family is to forget that it has by force entered Bahrain in 1783, and the Baharna/Shiite (indigenous people of the island) usually hates the word “conquest” used by the official date of entry of the first rulers of Al-Khalifa of Bahrain, also do not like the name of Al Fateh Mosque, the main mosque/official in the capital, Manama. Bahrain being a Muslim country the word conquest is an Islamic term used to express the takeover of the Muslim army on a foreign State.

promises of reform, and may have destroyed much of what is positive in relations between the ruling family and Shiite groups. He didn't even get the loyalty of the Sunnis who saw his treatment of the Shiites as hypocritical and the amnesty for prisoners of conscience as derisory⁽⁸⁾. One of the students at the sit-ins said we do not want King Hamad, we want Sheikh Khalifa.

Nevertheless, Sheikh Khalifa was not able to penetrate the Sunni political groups, and Societies (Muslim Brotherhood) and "Salafists" who have been faithful to the Palace and the strong man Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed, and his nephew Ahmed bin Atiyat Allah.

The message of Dr. Abdullatif Al Mahmood published in the "Washington Times"⁽⁹⁾ was clear; to approve the removal of Sheikh Khalifa and put forward a theory saying that the crisis is over, thanks to Sheikh Khalifa and his extraordinary work and achievements. And this does not change the probability of Sheikh (not sure what this means) among Sunni masses in Muharraq, which can be tuned, by adjusting some of the popular representatives.

Sheikh Khalifa has failed in the formation of a political rally which gives him allegiance despite desperate attempts. The palace stopped his early attempts to initiate a political movement. The prime minister knows that the decision was taken in the palace, not in Government House. The army and security forces are under the command of the palace, which means the presence of the actual Sheikh Khalifa is fragile indeed.

So, the displacement of Sheikh Khalifa only needs a decision by the King, to automatically find in favor of the "Coalition of the Conqueror" and other political groupings. The palace and its official media and local press will portray the decision as inevitable as will the Country, and Gulf News - newspapers which are close to the Prime Minister.

Options are narrow for the King, as he chooses to throw the load of his office onto the Minister Khalid bin Ahmed and his brother, the

8 The king issued an amnesty for about 12 prisoners of conscience.

9 Ben Birnbaum, *The Washington Times*, *Top Sunni: P.M. should mull quitting after crisis*, 18 August 2011.

commander of the army. This group is still awaiting the right opportunity to keep Sheikh Khalifa away from the scene.

The situation is quiet and contrary to what is believed there is a local initiative to remove the prime minister. Sheikh Khalifa has already been given the message that the game is over. It is true that Saudi Arabia will remain an obstacle. But it should be remembered that the Al-Saud family made a decision to sack King Saud bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud (1902-1969), in 1963, and that King Hamad passed a package of reform measures that were disturbing to Riyadh in 2001. But Saudi Arabia's desire to fight any aspirations for the advancement of the Bahraini people may again be softened if King Hamad forces the resignation of Sheikh Khalifa and starts a new era in Bahrain.

The dilemma faced by the King here is not Saudi Arabia, or the pro-regime groups but the preoccupation with what happens next. What is the benefit of offsetting Sheikh Khalifa? The opposition adheres to the restructuring of power, and demands that the powers of Parliament and the Government fully reflect the opinion of the people.

The displacement of Sheikh Khalifa is imminent and will ensure that the political system in Bahrain sticks to reform; Sheikh Khalifa is only a shell.

5. Consensus on Removing the Prime Minister:

The option of an unstable state or a historic settlement by instituting a real constitutional monarchy may not be acceptable to the king. But the decision to displace his uncle is affordable, to provide an accepted settlement, claiming that the obstacle to reform (Sheikh Khalifa) has been eliminated.

The Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman was not at all comfortable with the formation of the Bassiouni Commission of Inquiry on violations of human rights, as he was afraid he would be forced to resign.

Sheikh Khalifa is getting his revenge by employing a global company, called Mackenzie⁽¹⁾, for the preparation of reports on the economic

1 A global consulting firm, formed an alliance with the Crown Prince, and has put the overall economic plans adopted by the Economic Development Board.

situation, and status of Bahrain, if Sheikh Khalifa remains in his position, as Bahrain faces huge challenges in terms of unemployment and poor ability to attract investment, because of corruption and mismanagement which are his legacy⁽²⁾. This file has been managed since 2002, by the Economic Development Board, chaired by Crown Prince, as part of the campaign waged by King Hamad against his uncle.

So, in practice, Sheikh Khalifa is no longer a target for the opposition, announcing only that he was and still is the target of powerful forces in the Royal Council. This is clear as he has been marginalized by the forces in the system such as the Crown Council. Sheikh Khalifa has been removed from the scene, an indispensable condition, to restructuring the course of settlement in Bahrain, from the standpoint of its strategic ally (the USA), and the patrons of the historic ruling family Al-Khalifa (Britain), and some countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Oman, and Qatar).

In fact, the complexities of completion of a historic compromise between the people and the family of Al-Khalifa, led to increasing pressure to bear on Sheikh Khalifa as a scapegoat. The opposition does not object to this but supports his departure in an honorable way. This is less ambitious than the goals of the opposition, which is now in the position of having to conform to the system to gain legitimacy and political stability.

If a historic settlement is intended it must be based on consensus for a real constitutional monarchy, where the role of the king is marginal and political decisions have to be made by the elected parliament and government. This is very difficult.

It is a challenge not faced 60 years ago, during the demands of the National Union of the mid-fifties. This was the time when Jamal Abdel Nasser overthrew King Farouk of Egypt.

In fact, the Al Khalifa family does not comprehend that a constitutional monarchy is one where the people have the final say in the rule set. The

2 A study published by McKinsey at a large conference sponsored by the Crown Prince, on December 22 (December 2003), that unemployment in Bahrain will be 100,000 in 2013, if it continues the current administration of the economy (under the authority of the Prime Minister).

Al Khalifa have faced the movements that demand the rights of people and responded by the use of excessive force which caused the loss of blood and the murder of innocent people.

When confronting the opposition groups, even when they are considering reducing the losses, the system was left with no choice but to continue using excessive force. Great sacrifices were made and now there is no trust at all between the people the royal family, and the king himself. This is considered a disaster.

History will record later that King Hamad was the most aggressive king who caused the most damage to Bahrain, and its people. The confrontation between the Al Khalifa family and opposition groups during the last ten years resulted in an uprising on February 14. The 30-year, undemocratic rule of Sheikh Isa / Sheikh Khalifa did not do as much damage as that of King Hamad.

It is true that the Arab Spring was the spark that ignited protests in Pearl Roundabout in a peaceful explosion, but it is also true that the situation in Bahrain has been waiting for a shot of gunpowder to explode.

In September 2001, when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in New York, and left the U.S. President George W. Bush, stressing the Arab rulers that need to adopt the option of democracy, King Hamad was in a comfortable position, because he had already taken some steps towards democracy.

About seven months prior to the terrorist attack of 11 September, a number of bold decisions, were taken which showed that the king favored democracy^[3].

The King followed policies which are unprecedented in the history of the state: discrimination and naturalization. The tenth anniversary of the Charter, like all festive occasions, was transformed from a happy time to an occasion which revealed the tragedy of the system. This was also the case with National Holiday celebrations. National Day (16

3 The charter was voted on to the king who united the Bahrainis, in the February 14, 2011, about seven months before the attack on the Twin Towers in New York, the King highlighted as a model for the ruler seeking democracy.

December) coincides with the start of the nineties uprising. Due to the history of fallen martyrs the official day is greeted with mixed feelings and is usually accompanied by demonstrations and casualties⁽⁴⁾.

The king himself suspended the Constitution of the State of Bahrain (1973), a consensus between the people and the ruling family, which came from abroad (Zubara in Qatar). The king bears a great responsibility for the damages suffered by the country, and for the damage to the reputation of the ruling family which should be in a better position.

The policies of King Hamad have tarnished the image of the Al Khalifa family abroad, even among their allies in the Gulf. The procedures the family developed whether to hand over more powers to the Sunni groups who are loyal to the family, or influenced by Saudi Arabia, or to give Parliament wider powers, are less effective.

Most likely, the West will stand in support of the family and try to play a role in the succession if an offered settlement refers to parliament and the government to be more representative of the people, so that the Americans and the British are interested in the settlement as long as their interests are secured and these interests cannot be secured if the ruling family monopolises decision-making. But the West also believes that its interests may be superseded or reduced if the rule of Bahrain is transferred to a national, independent movement as decided by the people.

So the West is interested in a comprehensive settlement and has declared its interest in a deal which secures stability to ensure the continued flow of oil. Bahrain is surrounded by Iran, and faced with the military superiority of Israel. The West thinks that its interests will be assured by the present king and it will not find better patrons than the ruling tribes in all of the Gulf States.

The position of the Sunni supporters⁽⁵⁾ of the continuation of the symbol of Sheikh Khalifa and his plan is more than its continuation by him in

4 Hani Al Wasti and Hani Khamis died due to bullets shots by Security on December 16, and that was seen as a spark to start an uprising nineties.

5 To understand the position of the "Al Fateh Gathering" of rejecting the demands of the reform, see Abbas Busafwan, *Bahrain Mirror: the dialogue is embraced in Al Fateh*, June 28 2011.

person. It is likely that the system can accommodate their reaction in one way or another, by ministering some people from the societies of “Islamic Menbar” and “Al Asalah” and “the Coalition of National Unity” or through persuading Sheikh Khalifa to retire honorably.

The West also believes that the challenges of the regional balance of power do not permit one of the citizens to be in charge of political decision-making i.e the prime minister. Current information suggests that the Saudis will be an obstacle to radical changes in the way Bahrain is governed.

However, the biggest dilemma is that the overthrow of Sheikh Khalifa will not turn into a fragile historic settlement, even if the opposition considered it an important victory. This is what makes King Hamad more reluctant to dispense with Sheikh Khalifa and the king will be haunted by a reduction of his powers.

So, the risk to civil peace will remain along with the excessive use of violence by the military which has ruled the country, under the direction of the king and not Sheikh Khalifa. Some hardliners in the ruling family could destroy the foundations of coexistence, as they did during the period of the emergency between mid-March and the end of May 2011, if they see that their interests are threatened.

The oppositions know that, and are also aware that the forces of compromise in the system remain fragile. However King Hamad himself, even as he adopts the security policies to manage the challenges of the uprising of February 14, 2011, and takes decisions contrary to international law, knows better than anyone else what to do to protect “the secretariat of the chair.”

In this case the king may chose the “military decision” to impose incompatible constitutional amendments⁽⁶⁾. He may repeat the policies which have been followed since 2002, and applied in a terrible manner after the uprising of February 14, 2011. Undoubtedly this threatens to turn Bahrain into an unstable state and the royal family without legitimacy, using force illegally.

6 See: Abbas Busafwan, *Bahrain: “fragile” constitutional amendments, boosting up the crisis and not resonate locally and internationally*, May 29, 2012.

Between the unstable state option, and the historic settlement, (submission to a real constitutional monarchy), King Hamad may find that the displacement of his uncle to safe guard the settlement is acceptable and claim that the obstacle to reform is (Sheikh Khalifa) who has been ousted.

The king will have to honour many commitments whether he announces the sacking of the prime minister or whenever he announces new reforms. The king has lost the confidence of the Shiites and Sunnis as well. The Sunnis prefer the prime minister 'Khalifa bin Salman'. The king has missed many chances and opportunities which caused him to lose the confidence of the Bahraini people. This is an obstacle which cannot be easily overcome.

The king will have to ensure the safety of his family and his people. That can be achieved if the people were in the position of decision-making, which is not the case at present, where the ruling family thinks that people are a strategic threat. Everyone involved: the ruling family and the people of Bahrain, are the losers in this no win situation.

Chapter 03

The Crown Prince, the Advocate of His Father's Approach

6. What is said about the Exclusion of the Crown Prince

“In the Kingdom of Bahrain, my role as Crown Prince is to support his majesty the King my father and I am proud to be in that role. The King appointed me as head of the Economic Development Board, and as his deputy of the armed forces. These are my most important roles⁽¹⁾.

The term “Crown Prince” is mentioned in the 2002 constitution of Bahrain three times, in article 74, which gives the King the right to appoint the Crown Prince or an alternative to open the session of the National Council (Parliament).

As for the subject of the Crown Prince, Item B from Article 1 of the constitution states that the rule will “pass to his (the King’s) eldest son, one generation after another, unless the King in his lifetime

1 The Crown Prince discourse of Bahrain in a meeting with Al Arabiya channel, April 10, 2010

appoints a son other than his eldest son as successor, in accordance with the provisions of the Decree on inheritance stated in the following clause.” With the exception of being deputy to the King in the King’s absence and being appointed as the delegate to open Parliament, the constitution does not give the Crown Prince any authority outside what is ordered by the King.

Currently, the Crown Prince is not involved in the daily general affairs of Bahrain. He is not the King’s accomplice, and this is in line with the role that King Hamad played when he was Crown Prince.

When King Hamad was Crown Prince (1964 – 1999), he was appointed as head of the Ministry of Defense, which remains under his command to this day. He built the Ministry of Defense on a basis that completely excluded any Shiite citizens, or potential opposition figures⁽²⁾.

Within the armed forces, he imbedded the culture of “protecting the Royal Family”, from external threats and especially internal threats. From what we know about the King, he always thought, and to this day thinks, that “the Shiite are a strategic threat to the regime”. The King views the revolution of 14 February 2011 as an event that vindicates his beliefs in relation to the Shiite, despite the fact that the revolution is proving to be a complete failure of the strategy Hamad has pursued during the past ten years.

A central principles of the king’s policy was the exclusion of the Shiite from the regime. The citizens reacted by excluding the royal family from the political field.

When the current King was Crown Prince, he actively wanted to engage in political roles. However, his father would repeatedly tell him to “wait your turn”.

At the time, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa was the strongman of the nation. This may have been the reason why the current King, upon his ascension, reduced the executive role of his uncle.

In other words, the limitation of the role of Sheikh Khalifa was an act of revenge by the current King in response to being excluded from the

2 *The King oversaw the construction of the army without the employment of Shiite citizens, even in small ranks, except in the narrow positions.*

political process for nearly three decades during Sheikh Khalifa's rule. Despite the conflict, the King is adamant to retain his uncle in the role of Prime Minister, even as a token gesture. The King even offered him the position of Deputy to the King.

However, Sheikh Khalifa refused to accept the offer knowing that the Prime Ministership remains a central role in ruling and in the constitution, and it is difficult to be ignored, whereas the constitution does not refer to the position of the Deputy to the King.

Despite the attempts made by the King that the crown prince should not be out of the equation of governance, as he was during his term of the Covenant, such attempts were not successful and the Crown Prince is not in a better position now than his father when he was the crown prince.

In fact, Sheikh Salman does not exercise a key role in the Ministry of Defense. To a large extent it can be said that in his position as Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces he is not authorized to make military or administrative decisions in this sector: his commission is clearly from the supreme commander of these forces (the king).

The Commander in Chief of the Defense Force, Field Marshal, Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed (brother of the Minister of the Royal Council) remains as the strong man in the military sector, who was with the king from the beginning during the formation of the army.

Al-Khalifa, found it necessary to defend the army and if necessary even use force against the people, as was evident during the declaration of a state of emergency (March 15, May 30, 2011).

This is in line with the belief of the ruling family of Bahrain, that it took over by force as the official discourse in 1783 revealed.

Before that (2005), the McKinsey company for the Advancement of studies confirmed that the country is in a disastrous state with regard to unemployment and impeding business growth due to the corrupt policy of Sheikh Khalifa.

The establishment of the Labor Market Regulatory Authority⁽³⁾ and the Labor Fund (Tamkeen)⁽⁴⁾, expanded the powers of the Economic Development Board (2008), and the formation of company property, in order to marginalize the Council of Ministers, and its president, Sheikh Salman and enable the implementation of his economic program.

Those who work in the Royal council led by the Minister of the Royal Court, Sheikh Salman, don't trust the crown prince and see him as a "Western fancy, who would prefer to speak English, and not write poetry.

He likes to watch cars races (such as Formula One), and does promote horses races "As the tribes usually do. He has been besieged on some of his institutions run by the staff close to those influential in the royal Palace⁽⁵⁾.

Although he did not show his disagreement, Sheikh Salman didn't play the role as an opposition figure in a public manner to remove him from political decision-making and his commitment to help his father to focus on the economic file (within the instructions of minors, of course).

Although it is impossible to separate the two files, the senior officials of the royal palace still look at the crown prince as a rival, and the rival is always deprived of the political file, and thrown into a war of wills with Sheikh Khalifa, who is an expert in the management of the battles⁽⁶⁾.

3 The Authority takes on all necessary duties and powers to regulate the labor market in the Kingdom and the organization of work permits of foreign workers and licensing agencies supplying workers and the employment offices and practice permits foreign employers to work in Bahrain ", see: <http://portal.lmra.bh/arabic/page/show/56>

4 Tamkeen was established in August of 2006 as one of the initiatives of the national reform project and the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030. And was entrusted with the task to develop the private sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain and make it the primary engine of economic growth. "See: <http://www.lf.bh/ar/about/?p=Profile>

5 Sheikh Khalifa bin Duaij Al Khalifa, is heading the Crown Prince's Court, and is a nephew of the chairman of the Royal Court, Ahmed Atiyat Allah Al-Khalifa, and the latter is the nephew of the Minister of the Royal Court, Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa,

6 See Item No. 3), the king and the prime minister... the public clash, in this book

Sheikh Salman, did not win over the business sectors⁽⁷⁾, or the opposition where he is seen as the best of the worst after his experience which was characterized by weakness and unilaterality in the management of the Economic Development Board, which is not subject to the accountability of parliament. He is also likely to be involved in corruption with regard to land (such as the land of the island), and the priorities of the Formula One, project. The building of a track for the Bahrain Formula One, at a cost of \$150 million, has come under scrutiny and questions were asked whether this project was selected only because it was favored by the crown prince who wanted to see his dream come true.

King Hamad managed to establish the nucleus of his mission, which was built by the army and not by expanding ties to Sheikh Salman who is not connected to certain parties. He is also isolated from the new business elite. None of the advocacy groups were pro Sheikh Salman. They criticized his economic and political activities in public. I was a witness during his file management dialogue between mid-February and mid-March 2011, when it was said that "the commander of the march had to make concessions to the opposition."

And records show the failure of Sheikh Salman in the formation of a network of relations with traditional families, whether Shiites or Sunnis. He failed like his father. Under Sheikh Khalifa the administration of the country was less turbulent, the opposite of what is believed. But he was removed from decision making during the new millennium.

So, it was not strange the king did not assign the Crown prince to be the chairman of the national dialogue⁽⁸⁾. The mission was assigned instead to the head of parliament, led by Mr. Khalifa Dhahran. Assigning the mission to the crown prince while preparing to attack

7 The traders protest on a permanent basis, for example, for fees have been imposed on employers for foreign labor, as part of the "labor market reform" led by the Crown Prince, and found support from the opposition. For more information about the project see the labor market: <http://portal.lmra.bh/arabic/faq/category/2>.

8 The state organized a consensus of a national dialogue in July 2011, but the opposition boycotted (Unionist), or pulled out of it (Al Wefaq), or did not accept its findings (the national assembly, National Democratic Action Society (WAAD), the Progressive platform)

the pearl roundabout and the protestors there would show the crown prince as a failure who cannot lead the country and carry on his job. As crown prince he has a famous history of failure, such as his failure in the labor market and the management of the properties of Bahrain, Gulf Air, which has lost 500 million Bahraini dinars in the year while the accumulated losses since 2001 to 2009 are estimated at one billion and 240 million Bahraini dinars⁽⁹⁾.

9 See the remarks of the parliamentary commission of inquiry in Gulf Air Halim Murad, *Al-Wasat*, May 5 (May 2010).

7. The Hidden Conflict: the Future of the Mandate of the Covenant in Bahrain

It may seem that Bahrain does not live a problematic mandate of the Covenant, as experienced in Saudi Arabia and Oman, but this is only what is shown on the surface. As the Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa (1969 – present), the eldest son of the king, suffers of great difficulties in persuading his ruling family and the people of Bahrain (pro and opposition), including Saudi Arabia and some Western parties that he is a promising option.

Where the name of his younger brother Nasser (1987 – present) rise and shine as an alternative to hard-liners in the ruling family and its elder sister Al Saud for Nasser taking on this post. However, the latter – Nasser – may face the opposition's rejection to him, and western scepticism in his ability to create national harmony, as well as a massive attack from prestigious international human rights organizations who shall necessarily cast away the western position, and may also undermine the credibility of the prince-to-be.

1. Preliminary data

On the 26th of last November, Al Ayam newspaper, owned by the media advisor to the king of Bahrain Nabil Al Hamar, published on its front page news of King Abdullah II of Jordan welcoming Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad, along with a photo showing him attentively listening to Nasser.

In the same issue, the newspaper devoted a full page to cover the visit of the fourth son of King Hamad -Nasser- to the Hashemite Kingdom and his declaration of Syrian refugee camps in Amman for humanitarian projects supportive to the Syrians.

The Royal Charity Organization⁽¹⁾ is headed by Nasser, which was restructured in 2007 based on the aspiration of the young prince to play a public role, about a year after graduating from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) in England.

The Royal Charity Organization almost gulp down the Bahrain Red Crescent Foundation and other charities of national character, in a non-innocent attempt to monopolize charitable work, and highlighting it as a registered brand in the name of the Prince favored by his father the king.

In a time when economic reform projects of the Crown Prince face fundamental problems almost ousted them, the charitable projects of Sheikh Nasser are not publicly criticized, even by the opposition. whereas intensive and costly public relations campaigns continue to show him as a man with humanitarian face, giving plenty of his time and effort for the poor and orphans and widows inside and outside Bahrain. I cannot consider that as a spontaneous and unintentional matter that does not carry special significance.

Nasser also chaired Bahrain Royal Equestrian and Endurance Federation, within a huge and undeclared budget, an issue that was and still is raising a wide controversy and a popular curse, as well as questions about the waste of public money from the point of view of loyalists and opponents.

And usually the name of Nasser is announced as a first place winner

1 For more information on the organization, see: <http://www.orphans.gov.bh/ara/>

in the races he participated in since the Federation was established in 2002, as if he is a “Super Hero”.

On the other hand, his older brother, the Crown Prince Salman turned to car races, which are a fashionable Western trend. He established the Bahrain International Circuit at cost of \$ 150 million, and since its establishment in 2004 it is recording substantial and consecutive losses (more than 8 million BHD in 2011).

It is interesting that the king during his mandate of covenant, was head of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports until his assumption of the position of the emirate in March 1999. Then Sheikh Salman got charge of the presidency of the Council to coincide with his appointment as crown prince in 1999. Salman lost this post in favor to his younger brother Nasser in 2010, and perhaps he – the Crown Prince– should fear losing other posts indeed.

The regime has invested a lot of money and effort in Nasser in presenting him as a sponsor of sports and youth, and highlighting the events sponsored by or those that held his name as extraordinary events. For example, Nasser 5 event adopted awards that cost 60 thousand BHD, and received media coverage on a large scale^[2].

In short, Nasser is being marketed through intensive local media propaganda as a young, inspiring man, athlete, and poet, owner of an opinion and view, and sponsor of youth. He is also being presented as a person who is keen on youth culture, education, residence and livelihood. Moreover, Nasser is promoted as a merciful and generous young man who hardly sleeps worrying about the poor, widows and orphans. And above all, a military person who earned the confidence of his father and always prepared to fight, ready to strike with an iron fist against his father’s opponents. All are attributes of an inspiring leader, who audiences seek his leadership, and looks forward to him as a redeemer!!

2 Al-Wasat newspaper, January 12, 2012: <http://www.alwasatnews.com/data/2012/3403/pdf/spt4.pdf>

2. Repositioning Salman during the Pearl Roundabout protests

During mass pro-democracy protests and sit-ins in the Pearl Roundabout (February-March 2011), the Crown Prince has been marketed and promoted across the local and international media for about an entire month, and in a defining and historic moment that shall remain in the minds for some time, as the holder of a moderate position. He was presented as the man of dialogue, and a dove of peace who deals with the opposition by calling for serenity and dialogue, and presenting a bold political initiative⁽³⁾, which earned him the support of the West, a curse of the loyalists, and sympathy of the opponents who could not find an alternative to ally with inside the ruling family – which adopted the “We or they” motto– except for the Crown Prince.

From the point of view of the Crown Prince’s opponents in the ruling family (Al Khawaled Pavilion), chaired by the Minister of Royal Court, Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Salman failure in attracting opponents to his initiative was a miserable failure. It might not be exaggerated if I say that the success of Salman in attracting opponents would have recorded – from the standpoint of Al Khawaled– a greater failure. As long as they, along with Sunni public opinion generally considered the mere thought of the Crown Prince, or his acceptance to play the role of the negotiator on the establishment of a full power parliament and a government that represents the people’s will, as a wrong and destructive strategy. A strategy that calls on a military intervention of Saudi Arabia in order to resolve the conflict in favor of the current situation, and bury the dream that might have been drawn by the initiative consisting of seven points, allowing the opposition to have a prestigious weight in the power and influence circle.

That initiative has dragged more challenges to the Crown Prince and has exacerbated the fragility of his position in front of influential people in the palace that see him as a unreliable person who does not succeed in the tasks assigned to him. They always repeat that the Crown Prince is a meek and liberal person. Add to that, his western interests: his passion

3 For the Crown Prince initiative, see: *Gulf Daily News*, Manama, March 13, 2012. <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3110/news/read/532237/1.html>

to riding cars and not horses, and not writing Bedouin poetry, like his brother Nasser!

In addition to the opposition, Salman carried alone the responsibility of the collapse of the talks in March, as if the other parties in power are not involved. The Crown Prince was isolated after the authorities used excessive force to crush the protests in the Pearl Roundabout.

It was repeated for so long that he was not a man of political or military decision. He worked hard to satisfy the militants and Sunni loyalists by sacking thousands of workers in companies run by “Mumtalakat” (the investment arm of the Bahraini Government), under his supervision.

According to this text he was seen as a wobbling person whose way is unclear, once calling for dialogue and then lining up with the owners of the security solution. He was also seen as a person who does not complete his effort in dialogue on one hand, and not putting all his cards in the hands of the military on the other hand. “We do not know his land from his sky, nor in what direction is he leaning” a comment a senior loyalist once commented describing Salman.

The opposition does not saying anything better about Salman and his potential, as well as the skyline of attempts of dialogue to which he contributed.

No longer has the Economic Development Board EDB chaired by Crown Prince met every Thursday as it used to do since the public clash with the Prime Minister in 2008.

Where its major adviser Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa was transferred from his post as Chief Executive of the EDB to be Senior Advisor in the Crown Prince Royal Court, as one of the signs of reclusion, and disastrous failure of the EDB, which has been blamed for all state’s economic failures.

However, attempts to re-market the Crown Prince continued through opening his weekly gatherings to welcome his supporters. Neither his father the king or the Prime Minister and those influential officials have not visited his gatherings, where no visits of the opposition were recorded. It is indeed a complex situation for the Crown Prince, where he carries full responsibility first and foremost.

It is probably acceptable by him or even admired, mistakenly believing that he is engaged with all parties, but he is mostly losing them.

3. Repositioning Nasser during the Pearl Roundabout protests

In March 2011, Nasser leaded the militants in the ruling family, supporting the position taken by his father, and the army commander Khalifa bin Ahmed, and Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman. He also spoke publicly via Bahrain National TV in a violent and reckless manner that lacked diplomacy, calling for revenge against the opposition⁽⁴⁾. That seemed a defining moment in the official approach of the state expressed by Nasser more than Salman who went on state television several times calling for calmness, while the army killed Abdulredha Buhumaid (18 February 2011). Whereas, his younger brother Nasser was biased to take on the security option, a decision that the authorities adopted relentlessly.

Nasser (and his brother Khalid) is accused of torturing prisoners of conscience⁽⁵⁾, and that have ruined his image inside the country and in the West. That is one of the most important weaknesses that are not to be easily forgotten or ignored as a key of a character meant to be leading. Whilst Saudi Arabia and the influential pavilion in the royal family and its loyalists are now convinced that the option of Nasser is worth studying for taking on key positions in the regime.

4. The Military Promotions ignores the Crown Prince

The King appointed his son Nasser as chief of the Royal Guard in June 2011, shortly after the lifting of the state of emergency in the country, which was announced between 15 March and 31 May 2011. That has shown the king's great confidence in Nasser, who considers him as a fortified shield to protect the personal security of King (the symbol of the Khalifi influence), and prevent the opposition from carrying out their ends in the overthrow of the ruler, or reduce his powers.

4 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioEkV_XWfNc

5 Bahrain Center for Human Rights: <http://www.bahrainrights.org/ar/node/4519>

Promoting Nasser to the position of a colonel and assigning him to head the Royal Guard came within a systematic policy to promote the parties considered by the regime as advocates for it.

Moreover, sometimes these promotions came as a proactive step, as in the case of the army commander who was promoted from the position of a General to a marshal in 8 February 2011 in the 43rd Defense Force Day and under the youth preparations declared for the launch of an uprising on February 14, a spring that followed Egypt and Tunisia springs.

That has given a green light for the army for appalling violations of human rights, which some have been documented in the famous report of Bassiouni. It seems remarkable that the promotion of the Crown Prince from a General to a marshal was announced a few days after promoting the Army Commander. As if it came after the son's reproach of his father, who forgot or ignored to promote his eldest son, which in both cases contains bright political implications.

King Hamad has issued a royal order promoting Khalifa bin Ahmed (1946- present) to a marshal in 8 February 2011, and it was broadcast in Bahrain TV and Bahrain News Agency BNA⁽⁶⁾. Local newspapers also published the news of the promotion in their websites on the same day⁽⁷⁾ and in their printed issues next day⁽⁸⁾, coupled with heavy banners of congratulations for two days at a row, 9th and 10th of February⁽⁹⁾. Reference to the Crown Prince's promotion was not made until February 15, nearly a week after the promotion of the Army Commander⁽¹⁰⁾.

6 See the news published by the BNA on the following link: <http://www.bna.bh/portal/news/446620?date=2012-03-28>

7 Al-Ayam Newspaper: <http://alayam.com/Articles.aspx?aid=65326>

8 Gulf Daily News, February 9, 2011: <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12010/article/429368.html>

9 See: Al-Wasat newspaper, February 9, 2011: <http://www.alwasatnews.com/pdf/index.php?issue=3078&cat=fir>

and Al-Wasat newspaper, February 10, 2011: <http://www.alwasatnews.com/pdf/index.php?issue=3079&cat=fir>

10 See Al-Wasat newspaper, February 15, 2011: <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3084/news/read/527322/1.html>

It is noted that the Crown Prince's promotion did not resonate in the local media, which did not publish any congratulating banners, not even regular reports about it, for reasons related to the fake promotion itself with no single doubt, and its embarrassing timing come after the promotion of the Army Commander.

Moreover, perhaps because the country was then mired in blood due to the killing of two young men (Ali Mushaima in February 14, and Fadhel Matrook in 15 February), and then the bloody attack on the Pearl Roundabout in 17 February.

While the Minister of the Royal Court congratulated his brother the Army Commander⁽¹¹⁾, he did not congratulate the Crown Prince, as there was no welcome from the Army Commander to the Crown prince's promotion, when he scored a warm welcome to Sheikh Nasser's⁽¹²⁾ promotion to the position of colonel.

It is difficult not to say that this has many political interpretations. Therefore, despite the fact that the Crown Prince served as Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, he does not have influence on the military decision, which is held strongly by the Army Commander, the brother of the Minister of the Royal Court who is the right hand of the king and the real Prime Minister.

Given that Sheikh Khalifa, the Prime Minister is no longer in power after the king stripped him of his powers, unlike what the international media repeats.

5. The Crown Prince: Implications of tumbling of the Economic Reform Programs

The economic reform projects led by the Crown Prince reached to almost a dead end including projects that were launched in 2003 related to reforming the economy, the labor market and education. The reasons of its retreat is back to attempts to separate political reform from economic reform, and seek to perpetuate a monopolistic model

11 Al-Ayam Newspaper: <http://alayam.com/Articles.aspx?aid=65270>

12 Al-Wasat newspaper, June 19, 2011: <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3207/news/read/567157/1.html>

with new faces and modern mechanisms, while old monopoly lobbies stand as steel barrier to prevent the realization of the public interest, and reduce their privileges.

The labor market reform has completely derailed when it was sure that is it moving toward the interest of unemployed Shiite citizens, and small and medium enterprises in which they invest in, where the restrictions on them is at its peak for the establishment of major companies.

Furthermore, education reform will open competition in investment in education -which is intended to be monopolistic- and will also increase the options for Shiite citizens seeking a good education that takes them out from the reality of being seen as second-class citizens, who also cannot find the chance they deserve in scholarships provided by the Ministry of Education and military institutions.

No economic reform was made and a handful of influential people remained in control of the economy and monopolized the wealth, while talking about "competitiveness" has been focused on the competitiveness of Bahrain and its sisters in the Gulf, and neglecting local investors who find it difficult to compete against the Khalifi merchant and its platforms.

Perhaps it is not observed by ordinary citizen, but the files referring to the reforming of Gulf Air and others caused great embarrassment to the Crown Prince. These reform programs resulted in daily losses of the company estimated at half a million BHD⁽¹³⁾.

In addition to "Alba" for the production of aluminum (major Bahraini company) profit that fell back during the first half of 2012 to about 57 million BHD, compared to a net profit of 102.88 million BHD for the same period in 2011, a drop of 44.63 percent"⁽¹⁴⁾.

In addition to the question of public opinion in the feasibility of the Crown Prince's projects, the putative reform programs have taken the Crown Prince to face a fierce war against the Prime Minister, reached its peak in January 2008. This war has cost the Crown Prince a lot, in terms of making fierce enemies: a traders lobby, and Sunni Islamists,

13 *Al-Wasat newspaper, January 7, 2012.*

14 *Al-Wasat newspaper, July 29, 2012.*

who are objective allies for the Prime Minister against reforming the economy, believing this supposed reform would increase the burden of businessmen, and is in favor of Shiite citizens, whether traders who may gain more competitive opportunities, or Shiite workers who represent the majority in the private sector.

It seems remarkable that the project of opening a telecommunications market, which scored some success, was not connected to the Crown Prince! Though it has been launched with his own initiative in 2003, it has been meant to be linked to Ahmed Atiyatallah, a hardliner and notorious advisor in the Royal Court. Where the file of ramshackle houses been referred from the Royal Charity Organization to other government agencies –as a matter of urgency– when it became clear that the project is limping, so that its failure is not linked to Sheikh Nasser, who is intended to have a file with no single errors. Labeling errors to the Crown Prince seemed at several times a policy led by the influential persons in the palace.

It was intended to drag the Crown Prince –who usually accepts the role sketched for him and may also volunteer for it– in the midst of a battle of attrition against the Prime Minister, in an all-out war waged by the King against his uncle to monopolize power and authority. The so-called reform program has gained support from opponents of the Crown Prince in the palace, especially since the primary undeclared and agreed upon objective between the father and son is pulling powers of their uncle, the Prime Minister, and not to restructure the economy in favour of the public interest.

Nevertheless, those in control in the palace are well aware that the supposed reform program would be enough to make the Crown Prince lose the confidence of the liberal elite and the moderate opposition, who are candidates to support him against his conservative opponents.

Yet, both parties are no longer counting on him, whether to be a model of good governance and leading a serious economic reform as the opposition hopes, or to be a hand-thick person as loyalists and those in power of Al Khalifa want him to be⁽¹⁵⁾.

15 Read also: *to what direction the oil and gas sector is heading under the Crown Prince leadership*, *Bahrain Mirror*, July 30, 2012

6. The Scenarios of the Mandate of the Covenant

It is difficult to draw clear scenarios for the future of the two brothers Salman and Nasser, under the prospective shifts in the nature of the government. Especially if we assume –even if not certain– that the Bahraini authorities provide a set of reforms that may affect the league involved in decision-making.

It is also illogical to disregard the aspiration shown by Nasser to play an important role in the state and the support he gets from his father and those around him, in light of the fragility that characterize the performance of the Crown Prince and the weakness of his alliances.

Several evidences indicate the continuance of the Minister of the Royal Court (the reader of the King's thoughts and its implementer) to push Nasser to be ahead of his brothers, including the Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad (1975–present), who was appointed in March 2010 as a Personal Representative to the king.

It reflects an apparent attempt to contain the protests of the sons of Sheikha Sabika, the first wife of the king, who appears in the media as the “first lady” in Bahrain, and whose children think they come first, even though they see their half-brother Nasser ahead of them in a fast speedy manner.

Possible scenarios, including the following:

Scenario I: Nasser, a Crown Prince

I am not hesitant to say that Sheikh Salman does not represent the most appropriate option from the ruling crews and Saudi Arabia's perspective for him to become the future king of Bahrain. Perhaps those alongside a wide range of Sunni loyalists prefer Sheikh Nasser for reasons mentioned above.

Nevertheless, the scenario of overthrowing Salman and appointing Nasser to replace him may form a leap that carries implications that are not trivial, and perhaps facing several dilemmas, including the following:

The first dilemma is the strong coalition which was built by the Crown Prince with the United States and Britain. Whereas, Sheikh Nasser's

image reflects an image of an impetuous young man who lacks wisdom, and does not enjoy a close relationship with the West, exactly like the militant in the palace and the Prime Minister's Court.

Yet, it is indefinite whether this dilemma has been inflated as part of the equation, in the light of the Saudi approach that might have a bigger impact than the West. Perhaps the American-British submission to the blackmail practiced by those in power in the royal palace who do not hesitate to direct vitriol to America and Britain through MPs, loyal societies and Al-Watan newspaper⁽¹⁶⁾, is seen as an indicator of the probability that the West could give up on Salman. Especially since some voices believe that their lengthy investment in the Crown Prince did not bear fruit, and some of these voices see the alliance with the real rulers of the country comes first than holding on to Salman who lacks many of the qualities of leadership and firmness from their point of view.

The Wikileaks website revealed that the analysts in Washington in 2009 noticed and after "analyzing the (behavior) of the leadership in the royal family of Bahrain it is more likely that Prince Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and (his younger brother) Prince Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa are emerging significant targets". The leaked document also pointed out the lack of the State Department to information on the princes, and asked for "reports on the scope of their influence within the family, personality traits, and disciplines of knowledge, and if they use drugs or consume alcohol or cause problems within the royal family. Also if they have any friends among Shiite Muslims, who usually stand behind the protests taking place in Bahrain"⁽¹⁷⁾.

The West making up its mind to put Salman in power after his father may not be this certain, especially when we recall that the late Jordanian king Hussein Bin Talal made up his mind to transfer the mandate of the Covenant from his brother Hassan to his son Abdullah II a few weeks prior to his death in 1999. As well as the Qatari Prince who was able to

16 Abbas Busafwan, *How to understand the request of Bahrain to deport the U.S. Ambassador in Manama*, Al Quds Al Arabi, London, July 4, 2012: <http://www.alquds.co.uk/index.asp?fname=data\2012\07\07-04\04qpt473.htm>

17 http://wikileaks-a.blogspot.co.uk/2011/02/blog-post_18.html

transfer the power from his eldest son Meshaal to younger son Tamim easily.

The second dilemma is that Shiite citizens prefer Sheikh Salman to his brother Nasser, while an important sector of the Sunnis may prefer Nasser, yet, they will not be able to reject Salman. Under these complex circumstances, it is difficult for the regime to ignore the negative position taken by the Shiites of Nasser, who they see as militant and a violator of human rights.

The ruling family is not used to taking the opinion of the people into account in such matters or even other less important matters. However, the appointment of Nasser as a Crown Prince may deepen the Bahraini dispute, and lead to strengthening the opposition forces' position of rejecting the monopoly of power to Al Khalifa. It may also enshrine the slogan "the people want to overthrow the regime", and increase the Western suspicions in the ability of the Khalifi regime to make a political settlement of the ongoing Bahraini issue.

The presence of Nasser on the top of the pyramid in the state clearly means the continuation of the policy of the iron fist, cleansing and naturalization, and all its consequences which are deepening the political crisis in the country.

Scenario II: a double-headed Kingdom

In case it was difficult for the Khalifi family to replace Salman with Nasser for reasons related to the unity of the family and not having a third option from the king's sons as the readiness of Khalid bin Hamad (1989- present) for this task is still unclear. Khalid is the fifth son of the king of Bahrain, and is married to King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia daughter. He is believed to be a copy of Nasser. To ensure the monarchy continues to Hamad sons, a double-headed Kingdom scenario can be put forward: Salman and Nasser, the first a king, and the second a Prime Minister, or a Crown Prince, even though Salman has always showed his son Isa as his successor.

It is known that during the reign of the late Emir Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa (1933- 1999), the Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa was the true ruler of the country, and this scenario is available to be repeated again.

Moreover, when Mohammed bin Rashid was a Crown Prince in Dubai he was the true ruler of the Dubai emirate under the rule of his brother Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum. Sheikh Mohammed has settled the mandate of the Covenant to his son when he became the ruler of Dubai, and as we know Nasser bin Hamad is married to the daughter of the Ruler of Dubai.

In Abu Dhabi, the rule of the late Sheikh Zayed moved to a dual: the ruler of Abu Dhabi Khalifa and his brother Mohammed who was appointed as Crown Prince. But the latter apparently is the one who stands up for the management of the governance affairs.

The choice of the double-headed Kingdom was experienced in Bahrain, Dubai and Abu Dhabi and it guarantees the family cohesion, but it could not guarantee Salman to set his son in the mandate of the Covenant.

This scenario means that the power will go to Nasser and not Salman with all that it represents of a victory for the Saudi approach which will intensify the tensions and deepen them in Bahrain.

Summary:

The Crown Prince will have to seriously take on convincing his father, loyalists, oppositionists and Saudi Arabia that he is able to save their interests, under the roof of one country and one home.

But perhaps he is supposed to put in his mind the possibilities of overthrowing him, as the political movement should also take that in mind. Furthermore, Nasser has to be expecting alongside the new position if the king issued a royal order in regard, that there would necessarily be controversy and an increase in the unrest and tension as well as an increase in the western concerns about the efficacy of the line led by King Hamad who plunged the country into an unprecedented predicament.

I might think it is likely that Nasser's opportunities may increase whenever his father was able to quell the unprecedented uprising that permeated Bahrain. Where the position of the Crown Prince is reinforced with the existence of a public movement, under the belief of some parties in the family that Salman may be one of the keys to a comprise with this movement.

This is not a call for an alliance between the Crown Prince and the opposition, as it would be a rush to consider them in an objective alliance. This surely is not making Salman cheer for the protests, where he goes on giving cover to suppress the protests through the behavior of public relations practiced inside and outside Bahrain. But the opposition societies lead by Al Wefaq still clings to him as an ally in a family dominated by militancy in its leaders.

Bahrain is at a crossroads, and the continuation of the current conditions, or the first or second scenario becoming true does not hold any benefits for Bahrain. And perhaps the scenario of a democratic consensus, which is supposed to include enabling the legislative institution of authorizing the name of the king and his Crown Prince, as well as resolving any conflicts that might occur in this regard, is a condition that could lead not to allow a person, no matter who he is, to control Bahrain.

The elected institution is supposed to be the decision-maker, not only in choosing the Prime Minister and forming the government, but also in deciding on choices of the ruling family of the person who shall take on the monarchy, as was done in Kuwait while the Council of the Nation approved Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad an Emir of the State in 2006.

Chapter 04

The Rule of Militancy... A Review of the King's Speeches

8. Power Parity Produces Inertia

In his speech on the occasion of the last ten days of Ramadan (August 28, 2011)⁽¹⁾, Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa appeared to be upfront in his rejection of the demands of the protest movement, which started on 14 February 2011.

Objectively, regardless of the assessment of the king's speech, in my opinion, it was different from all the previous speeches he made. He rejected democracy and showed himself to be a supporter of the use of violence against his opponents.

In the past royal speeches he used to inject public opinion with doses of hope, when he said for example: "the beautiful days are yet to come", and that he does not want a political prisoner during his rule, and that he is against jailing journalists, and that he will review the policies of naturalization, and that every citizen would be given land, and "filling

1 See Appendix (2) for the full text of the letter of the monarchy.

the pockets of the citizens with money” and building the northern city and three other cities and so on.

It is true that most of the promises mentioned and many others have not and probably will not be kept. The king never said he would not keep his promises and that made opposition groups and those loyal to the king lose trust in his official discourse.

The speech in 2011 was clear with no promises of reform. The king even declared that the claims brought by the opposition for reform “will not do or help”, and were rejected.

The rejected demands included those filed by the official opposition (Al Wefaq, and its partner associations) who are ready to set a timetable for the transition to democracy.

It was the first time that he explicitly talked about “punishment” for involvement in the protest movement, but not in the “extreme” sense of the term. And we can talk a lot about the concept of “extremism,” which he referred to in the speech, and enter into a debate about the low degree of tolerance he showed.

He seemed to be in favor of the arbitrary procedures taken against the workers, students and medical staff, yet, he did not believe that such measures should be taken against everyone in these sectors.

He used the word “accelerate” in taking steps to return to work for those who have been dismissed because of their political positions. This word opens the door for interpretation to more delays in reinstating those dismissed.

After analyzing speeches about governance for years I believe, that the last Ramadan speech may be more of an expression of how the king sees himself as an absolute ruler, and sees his loyal people as a congregation.

While he sees the opposition (the Shiite) should be punished, and the land should be “cleansed” of them. As he “cleansed” the army, the palaces the higher position in the state.

This cleansing process also applies to the Council of Ministers, when all ministries continue in the “cleansing” procedure for those who are thought to be the planners for such protests. “Cleansing” also reach to

effect traders⁽²⁾ who are opposed to the king's policies.

For the regime the real problem from behaving in a manner which is condemned internationally, is the continuation of the protest movement that is still active and is expected to grow.

The regime is extremely rejecting those demands, and its procedures are coupled with a green light for the punishment of protesters. It is as if the government is repeating the statement made by the commander of the army: "there is no turning back".

While the Bahraini regime threatens to use violence again, it faces real challenges making it difficult to choose, which has led to the current situation, where the scene has reached to a dead-end.

The regime wants "to resolve" the battle militarily, but it has failed to do so. It has lost the confidence of the international community who sees it as a regime that do not hesitate to suppress its opponents - even murder them - arrest women and demolish mosques.

Contrary to what its supporters believe it is difficult to continue on this path because violations of human rights are unacceptable internationally under any pretext.

The authorities remain wondering: How can the regime face the demands of peaceful reforms, as its image is tarnished in the eyes of the world?

I might think that the situation in Bahrain did not reach its peak yet, and the future may exhibit unexpected escalations, including the move towards civil violence, especially in view of the recorded successes of the popular movement. The successes of the opposition make the authorities take the country into civil conflict.

However, it is important to recognize that the regime still has the army, the Ministry of Interior and the intelligence and thugs 'armed militia groups', as well as significant loyalty. And more importantly, it receives support from the region and the West. Whereas, the official opposition movement is reluctant to take a step forward against the regime, and

2 Shops of the businessman Faisal Jawad were subjected to more than 50 attacks during the outbreak of protests.

perhaps this reluctance leads to the restriction in the violence of the security apparatus.

So, where is this path taking us all? The regime is unable to act and determine the crisis, nor the people are able -up till now- to transform their political vision, popular peaceful mobilization and its anguish upon its victims into in a political settlement.

9. It is Not the Time Yet for Democracy

Any revision of the official discourse since 14 February 2011, including the king's speech will clearly show references linking democracy and a civil war.

King Hamad spoke about the matter of democracy and that it is not the time for it in more than one of his speeches. When he opened Parliament on October 9, 2011⁽¹⁾, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain stated that it's not the time for democracy yet in Bahrain.

He justified his rejection of democracy, with a number of arguments:

- Democracy is against Bahraini Nature.

King Hamad considered that "The system stemming from the civil state and the nature of cultural, political, social and religious factors is the

1 See Appendix (2) for the full text of the letter of the monarchy

suitable system or regime for our country, which is more suited to the situation in Bahrain”.

This mean that the current system, with the monopoly of the ruling family in making decisions and the national wealth is “suitable for our country”, whereas democracy, including the circulation of power, do not fit Bahrain and is against Bahraini nature.

King Hamad did not use the word ‘nature itself, but he refers to it in what he sees in the formation of an elected government, impartial judiciary and the security establishment to represent the people a framework that is against Bahrain’s cultural, social and religious system.

In fact, the “nature” argument has failed globally, and the concepts of equality and human rights and the right of people to govern themselves is seen as a human constant. It is an underlying principle of the United Nations and the international conventions ratified by the Kingdom of Bahrain, many of which are ratified by the King himself.

The concept of “nature” may be used in different countries, without prejudice to the foundations of democracy, its legal frameworks and its actual applications, including the explicit rule of the people governing their country by themselves.

The culture of people and nations will continue to enrich the human experience, where each model is unique and special. We see a clear difference in the American model in comparison with the British, or the Danish, Turkish or Brazilian model.

The framework that those models have in common is periodic elections to ensure a fair, transparent and peaceful transfer of power.

· Democracy Threatens National Unity

The King said in his speech on 9th of October 2011 that the current state system “is the best that suits our country and enhances Bahrain’s national cohesion”. It is just like saying that dictatorship is preserving national unity.

In this sense the application of the foundations of the constitutional monarchy including parties according to parliamentary majority control, will harm national unity, deepen the national aspect, and promote sectarianism, which may later lead to a civil war.

In fact, any review of the official discourse since 14 February 2011, including the king's speech, will clearly illustrate the linkage between democracy and a civil war.

In light of the above the ruling family is asking the opposition to choose between dictatorship and a civil war. The authorities in Bahrain have held a rehearsal of the civil conflict in February and March of 2011, when they moved the civilian militias to attack the areas inhabited by the the majority demanding democracy.

The dictatorship or civil war option will always be presented by the Authority whenever the people move and demand democracy. The degree to which the people manage to succeed will determine the degree to which the authority will try to lead the country and take it into a civil conflict. It is hard to avoid it without consensus to agree on transition to democracy.

But what has not been heard in the royal speech is the idea that democracy has been built in Europe to avoid any civil strife, and not vice versa.

If a society has a group of disparate visions that are keen to prevail, then people have the right to choose. This moves the conflict from the street, the sword and the tank, into the arena of Parliament: the word and the law.

The most important aspect of the democratic peaceful transition of power is that it enables the people to remove any political faction that holds power through a fair election.

This is contrary to what was mentioned in the royal speech: that democracy leads to conflict. Democracy codifies conflicts in a peaceful framework. There are procedures for competing to win the trust of the people by a parliamentary institution.

Instead of using weapons, tools of conflict management in democracies resemble in speeches, sit-ins, periodic elections and parliamentary questions of ministers, as well as toppling governments, in addition to the pivotal role of the media and civil society institutions.

- YES to Development, but NO to Democracy!

The royal speech's expression, indicates the rejection of King Hamad of

the transition to democracy. He says “we will support those who work on constant development as it is historically needed”.

This means that demanding democracy in its international concept, does not enjoy the support of the king, who supports development and not democracy.

Although the King refers to development as historical need, he does not specify the meaning behind those words. Does he mean a more efficient government, and more competent advisory council? Or does he mean more advanced plans? That does not seem obvious at all.

If the analogy is based on the actual experiment, the King himself signed a constitution in 2002, which turned him into an absolute ruler. This make us believe that development in the eyes of the king is in marginalizing the people in political decision-making – or at best “marginalized participants”, as in the models of the councils and the Constitution of 2002.

Even though the statement of “partnership in the decision” is pale, and bypasses the requirement of democracy, it has not been applied in the last ten years. There is no confidence in its true application whatsoever.

The Arab spring has eliminated these uncertain pale statements and demands a total decision-making, ending this whole concept of development used in the ambiguous royal speech.

· The Transition to Democracy Means Burning Stages

King Hamad mentioned in one of his speeches that he supports the development “without jumping to stages.”

The problem here is that the ruling family wants to determine the stages on its own without the involvement of the Bahraini people. For instance, if King Hamad equates development with democracy then the ruling family will decide the stages that Bahrain needs to move through without the approval or the involvement of the Bahraini people.

Since more than ten years, the opposition talked about what the leader of “National Democratic Action Society (WAAD) party” prisoner Ibrahim Sharif calls “delaying” reform. The national opposition forces are not saying that a new prime minister should be elected tomorrow. As the opposition recognizes the difficulty and the cost of the bloodshed

that it wants to reduce, it remains talking about the importance of a dialogue to agree on a smooth transition, within a specified period of time, from a single to a multi-party system.

The authority prefers to work on development as it is today, with no involvement of the people in decision making because the ruling family wants to maintain power within the family itself, even after forty years of the emergence of the modern state.

The reform project in the last ten years made the monopoly of power increase in breach of the constitution and the law. This culminated on 14 February 2011 in an unprecedented popular uprising in the history of Bahrain.

If Bahrain follows this mode of “development” by “not rushing into stages”, it may take a century to arrive at a parliamentary democracy that truly represents the will of the people.

These royal statements are no longer acceptable or even palatable. This argument no longer convinces anyone: it is non-sensual and no one wants to hear this old argument anymore.

It is possible for the authority to drag the country into civil conflicts, but this is neither in the benefit of Bahrain or the ruling family itself. Past experience of civil wars in the region and other areas testifies to this. Whereas democracy reduces differences.

On the issue of burning stages, it became clear after forty years of the emergence of the modern state that this is not the right way to resolve problems in Bahrain. Burning stages are just an excuse not to make the transition to democracy.

I realize there is a crisis of options and I totally understand it, but it seems the best and the safest option is the transition toward democracy!

10. King Hamad and the People 'Face to Face'

The King is not a reformer in his nature, nor conciliatory man. Rather is inclined toward "cleansing", as clearly seen from the military institution he founded, and its appointments in the last ten years, and the entire behaviors he has been taking that bonds inside the famous "al-Bandar report".

King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has before now talked to the people with a "sword in his hand", (August 28, 2011 speech) and he has previously said that the time is not yet right for democracy in Bahrain (the opening of parliament speech: October 9, 2011). In another speech dated January 15, 2012, the King started with his assessment of the unstable political situation in the country.

He believes that the protest movement is not in a position to engage in a dispute for power, as in February and March 2011, so that he would be forced to make meaningful concessions.

The king has a tendency towards dictatorship but as a politician as well, he could make a gift of a thousand dinars to the citizens (February 2011), or go to the stronghold of protest movements on the island of Sitra (February 2001), in order to get the support of the citizens living there to vote on the Charter.

He would not hesitate also to publicly apologize for killing the innocent protestors who have been murdered (February 15, 2011), or to introduce the Crown Prince's initiative (March 13, 2011).

Therefore, the circumstances rule the decision, and not the good intentions toward the people. In his nature, the King is not a reformer nor a consensual person. He is inclined to adopt a policy of "cleansing", as can be seen clearly from the composition of the military establishment he formed and the strategies he adopted and was exposed in the famous Bandar Report.

The King ignored in his speech the demands of the national forces of the opposition and sees that the protest movement has not subsided and is still troublesome, causes harm politically, militarily and economically, and embarrasses the ruling family and its government at the international level. But he also sees that he managed to successfully abort the uprising of Pearl Square in March and February, 2011.

He sees that the uprising in its form after end of May 2011 is unable to shake the authority, which may in time act as it did in the nineties of last century.

The protesters may be trapped in the villages, disturbing power and causing harm to the economy and to the prestige of government but they will not be able to topple the government.

Whether this is seen true or not, it remains important to understand how your opponent looks at this uprising, especially when the regional and international countries started looking at it the same way, making them pressure the regime to correct some situations, not necessarily as a matter of urgency.

It seems that the idea of locking up protests has crept into the media sector, including news agencies such as Reuters and the French and German agencies whose reports are usually neutral.

They report that the mass sit-ins and protests at Pearl Roundabout in the middle of March 2011 were suppressed through the use of force and were stopped.

Returning to the analysis of the king's speech it is clear that he sets out to antagonize and cut the last breath of his opponent.

In the mentalities of rationality, the authorities try to correct as far as possible the negative aspects in order to avoid aggravation. But the behavior of King Hamad in the past ten years, has been more abusive to the people of Bahrain than that of any other member of the royal family. That is why the unprecedented uprising started in February 2011 and is still continuing.

Many advised the king to bring in some real reform to save the country from any risks and dangers, but he believes he can contain the situation inside the country. This advice is really serious, because the King is not able to control wider local and regional situations that might be even more dangerous.

The events of February (2011) were not expected several weeks before it started, until the sudden fall of Presidents Ben Ali of Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Perhaps the King was deluding himself during the huge gatherings at the Pearl Roundabout. He watched the pro-regime Al-Fateh gathering on February 21, 2011 flying by his own airplane. This can be confirmed by those who witnessed and attended the gathering and felt pity for him.

So, according to the reading of the King, the whole situation is under the iron grip of violence and this requires further security options including repressive measures, "cleansings" and collective punishment. It was hoped the problems will be resolved in 2014, by depleting the protest movement, holding new elections, and removing the Prime Minister from the scene.

Even if the state had to go to the table of dialogue, it has the seven points of the crown prince. Dialogue will be preceded and followed by threats and violence tactics especially in areas of contact like (Bani Jamra / Budaiya, Dar klaib / Hamad Town, Muharraq, Samaheej and Dair/ Qalali and Busaiteen).

In circumstances like this, the situation seems to escalate, because nothing will make the people return to their homes, especially when the King challenges them in his transcendent speech on the reality that is stuck in mud.⁽¹⁾

1 See Appendix (3) for the full text of the letter of the monarchy.

Chapter 5

Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) and the Dismantling of the Infrastructure of Tyranny

11. Bassiouni's Recommendations: the Recipe to Bring Down the Regime

Bassiouni's recommendations include a bold call for rebuilding the state according to the public interest rules, and not the interest of the ruling tribe.

Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) report⁽¹⁾ held King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa responsible for implementing the recommendations made on November 23, 2011, in a public ceremony.

The report states that "the King of Bahrain and the Government will develop a mechanism to implement the recommendations of the Committee", within a period of time⁽²⁾.

1 See <http://www.bcsi.org.uk/en/documents/471-bassiouni-report>

2 *Report of the Bahraini independent Commission of Inquiry*, paragraph 1643.

In a speech before a large gathering at his palace in Sakhir, the king pledged his commitment to the terms of the report and its recommendations, even though the King criticized some of the conclusions especially when the report confirmed the patriotic movement and the lack of evidence of Tehran's relations with the protest movement. That confirmation crushed the most important pillars of the anti-revolution led by the radical wing in the regime.

To accept the results of the investigation is a done deal. The BICI was formed after nearly three months of the official violent campaign against the calls for democracy. It was formed as the King said in a June 29, 2011, "After doing a lot of consultation, including with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner"⁽³⁾.

This would force the head of the state and make him obliged not only to the people of Bahrain, but to the international community and the United Nations, to implement the recommendation made by a committee he formed and created.

The Peaceful Spring of Bahrain:

The BICI report lists the government accounts in telling the "Day-to-day events", and also lists the point of view of the opposition⁽⁴⁾. Some may argue that the report did not filter those narratives alleged by both parties, but I think that the conclusion, findings and recommendations are the most important parts and not those stories. The conclusion contains the words of the opposition and international human rights groups, which is a gain indeed.

The report concludes in Chapter II that "Bahrain was influenced by what became known as The Arab Spring. Even when each state and Arab society was affected differently by these events and developments, the Arab Spring encouraged the people of the Arab world, including Bahrain, to express their grievances and demands for reform that were repressed for long periods"⁽⁵⁾.

3 *Al Wasat newspaper, June 30, 2011.*

4 *Report of the Bahraini Independent Commission of Inquiry, paragraphs: 186 and 639*

5 *Report of the Bahraini Independent Commission of Inquiry, paragraph 641*

Therefore, the report denies here the official statement made by the government repeatedly to exclude the movement in Bahrain from the Arab Spring fueled against current dictatorships in those countries in close periods.

The report records that the huge rallies and large marches in the Pearl Roundabout, between February and March 2011, “despite the high ceiling of the demands of the protesters and enlarging the gathering areas, protests showed they were good and peaceful natured⁽⁶⁾” when protesters used to carry flowers.

The report states the protests were peaceful and that denies much of the unreliable narrative put in the report, which is based on the fabricated and inaccurate account of the government and which does not necessarily reflect the view of members of the Committee. Opinions that reflects the views of the Committee –as I see– is where it says in the report: the Committee sees, suggests, concludes and recommends. So, not necessarily that everything mentioned in the report reflect its opinions.

The Dismantling of the State Structure of Dictatorship:

will hereby try to read the recommendations of the report, in light of a fundamental premise: a real implementation of the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) necessarily lead to the collapse of the pillars of the sole-state monopolized by the Al Khalifa family in terms of politics and national wealth.

see that the BICI recommendations call for the restructuring of the legislative, security and intelligence, judiciary and media systems, which the current regime relies on, in order to shift them from functioning beyond law and constitutional and moral standards into functioning in the interest of the International Law.

The recommendations carries many dimensions of humanity and deep commitment to political and human rights, including, in its very essence I think, a bold call for rebuilding the state according to the public interest rules, and not the interests of the tribe. In their entirety,

6 Report of the Bahraini independent Commission of Inquiry, paragraph 650

the recommendations call for the dismantling of the police state that protects the current rule and establishing an alternative system which adopts deeper concepts of human rights.

Restructuring of the Security System:

Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) report makes it clear that the security services violated both Bahraini and international law through the:

- Use of excessive force leading to killing.
- Use of shotguns against civilians, without necessity and warning to minimize serious injury.
- Use of tear gas in an inappropriate manner to disperse the protesters, and to target homes randomly.
- Use of excessive force at checkpoints.
- Breaking into cars and private property without authorization.

The recommendations call for an end to the above-mentioned acts because they are criminal acts based on law, as well as a need for legislative and institutional changes to ensure they never happen again.

The report condemns the arbitrary arrests by the security forces and the military, intelligence and the National Guard.

The recommendations call to hold the Interior Minister, Intelligence Chief, officers, and security personnel accountable for the above-mentioned violations.

The Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry Mahmood Bassiouni says that responsibility for the systematic torture of detainees lies on the Minister of the Interior Sheikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa^[7], who is still in office, as well as the President of the National Security Service (NSA), who was appointed, shortly after the release of the report as Secretary

7 Bassiouni said that the officials involved in torture are the interior minister and head of national security, see *Al-Wasat*, November 25, 2012.

General of the Higher Defense Council⁽⁸⁾ and King's Counselor⁽⁹⁾.

The report recommends that "the security forces receive training on the dimensions of human rights, and in particular the need to refuse to participate in any actions that may be marred by torture or any form of ill-treatment"⁽¹⁰⁾.

Holding the Minister of the Interior truly accountable for those violations will surely lead to "destabilizing" the Ministry of the Interior and will disrupt the security establishment that is based on abuse. Especially if we take into consideration the other recommendations adopted by the commission that stated the importance of including all sectors of the society in the security establishment.

It is worth mentioning that the current security establishment is based on foreigners, named in scientific literature as "mercenaries."

Feasibly, and without exaggeration, it seems to me that these recommendations partially respond to the opposition's demand for engaging in the security establishment.

Implementing this part of Bassiouni recommendation would ensure the involvement of all society's sectors in the security.

This will also ensure this institution to defend human rights. An institution that refuses arbitrary arrest and torture, treats detainees kindly, and applies humanitarian and criminal law properly. This way, Security personnel who violate the laws will be held accountable. These recommendations basically mean cutting off the right hand of the state of dictatorship, which has been aggressively responsible for many violations over the past years.

These points are theoretical, I know. I would rush to say that it is difficult for them to see light. I have discussed this in one my pieces

8 Headed by the King, the Supreme Commander of the Bahrain Defense Force, and includes the leaders of the ruling family, and security officials and the military.

9 Khalifa bin Abdullah was appointed in two mentioned positions on November 28, 2011, after nearly four days of the issuance of Bassiouni report.

10 Report of the Bahraini independent Commission of Inquiry, paragraph 1254.

titled, “Even after Bassiouni Report, it is a surprise to see a settlement in Bahrain”⁽¹¹⁾. where reading the report is one thing and applying its recommendations is quite another.

The Fall of the Intelligence:

Bassiouni calls in the report to prosecute the former head of the National Security Service Khalifa bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, and all officers in the intelligence and those involved in arbitrary arrests and tortures, coupled with the restructuring of the intelligence service to be involved in gathering information without law enforcement.

It has to be ensured that its work is compatible with the demands of the international law⁽¹²⁾.

Although the king issued a decree limiting the work of the Intelligence in the collection of information⁽¹³⁾, it does not change the fact that the intelligence has sharp monstrous teeth and long claws far beyond the constitutional context.

The application of the recommendation of “humanizing” the intelligence service, means the fall of the other arm of dictatorship, which was built 40 years ago. This dictatorship increased in its repression during the past ten years in what was called the reform project, which was basically building non-active democratic frameworks (parliament and municipal councils) and on the other hand building active institutions to crush the will of the people.

The presence of the former officer Adel Fleifel⁽¹⁴⁾ in the political arena and the welcome he received by the Prime Minister, is enough to say that the ruling family is not honest when it claims it is applying these recommendations.

11 *Bahrain Mirror*, November 15, 2011.

12 *Report of the Bahraini independent Commission of Inquiry*, paragraph 1718.

13 *See Al Wasat Newspaper*, November 29, 2011.

14 *Charges against him of violating human rights during the validity of the security of the state, especially during the uprising nineties.*

A Severe Blow to the Judicial System:

The Bassiouni report directs a blow at the judiciary system, while wondering “whether the judicial system may carry more of its energy during the events of February and March 2011, or failed as a result of weakness in dealing with the challenges imposed by the situation”⁽¹⁵⁾.

The report finds that violations truly occurred in pre-trials and during trials, which deprived the accused of the most basic guarantees for fair trials⁽¹⁶⁾. Other parts of the report directs harsh criticism on the failure of prosecutors and judges in fulfilling their roles in investigating complaints of torture⁽¹⁷⁾. The report calls for accountability for the perpetrators of torture. In my estimation, It is also necessary to bring the army commander, Field Marshal Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa (The brother of the Minister of the Royal Court) to trial for applying the national safety (emergency) measures, which ran the notorious emergency courts.

It is perhaps worth examining whether the trials are supposed to mark the head of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary, the King; or his deputy, and the members of the Council. Where I personally think it is supposed to mark with accountability the Minister of Justice, Sheikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa who played an unprofessional role, and lacked legal and moral sense, continuing to “beautify” these unconstitutional trials, and encouraged or condoned torture, as evidenced in the report.

The report points out many factors that could bring down the military judiciary system in its monstrous phase during the period of national safety (emergency) and beyond, so “that the decree applied by the National Safety Military Prosecutor has exceeded the national judicial system”.

Bringing down the Military judiciary or restraining it, as well as

15 *Report of the Bahraini independent Commission of Inquiry, paragraph 1702.*

16 *Report of the Bahraini independent Commission of Inquiry, paragraph 1702.*

17 *Report of the Bahraini independent Commission of Inquiry, paragraph 1241.*

restructuring the public civil justice, to provide guarantees for the accused, means the judiciary has to be independent from the executive branch, and the ruling family and its narrow objectives. This also means separating courts for the Public Prosecution, the Ministry of Interior, the Intelligence, the royal palace interventions and governmental bodies. The judges and public prosecutors must not receive instructions from military and civilian commanders, and they must ensure fair, independent and transparent trials for the defendants. Again, the neutrality of the judiciary and its independence means protecting the people from the oppression of the authorities and bringing to an end this important tool used by an oppressive state.

The Illegality of the State of National Safety (Emergency) case in Bahrain

Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) says that there is a gap in the legislative declaration of a state of national safety, and in its implementation. “The constitution did not clarify the circumstances in which the government may resort to declaring national safety and it did not pin point the measures to be taken by the government thought its implementation”⁽¹⁸⁾.

The report believes that many of the actions that took place during that time lacked legal legitimacy, or at least remain in a foggy legal position. The report finds that some applications of National Safety were arbitrary to a high degree indeed.

It calls to pass legislation that regulates the status of a national state to be restricted by the international obligations of Bahrain. This provision, if applied, seems enough to reduce violations in various human rights fields recorded in the past months, under the pretext of national safety (emergency).

The Military under Questioning:

The reader of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) report may conclude that there is a major effort by the State to keep the

18 *Report of the Bahraini independent Commission of Inquiry, paragraph 164.*

army away from accountability, in the hope that the army, who protect the throne remains “clean”, loyal and far from the legal frameworks.

However, these attempts did not completely succeed; the army is still accountable according to the report for the use of lethal force against Abdulredha Buhumaid, who fell dead on February 18 (February 2011) after being shot directly by the army.

The responsibility for the killing of citizens, such as Bahia Al Aradi and two others was not placed on the army. The report concluded that there is no evidence that the military used excessive force to kill them, even with the proof that the bullets that killed them were fired by military personnel. This may mean that the killing of these three is “by fault,” but this word is not mentioned or stated clearly in the report.

In addition to the involvement in killings, the military was involved in the arrest of more than 100 people⁽¹⁹⁾ and the demolition or participation in the demolition of nine of the mosques of the Shiite community⁽²⁰⁾. Without a doubt, this is direct blame for the army that requires legal and political accountability.

There also must be some accountability by the army officials for committing serious violations and physical and psychological torture against detainees in Al Gurain prison run by the Bahrain Defense Force.

The report says that the violations stopped in June 10, 2011, which means they lasted from March 17, 2011 for a period of three months.

Given what was mentioned in the report that torture is systematic, the army leadership is a part of any accountability. The officials of the army and the military prosecutor, prosecutors and judges in the courts of national safety (emergency) are responsible for gross violations and the absence of justice in these courts.

It seems the army commander is responsible for legal and political violations during the national safety (emergency), being the person-

19 Report of the Bahraini Independent Commission of Inquiry, paragraph 1125.

20 Report of the Bahraini Independent Commission of Inquiry, paragraph (A) 1317.

in-charge for the implementation of its measures⁽²¹⁾.

It is not a political battle here, but this issue requires a team of lawyers to decide on, and I find myself agreeing in line with the Bassiouni Commission that the army did not use live ammunition on a large scale. That would indicate that the hands of the army were tied to an extent and that talk of as F-16 planes to be used to wipe out villages and regions engaged in the rebellion were completely a royal nonsense.

Atrophy of the Official Media:

Bassiouni condemns the official media and accuses them of “humiliating” opponents. He says this should not only happen again but also calls to open the television and radio broadcasting for the opposition, and for the national media to be for all.

Despite the promises of the authorities to open the media for all, this provision was not enforced. State television continued unchanged in its distasteful mode. The regime knows well that enforcing this would mean that one of the arms of the police state will be cut off. A police state that is based in biased media and prevailing repression force.

Inadmissibility of the Punishment of Protesters:

To bring back those dismissed from their jobs and students dismissed from their universities, and to free prisoners, including the leaders of the opposition where these groups did not break the law, as the report acknowledges, would make the authorities lose the popular balance.

When those dismissed return to their positions, the morale of those who call for change will be raised and will be able to protest again, because the state cannot arrest and dismiss them from their jobs.

The recommendations explicitly state that thousands can join rallies such as those of February and March 2011, because they are lawful and legal protests. It also states that the protesters can raise chants demanding a state of democracy, including chants calling for the fall of the regime, and they can strike and address the media and practice all

21 Abbas Busafwan, *Bahrain Mirror*, *Marshal may be charged twice in the human rights violations*, July 13, 2011.

peaceful activities they wish to. The vast majority of the measures taken by the Authority are considered illegal by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) and those responsible must be held accountable.

The regime here will be thrown into a baffle, knowing that the advocates of reform will increase and are protected by international laws from abuse and terror practiced by the regime in the past months.

Therefore, the dismissed workers were reinstated in a very slow pace after international intervention by the International Labor Organization, with so much injustice though. Hundreds have not yet been reinstated and opportunities of new employment for people seen as opposition –the Shiites according to “Hamad Startegy”– have been stopped.

Summary:

A true implementation of the recommendations of Bassiouni shall never take place. They are almost the same as the recommendations that have repeatedly been made by the Human Rights Council, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the report of the U.S. State Department. They are the same as those put and mentioned in the Constitution of Bahrain, issued by the King without referring to the people. The constitution written but not practiced by the state.

It is worth noting that if the recommendations are not implemented, the credibility of King Hamad shall be gone. He lost the trust of his people; Sunnis and Shiite for many reasons, and he also lost the confidence of the neighboring countries like (Kuwait, Qatar, Oman), as well as the confidence of the Americans and Europeans. That is because he failed to keep his promises to the people, and to the West during the past ten years. He is left alone with the Saudis who are costing the Khalifi regime a lot for their radicalism and refusal to reform.

I see that the recommendations of Bassiouni, if implemented, could change the course of events in Bahrain, and I shall be fascinated to see the report turn into a similar initiative to the Khaliji Initiative in Yemen, in order to overthrow the standing dictatorial system.

Chapter 06

A Future Vision

12. Possible Scenarios of Settlement

The best option for obtaining stability in Bahrain is to turn it into a Western style democratic system and through resolving the political conflict through the ballot box.

However, this solution is unacceptable to the ruling regime, and cannot be translated into action and reality unless the opposition forces manage to pose a real threat to the regime, much more severe than during February and March 2001.

That the regime of Al Khalifa is very similar to Mubarak's regime in Egypt and Ben Ali's in Tunisia, for refusing compromises on the level of restructuring of the ruling establishment. It is a case of break or be broken.

The "Saudi approach" prevailing in Manama, backed by the Gulf and the west rejects the scenario of a democratic transition, where Iran seems to be aware of these complexities, and calls for a settlement that takes

into account the challenges of the local and regional reality⁽¹⁾.

So what options are available to the regime and the opposition? And what are the expected scenarios in order to contain the crisis? I will try in the following to present a series of scenarios, and read the possibility of their recurrence in the light of past experiences between the regime and the opposition, as well as the current given facts.

1. The scenario of displacing the King collides with the Dispersion of the opposition and the weakness of the Crown Prince

In 1923, Britain decided to overthrow the ruler of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa, and replace him with his eldest son, Sheikh Hamad, due to Shiite citizens' complaints of human rights violations, and rampant corruption by the state ruling party.

This change was opposed by the main parties in the ruling family, as opposed by the Al Dawaser tribe who were classified as a major Sunni influence, fearing that this displacement could be the beginning of Al Baharna/Shiites influence and power.

Britain resorted to the appointment of Sheikh Hamad (I) as a governor, and made some administrative changes that were considered important at that time.

When discussing the possibility of repeating the scenario in the twenties, replacing the king of Bahrain with his son the Crown Prince to be a way out of the current crisis, several points can be made:

First of all, it can be said that there are important sectors demanding the removal of King Hamad, and possibly bring down the entire regime. However, the main difference between the past and the present is the absence of a total consent of the opposition and Shiites on the removal of King Hamad. In the twenties of the last century the whole Baharna/ Shiites refused Shaikh Isa bin Ali to remain in power in the letter handed to the British Political Resident in Bahrain Colonel A.B Trevor during their meeting in December 1921. They have also rejected

1 Abbas Busafwan, *geopolitics and democracy in Bahrain*, Al-Akhbar Lebanese newspaper, December 20, 2011.

the petition Sheikh Isa asked them to sign in support to his rule⁽²⁾.

The current Shiite opposition forces (Al Wefaq, and the Alliance for the Republic) do not pose the idea of replacing King Hamad with his son the Crown Prince. Al Wefaq (the major opposition society) calls to reduce the powers of the king, while the Alliance for the Republic (consisting of Haq movement, Al Wafa party, and Bahrain Freedom Movement) calls for stripping the entire royal family from decision-making power and authority. Obviously there is a big difference between only reducing the powers of the governor and his total departure, where also the biggest difference is between the departure of only the governor and the entire family.

This situation is even more fragmented with the presence of Shiite families, though few in numbers, loyal to the regime and is part of its bureaucracy. Waad Society, the main ally for "Al Wefaq", and some of its members, such as leading figure Dr. Munira Fakhro, consider talking about regime change damaging to the public interest. That means that the leaders of the Waad Society mixed between its Sunnis and Shiites members, stand out against any talk for the overthrow of the monarchy, and does not propose to replace the King with his son as an option for any settlement.

The lack of consensus in the opposition's aspiration and vision increases the dispersion and confusion between its bodies, and increases the volatility between the masses and deepens their differences. It also expands the room for maneuver with the regime and its regional and western supporters, where they can fully play on the strings of variations that are thought to be unessential, yet important. Because unity among factions of the opposition in the phase of the national struggle to achieve a historic achievement is crucial, knowing also that the experience of the establishment of a Council for coordination between the bodies of the opposition at home and abroad ended in an utter failure.

To sum up, if the opposition itself does not present the option of the twenties as the beginning of change, the ruling family and its supporters are more likely to ignore such scenario.

2 Dr. Saeed Al-Shihabi, *Bahrain 1920 1971, a study in the British documents*.

Secondly the Crown Prince Salman does not enjoy alliances within the ruling family that would qualify him to persuade them to be a substitute for his father in order to save the current situation.

The crown prince did not win the family conservatives who are led by the Prime Minister, and who view him as westernized member of the family.

However, that is only the surface, as the war between King Hamad and Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa was resolved by the first through converting all economic powers to his son Salman, and this is what led to the involvement of the latter in a brutal war with the Prime Minister, merchants lobby, and their Sunni allies, who –generally– opposed the economic reform projects adopted and launched by the Crown Prince in 2003 to reform the labor market⁽³⁾, which is now far away from its main objectives that have been proposed initially.

It seems also surprising that the Crown Prince often suffers from marginalization by the lobby surrounding the King, which controls the palace led by Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, where complaints of Salman and those close to him were for so long a hot material for political gatherings.

The Royal Court Minister fears that the Crown Prince will pull the rug from him, and he always tried to involve Nassir bin Hamad, the Crown Prince half-brother, to appear in major events as the closest person to his father, and perhaps the best person able to manage the country after his father.

Maybe it seems surprising to many to say that if there is no Western ally (U.S–British) supporting Salman's reign after his father and the militant appearances of his brother/rival Nassir during the recent events, as well as allegations of torture which are attributed to him–perhaps we will find Nassir serving as the Crown Prince. This scenario remains probable at all times, especially if things restored to the king and ended the protest movement.

3 For more details about the project, see general questions about the reform of the labor market in the following link: <http://portal.imra.bh/arabic/faq/category/2>

The disadvantage of the Crown Prince in the system of governance weakens the idea of copying the experience of the twenties replacing the father with his son. It is not seen as an input to resolve the royal family inherited rule, and the people's aspiration to become the source of power and authority.

Thirdly, the absence of the king in participating in decision-making when he was a Crown Prince (1969-1999), where the prime minister was the real ruler of the country, helped in blurring his king image in public opinion and among the leaders. This has enabled the king to pass his political undemocratic project in a resounding and successful way in 2001 (98% in the vote on the National Charter).

The King's absence from the public view when he was a crown prince includes the absence of his crew, who currently run the country. As the Minister of the Royal Court Khalid bin Ahmed was not known by the public opinion before Sheikh Hamad came to power in 1999, and the army commander Khalifa bin Ahmad (the Royal Court Minister brother) operates like a professional defense minister who does not throw himself in the clutches of politics.

The current Crown Prince and his advisers are totally immersed in current policy. Since 2005 the main adviser of the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa presided at the interface of any economic event, and served as CEO of the Economic Development Board (controlling the economic resolution), and also chaired the board of directors of "Tamkeen" (concerned in supporting the private sector and qualifying Bahrainis to engage in the labor market, operating under an open budget).

He also chaired Bahrain Polytechnic, which FSA report of year 2011-2012 noted had suspicions of corruption in many aspects of its work. Moreover, he chaired the Board of Directors of the Bahrain Development Bank. All are initiative projects of the Crown Prince to maintain the economy, which includes economic reform, labour market reform, and education reform.

Mohamed Ben Isa left in March 2012 his post in the Economic Development Board EDB, and was appointed as an adviser to the Crown Prince for political and economic affairs, in a belated attempt to

mimic the model of his father with the Minister of his royal court Khalid bin Ahmed. However the Crown Prince's team still manages files of the economy and oil.

Kamal Ahmed is in charge of the Ministry of Transport managing Gulf Air (daily estimated loss about half a million Bahraini Dinars)⁽⁴⁾, Bahrain International Airport and the telecommunications sector. He also is the Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Development Board EDB since March 2012, and is responsible before the Parliament for Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding Company (a Bahraini sovereign wealth fund/ the investment arm of the Government of Bahrain in the non-oil sectors), which manages a \$ 8.8 billion investment portfolio.

Mahmoud Al Kooheji serves as CEO of Mumtalakt, and is also Chairman of Aluminium Bahrain (Alba) (a major Bahrain company), whose profits fell during the first half of 2012 to around 57 million dinars, compared with a profit of 102.88 million dinars for the same period of 2011, a drop of 44.63 percent⁽⁵⁾.

Zayed Al Zayani heads the board of the Bahrain International Circuit BIC that has recorded consecutive annual losses (more than 8 million in 2011), since its inception in 2004. It was built at a total cost of \$ 150 million, not for any economic consideration but because of the Crown Prince's passion for cars and races.

Tasks of the Ministry of Finance are assigned to Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, after the removal of Abdullah Hassan Saif, who is close to Prime Minister in January 2005 in a blow to the influence of the prime minister in any economic decision.

The Minister of Finance had been assigned in July 2012 to oil and gas affairs as well, in light of fears of the repeated failure in other projects sponsored by the Crown Prince⁽⁶⁾.

The unsuccessful experiences of the Crown Prince in reforming the economy (labor market, Formula One, Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding

4 Al Wasat newspaper, January 7, 2012.

5 Al Wasat newspaper, July 29, 2012.

6 Abbas Busafwan: to what direction the oil and gas sector is heading under the Crown Prince leadership, Bahrain Mirror, July 30, 2012

Company, and Gulf Air) aborted the hope of liberal elites and moderate opposition of Prince Salman bin Hamad to be a reformist project of good governance.

Fourthly the Crown Prince has failed to form strong relationships with the traditional social fabric (popular families), in contrast to his father, who managed through four decades of army formation to build a crowd around himself.

With the absence of the king from public view when he was Crown Prince, the chances of having animosities against him amid the public opinion have decreased when he first came to reign. Crown Prince Salman made huge mistakes in managing the economic file, and could be seen as a tyrannical figure, when the Economic Development Board headed by him enjoys not being questioned by the parliament, which is already fragile. He could also be seen as a sectarian administrator when the team working around him consists of only one sector (Sunni).

Even though it seems that the opposition is taking a positive attitude towards the Crown, it is not without its helplessness and poor choices, where it does not know who to ally itself within the ruling power, as they could not find a partner inside. It is a stand that carries a lot of courtesy, in the hope that the Crown Prince tops the political scene through practical situations supporting his calls for dialogue. It is the very same call for dialogue he mastered, and presented him as a moderate and open character.

However, by repeating his boring terms of calling for dialogue without any effective actions, he has harmed in the end his already-fragile "alliance" with the opposition. The opposition has described his political conduct as being closer to the public relations of the ruling family. Where some opposition parties accused him for working as a defender of the government's tyrannical approach using a liberal attitude. Furthermore, he is seen as a person who can be turned into a tool in the hands of the military and extremists, as it appeared when the big companies run by his team dismissed about two thousand employees for supporting the opposition in the current uprising.

The loss or win of the Crown Prince to the opposition, did not enable the Crown Prince to win the Sunni loyal groups who view him as an ally

of their opponents, especially when he presented the seven-point plan (March 2011) during the sit-ins at the Pearl Roundabout. His plan theoretically proposed a shift to democracy, including what that could mean of prospects for the establishment of a Shiite impact in power, which is usually feared by the main Sunni groups.

The bottom line is the sporadic position of the Shiites on overthrowing King Hamad, and the rejecting position of the main opposition toward any scenario of this kind, whether or not it is put as an option and a way out of the crisis.

In addition to the weakness of the Crown Prince in the system of governance, the weakness of his alliances with the loyal groups, and the opposition's distrust in his abilities, all make the idea of overthrowing King Hamad a non-popular idea for the supporters of the Khalifi rule (Britain and America). Where such a scenario is outside the range of the Saudi patron, even with Saudi King Saud removal in 1963, when it felt the need to do so.

Yet, when the royal family needs to offer a scapegoat to save its rule, and when overthrowing the weak Prime Minister or the influential Minister of the Royal Court Khalid bin Ahmed aren't seen as enough to rescue the Khalifi rule, the overthrow of King Hamad is difficult to remove from the negotiation table.

However, it is worth recalling that the overthrow of Sheikh Isa bin Ali in the twenties had strengthened Khalifi rule and its alliance with the West on the one hand.

On the other hand, it dumped the Shiite congestion that saw what happened as a British victory for them! But the fact was that the Khalifi control continued and increased, because the ruling establishment was not re-structured, but changed its faces. And that enabled Al Khalifa to continue to monopolize the political decision and national wealth, while the British continued to tell the Baharni/ Shiites: »We've won for you and did you a favour!« And the truth was that they have won for the Khalifa family, and helped them establish themselves as rulers. Yet, this is also due to the Shiite/ Baharni seeing themselves as only "locals", and not a substitute to govern, as well as not having a military and financial force enjoyed by Al Khalifa and the Al Dawaser tribe.

2. The opposition's consideration of the Minister of the Royal Court as the king eliminates the option of his removal

Between 1954 and 1956, Bahrain has witnessed an unprecedented public uprising, led by the National Union, which was formed by election in October 1954, divided equally between Sunnis and Shiites, led by Abdul Rahman Al Baker, to contain the events of a sectarian nature. However, this uprising became a historical political movement, raised demands of reform, including: the election of a legislative council, judicial reform, the reform of the security services, allowing the formation of trade unions, free elections in the area of health, education and municipalities.

Besides, a general amnesty for prisoners and deportees as well as prosecuting those accused of shooting citizens⁽⁷⁾, in addition to the dismissal of the influential adviser of Bahrain government Charles Palgrave. These aspirations are not much different from the demands of the February 14, 2011 movement.

After nearly three years of active political action, and negotiations with the local government and the representatives of the colonial British authorities, the union did not achieve the demands brought to the governor. But it did not reduce the pride of the Bahrainis of this experience, particularly in terms of standardization the two communities in raising national demands.

The fifties movement ended up with prosecuting the leaders of the national movement, sending them forcefully into exile outside the country, and referring Palgrave to retirement after being the actual ruler of the island.

When approaching what happened then, and studying the possibilities of its repeat as a platform to get out of the current crisis, the following can be noted:

Firstly the authorities will continue to work to contain any Shiite-Sunni rapprochement, and prevent claims in the consolidated list. The regime

7 Dr .Essa Amin, *trials of the anniversary of the National Union*, a paper presented at Waad Society, December 23, 2004.

has succeeded in moving more than that, to mobilizing the Sunni street to be against the demands of the general national reform.

In fact, since the fifties experience the authorities have started to implement policies that contribute to the division of citizens along sectarian line. Iran's Islamic Revolution at the end of the seventies gave the government's divisive approach additional pretexts.

These policies have turned scattered in the eighties, which were characterized as a reaction in the nineties, turned in the first decade of the new millennium to a systematic action plan directly sponsored by the Royal Court and his influential minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, where its major joints were revealed in Al Bandar report. Al Fateh gathering formed on February 21, 2011 was seen as a test to measure the success of creating a Shiite-Sunni divide, and perhaps it recorded a resounding success more than the government had expected, when thousands of loyalists Sunnis gathered chanting "the people want to remove the roundabout" (Pearl Roundabout).

The movement of 14 February inherited the failure of the opposition in the eighties and the nineties of the last century in developing a strong national coalition, and preventing the acquisition of the authorities to the Sunni public opinion. This division strengthened in the past decade when Al Wefaq National Islamic Society rejected to provide a national electoral list in 2006, and 2010, and their refusal to nominate historic leaders such as Abdul Rahman Al Nuaimi and others like Ebrahim Sharif within the available seats of the society.

Secondly the authorities will continue to conduct formal dialogues with some opposition parties, without coming up with meaningful outcomes. And they will continue to take a number of superficial measures that help in managing the crisis and buying time, in order to be ready to seize upon the movement and contain it.

Perhaps the most prominent of these formalities, is the sequential and loose talk on the implementation of the Bassiouni recommendations, and forming a body and Minister responsible for following-up. Yet, that does not change that this implementation will remain incomplete, while the fact says that a true implementation of these recommendations will lead to the dismantling of the state system of dictatorship. So expecting its application is not based on a logical position.

Thirdly when you search for a character who exercises, at present, an influence similar to the influence and power of the Advisor of the Government of Bahrain Charles Palgrave, I would not choose the Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa, who is outside the decision system, contrary to what some opposition parties and the international media promote. And I would choose without hesitation the Minister of the Royal Court Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, the right hand of the king, and the one who can be regarded as the actual Prime Minister, or viceroy. It is very true that he is the second man in the State, and if he talks or gives an order it is as if the king had done so.

Is it possible to remove the Minister of the Court and refer him to retirement as Palgrave was referred? And will this lead to an important change in political life?

First of all, it seems surprising that the official opposition in Bahrain (Al Wefaq and its five partners) avoid criticizing Khalid bin Ahmed and also the king, and perhaps you find some criticism of the king, like Sheikh Ali Salman, the Secretary General of Al Wefaq stating that there is no royal will to reform, but you will not easily find any criticism to his first minister.

While searching for excuses for the opposition avoiding a series of criticisms of the king that could lead to a rupture with the head of state who holds a major part of the solution, it may also be understood that the opposition sees Khalid in the same way in it sees the king, where criticizing him means criticizing the king.

Secondly the opposition societies lived a negative and bitter experience at the level of the king's abandonment of his two major assistants. Since September 2006 the opposition has been demanding the resignation of Ahmed Atiyatallah (nephew of the Minister of the Royal Court) from his post as Minister of the Council of Ministers Affairs, in the wake of former adviser to the Royal Court Dr. Salah Al Bandar exposing a government cell led by Atiyatallah to dwarf the opposition and the Shiite community.

Unlike the expected, the influence of Atiyatallah has extended since 2006 and gained arms like an octopus. He became a Minister with extra qualities by supervising the agenda of the Council of Ministers, and

chairing the Central Information Directorate, the Civil Service Bureau, and election administration. Besides, secret tasks given to him by the secret cell, as exposed in the Al Bandar report, which includes multiple arms, including intelligence, financial and a third with a missionary nature (as in to convert Shiites to Sunnis). He was also charged with the establishment and management of civil society organizations affiliated to the authority, in addition to a media arm that oversees Al Watan newspaper, the Public Opinion Center and E Media.

The king was compelled to dismiss Atiyatallah on February 25, 2011, ten days after the start of the uprising on February 14, within a very limited cabinet reshuffle in order to absorb the public storm.

It is perhaps not surprising when the King resets Atiyatallah to become the Minister for Follow up Affairs at the Royal Court on the sixth of April, 2011, the authorities broke up the set-in at the Pearl Roundabout with Saudi and Emirati military support.

Thirdly if the King dealt with the problematic issue of Atiyatallah in such way, imagine how he will be dealing with the closest version to him (Khalid bin Ahmed). However, what happened means that the King sacking those close to him will be improbable if this action will strengthen the position of the regime before the public movement. However action of this kind will be only in compelling circumstances and it will not necessarily neglect the person being retired, who may remain an active actor in the back ground. In the sense that the change will not bring a significant shift in political life, unless the king invested it to take deep institutional reform measures.

It is interesting that in the last period of the movement of the fifties, the National Union pulled out its demand of removing the influential advisor Palgrave in an expression of apology to the Government of Bahrain and the British authorities. That came after the British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd was assaulted during a visit to Manama in the 8th of March 1956^[8]. This does not mean that the opposition fears to repeat that scenario, where its demand of removing the Minister of the Royal Court makes its offer an apology for such a demand!

8 Dr .Essa Amin, *the National Union in the British documents, a paper presented at the Democratic Forum, Sunday, October 24, 2004.*

The bottom line is that the removal of the Minister of the Royal Court is not an option on the table. So, as long as it does not represent a demand of the position, and replacing him means the king throwing unnecessarily paper, the king is before another option which offsets his uncle Sheikh Khalifa as prime minister. In order to build a harsh road for gradual reforms, that does not force the king to hand over the helm of the decision to an elected parliament and government, nor ignore the facts of the uprising on February 14 and the Arab Spring dues.

The offset of Sheikh Khalifa finds the support of the West and all Gulf states except Saudi Arabia, as it is not opposed by the main Sunnis aligned to the king, unlike the rumors about their adherence to the Prime Minister. The official opposition (Al Wefaq and its partners) consider the offset of the Prime Minister as a first step towards reform. Nevertheless, it ceded this demand as a condition to step forward into a dialogue to open a new page, and such an inconclusive position puts question marks on whether the authorities must take in considering changing the prime minister as a necessary option or not.

During protests at the Pearl Roundabout (February- March 2011) the demand of changing the prime minister turned into a power show of the opposition demanding to appoint another person of the ruling family who is not considered as “a symbol” and is allowed to be questioned. The regime was afraid that the change of Sheikh Khalifa could repeat what happened in Tunisia and Egypt of dramatic changes.

Nevertheless changing Sheikh Khalifa is no longer so perceptive now, as he is already an opponent to the king and has been stripped of all powers in governance. Sheikh Hamad offered his uncle repeatedly the position of viceroy, a ceremonial position not stipulated in the Constitution, but was rejected by the prime minister strongly; this may be an option in 2014.

The removal of the Prime Minister is intended to be a substitute for a historic settlement, and I mean by a historic settlement that agreed upon with the people on the writing of a new constitution.

However, the Prime Minister is nothing but a crust of dictatorship in Bahrain, and his removal is difficult to lead to any transition to democracy, the basic requirement for stability. Unless it was exploited

by the King who can give an impression that the Prime Minister is what was hindering reforms, and take substantial measures to restructure the ruling establishment. Yet, this seems a revolutionary scenario that is incompatible with a conservative area like Bahrain's.

Finally, the removal of Palgrave was part of a plan to revitalize the British influence in Bahrain, in light of the permanent unrest throughout the years before the 1956 uprising, which means that a Khalifi agreement with their regional and international supporters will be crucial on the need to change the faces of decision makers in the regime, more fully than to respond to the demands of the public or a political reform.

3. The non-existent Chance for Constitutional Settlement

The people of Bahrain chose independence of their land and their Arab identity when Iran agreed in 1970 to conduct a poll on independence of Bahrain⁽⁹⁾. Back then, an unwritten agreement was made between the people and Al Khalifa family that following the independence an agreement must come on a constitutional formula that ensures partnership in decision making and national wealth between the parties. Even though that unregulated poll conducted by the delegate of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in March 1970 focused on the Arab identity of Bahrain and independence, not addressing the nature of governance.

On the Independence Day (August 1972) the Constituent Assembly was formed to write a constitution with a majority of 22 elected members and 20 appointed members. The Board approved the constitution, and it was issued by the late Amir Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa in 1973, reflecting the partnership in the writing of the constitution and approval.

The Constitution of the State of Bahrain is considered the first public legitimacy given to the rule of Al Khalifa family in Bahrain. And it was

9 To know more on the backgrounds of independence, see: Yousif Makki, *Bahrain's Independence 1968-1971: the public position and the position of regional and international powers*, Bahrain Centre for Studies in London BCSL, August 14, 2012.

hoped it would open the horizon to move from a state of permanent tension that characterized political life since the Al Khalifa's arrival to the small island coming from Al Zubarah (located in the north-west coast of the Qatari peninsula) in the year 1873. Also it was hoped to fold the Khalifa "conqueror" family culture, which is still considering its seizure of Bahrain as a "conquest", feats and glories.

Moreover, the royal family insists to use the term "conquest", because it believes that it granted it a license to possess the land, with its people and property, within the "Islamic" interpretation of conquests. It has been said that some conquests may be true when Muslim enter "Infidel lands", and not a state known as one of the first countries submitting to Islam- Bahrain. Unless, if we consider the citizens of the Shiite Muslims, who represent the majority of the people of Bahrain as infidels!

The consensus on the constitution also recorded a public recognition of the legitimacy of the rule of Al Khalifa, to stop political forces, Shiite especially from talking about the occupation of Al-Khalifa to Bahrain, having Al Khalifa as part of the country, after nearly two centuries of their arrival in the country.

So, the writing of the Constitution and agreeing upon it mean much more than being a unique political event for the democratic transformation in the politically- infertile region. It conveys the conflicting parties in the country on its identity, property, decision and wealth from conflict, to recognition that Bahrain is for all children, regardless of any other considerations.

However, the authorities dissolving the elected parliament in 1975, suspending the constitution, and issuing the State Security Law, have turned the situation to that of pre-1970. And the country entered a tunnel until 2001, when king Hamad's political project began, which was promising that "the most beautiful days are yet to come" he said, marking his new reign with great expectations.

When considering the possibility of a repeat of what happened in 1973, and the opportunity of a consensus on the writing of a new constitution a present option, the following points can be stated:

First of all, one of the most important problems experienced in Bahrain in the past decade of the new millennium is the existence of

a constitution that is not agreed upon, in the wake of the issuance of King Hamad of the constitution of 2002 without consulting the political forces, and a referendum of the people.

Despite the existence of periodic elections (2002, 2006, 2010), and a half elected parliament, the political situation deteriorated in a manner beset with ingrained problems, which the country experienced when the 1973 constitution was suspended, between 1975 and 2002.

Perhaps a grave mistake committed by the King is when he flaunts over the public reference, and cancels the agreed-upon 1973 constitution. Such a measure to abolish the constitution even if it is not applied has not been taken by the Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, who ruled Bahrain with an iron fist between 1972 and 2000.

By issuing the 2002 Constitution, the king has driven a wedge between him and large segments of the population who supported with all honesty and enthusiasm in his political project. And through the continuance of other unwise policies, an unprecedented revolution in Bahrain broke out on the ninth anniversary of the issuance of the Constitution (14 February 2011).

Secondly the King considers himself the father of the Constitution, and believes in changing the foundations of the existing constitutional system a violation to his person and his stature.

This personal dimension holds of any opportunities of constitutional compatibility. Where the King seems siren when talk starts about the abolition of the Shura Council, which is considered by the king one of his ideas, apart from the Shura Council being a safety valve for the regime.

However, the king seems more provocative when he hears demands of cancelling the existing constitution, and that talk on an agreement on a new constitution turned into a red line for the regime.

Thirdly the opposition societies' discourse does not seem to address and insist on the formation of a constituent assembly to write the constitution, but adheres to the term of consensual Constitution. And it may be committed also to saying that any constitutional amendment must pass through a referendum, which means that the desired Constitution can be the current Constitution, which can bear changes

through existing constitutional mechanisms, including the approval of the appointed Shura Council that represents half of the parliamentary seats, as well as the king's approval.

Some opposition parties say they do not rule out this option to facilitate a political settlement, where it adheres to what it calls the essence of the truth: the people are the source of authority. These opposition parties do not stick to the »people are the source of authority« mechanisms, and without a doubt, to expect the issuance of a modern constitution through existing mechanisms is closer to a daydream.

Fourthly, many almost agree on the Shiites majority inevitability in any fair and impartial election to any constituent assembly. This fact increased the rejection of the authorities and Sunni loyalists to the idea, and even refusing to discuss it or place it on the table of negotiation.

Therefore, the initiative of the Crown Prince (March 2011) included items such as a government that reflects the public will, and a full power parliament. But it did not include the idea of electing a constituent assembly, which is a point of contention and led –among other points– to delaying the positive reaction of the opposition to the initiative of the Crown Prince.

As a solution to the problem of the Shiite majority, Al Wefaq Society suggests to resort to the option of “consensual democracy”, a term understood as granting each sect its share in government. As well as a veto right to the Sunni community to prevent the monopoly of power by the Shiite groups (the majority). Al Wefaq also suggests a percentage of 60% votes in the Constituent Assembly on the main articles in the constitution.

Initially the authorities rejected these proposals, because the Shiite citizens still make up more than 60% of the population, in spite of all the tampering with demography and the continuing political naturalization. Perhaps one of the indications is that the Al Wefaq parliamentary body got 62% of the electoral bloc in the 2010 elections, even though it won only 18 seats, because of the imbalance in the distribution of electoral districts.

King Hamad does not seem to resort to the Moroccan option, when the king Mohammed VI chose to form a prestigious committee, in

March 2011, commissioned to write a constitution that takes into account the Arab Spring dues. As well as expanding the powers of the Parliament and the Council of Ministers, even though the writing of the Constitution was a way to make the Moroccan king the head of state with broad powers.

The rejection is due to the insistence on following sterile mechanisms for constitutional reform through the existing legislative institution. Also because the idea that the Prime Minister is not a member of the ruling family, as is the case in Morocco is not acceptable for Al Khalifa, even if the Prime Minister does not really have powers derived from the people, as in the Jordanian case.

However, the Constituent Assembly that wrote the 1973 constitution included a simple elected majority of (two votes), and did not allow the popular majority to monopolize the writing of the Constitution as it usually is in classic democracies. As long as the debate here is about the prospects of repeating past experiences in the current crisis, the formation of a constituent assembly similar to the seventies model is not supposed to be a taboo as long as the regime has a voice in it. But what makes this idea futile is the authority's considering it as a form of breaking the king's constitutional project.

4. The One-sided Reform scenario, an unrewarded cost

After the end of the war to liberate Kuwait, the national movement in Bahrain signed a petition demanding the return of the Constitution of 1973, and the election of the dissolved parliament since 1975.

The petition was delivered to the late Emir of Bahrain Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa in mid-November 1992, by what was known as the "Petition Committee", which included Islamic and leftist figures, Shiites and Sunnis, notably the late Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, Dr. Abdul Latif Al Mahmood, who now heads the National Unity Gathering taking pro-government positions and counter to the demands of the latest uprising on February 14.

The Prince refused to respond to the request of the Petition Committee, on the grounds that it does not represent the people. And he issued on December 20, 1992 an order of the appointment of an advisory board, consisting of 30 members, for a four-year period.

In December 1993, the “Petition Committee” decided to hand in to late Prince a popular petition, signed by thousands, to confirm that the restoration of the constitution of 1973 is a popular demand. However, the authorities refused to receive the petition.

As a result of the violent way the authorities dealt with the petitions and its providers, conditions in December 1994 exploded in coincide with the National Day celebrations and the Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Manama. The timing had special significance, where it recorded an influential internal and regional impact.

The security solution dominated the way the authorities handled the popular uprising and it led to the deaths of more than 40 victims during the years of the uprising, and three of its leaders were banished outside the country, including Sheikh Ali Salman, the current Secretary General of Al Wefaq.

Also the leader of the public movement late Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri was imprisoned and tortured, and his two companions Hassan Mushaima and Abdul Wahab Hussein, who are currently imprisoned against the background of the events of February 14 (2011).

Mushaima and Abdul Wahab are two key members of the Alliance of the Republic, which calls to overthrow the regime, and they were advocates of reform of the system and the constitutional movement in the nineties.

At the peak of the protests in September 1996, the late Amir issued an order to increase the members of the Shura Council to 40 members, but its powers remained very much formal. This was rejected by the opposition inside the country and the Bahrain Freedom Movement, the main interface of the opposition abroad (London).

The tension coupled with violence continued until the arrival of King Hamad in 1999, when political forces considered that it is important to give the new Emir an opportunity to reform, yet, it is also true that the public movement was in a state of atrophy back then.

The last Shura Council was formed in the absence of the 1973 constitution in 2000 by Prince Hamad (before declaring himself a king in 2001), and it included members of reform tendencies. Nevertheless, the opposition rejected this Council, and reiterated its discourse

reported to the late Amir that the authorities have the right to form any Shura boards or committees, but constitutionally they cannot be a substitute for the elected council.

The establishment of the Shura Council and “reform” procedures taken by the government since 1992 to contain the demand movement did not achieve its potential.

Yet, the political situation worsened after two years of this, and was deepened by the prevailing security solution coupled with a series of political initiatives and dialogues with popular leaders in and outside prison through which the government aimed to break the constitutional movement, and hit the credibility of its popular leaders.

The government’s complex strategy is: judicial and media backed violence, unreal dialogue, and blurry reform initiatives, in addition to the lengthy use of the time of the government supported by Gulf and Western countries. This strategy managed after nearly four years of scaling the popular movement, but it could not create stability, while the legitimacy of the regime remained standing based on the pillars of power alone.

Now, what about the one-sided reform items, and the chances of their success in forming a bridge to safety from the current deepening crisis?

The premise of one-sided reform is existent, and if it occurred could include the following aspects:

First, to modify electoral districts

I do not think that the authorities will carry out significant changes to reform the electoral system, and perhaps it limits some of its procedures in the reform of electoral districts that might reflect the demographic weight of the Shiite citizens.

Currently, the electoral districts are described as uneven, and they are distributed on a sectarian basis, guaranteeing Shiites citizens the right to elect 18 members, won by Al Wefaq in 2006 and 2010 elections, where it gives Sunni citizens the opportunity to elect 22 members.

The imbalance seems clear in the failure of these electoral districts to achieve the principle of “a voice for every citizen”. According to

the statistics of last general elections in Bahrain (2010) the electoral bloc in the first constituency in the Northern Province (predominantly Shiites) consists of more than 16,000 voters, while the electoral bloc in the sixth circle in the Southern Province (mainly Sunnis) consist of about 800 voters, and in both cases every district is to elect one representative⁽¹⁰⁾.

Reforming electoral districts does not mean reforming the electoral system which is not transparent. The executive authorities dominating on managing the entire electoral process may lead to the idea of establishing an independent body for the elections like the Jordanian one.

And perhaps the existence of the “independent” would be more appropriate for the authorities from the existence of fair electoral districts, so that the body can only work on the implementation of the existing law, and make sure it eliminates fraud on election day. As far as we know, the major manipulation occurs on the days before the election through playing with electoral districts, political money, biased media and religious marketing.

However, the day of the election witness blatant manipulation, when military personnel are made to vote in order to tip a party over the other, as happened when the prominent leader of Waad Society and former candidate late Abdulrahman Al Nuaimi was ousted in 2006. as well as ousting prominent opposition faces such as Ebrahim Sharif and Munira Fakhro in 2006 and 2010.

All this happens through making military personnel and Al Dawaser/ newly naturalized Saudis to vote for the desired candidate. This polling happens in public polling centers outside electoral districts, which ease the manipulation and fraud practiced by the authorities.

In summary, the authorities may take a number of measures to improve the integrity of the electoral process, but that will not make it lose its ability to guide the direction of the election in favor of government desired candidates.

10 For electoral bloc statistics, see the following link: <http://www.alwasatnews.com/index.php?plugin=elections&act=read&id=117>

Second, to create popular legitimacy for the Shura Council

Even with the lapse of the authorities to amend the constituencies to be more equitable, the composition of the legislative institution outweigh the opinion of the executive branch with the presence of the appointed Shura Council along with the elected Representatives Council, where both have the same legislative functions.

In the sense that to impose a completely fair parliamentary election, the opposition was able to acquire a majority in the elected council, the appointed Council can abort any legislation the government does not want.

Under the authorities' commitment of granting the Shura Council legislative powers equal to the elected Council, the authorities can propose a formula for indirect electing to part of the appointed Council, in an attempt to grant it a public legitimacy.

But the authorities will face a challenge to devise an alternative term for "appointment", so that the mechanisms of "indirect election" or "criteria for appointment" shall remain to give the King the upper hand in the selection of the members of the appointed Council.

Furthermore, the adherence of the authorities to the number of appointed members of the Parliament to be equal to the elected seems like a political intransigent. as well as being a contradiction of democracy in its worldwide definition.

In the Jordanian experience the ruling establishment controls the legislative and policy decisions, where the appointed council consists of half of the members of the elected council. And that did not change the balance of power that continues to be in the hands of the Hashemite royal family. So taking a similar step remains always contained in Bahrain.

Third, to improve the representation of popular faces in the Ministers Council

Such a move would not cost anything in terms of constitutionality. As it does not change the balance of power in the institution of decision making, Such a move will remain looking as a formal change, compared

to reforming the electoral system, or taking serious action to give the Shura Council popular legitimacy. Both last steps can be considered a viable promotion to be transferred to a center for propaganda.

A number of other actions can be outlined that might be taken by the authorities of one side. But overall it is difficult to achieve the demands of the opposition of an elected government and parliament, an independent judiciary, fair electoral districts, and security institutions that represent everyone.

Nonetheless, these reform measures may increase Western pressure on the opposition, and may increase the space of dropouts under its wings. They will also reduce supporters in some elite circles, which some want to get out of the neck of the bottle finding themselves stuck in it.

As they were not part of the uprising in February 14, but found it a chance to vent for them what is suppressed and they predicted victory. This category seeks the opportunity to change its course, and perhaps the reform steps –even if limited– helps it to do so.

However, the experience of the nineties confirms that any reform of one side that the opposition does not contribute to promote will continue to be a burden on the country, rather than reform. But the opposition, including its radical/ impedance/ revolutionary actors see the lack of dialogue with the authorities an appropriate option, and consider the regime's formal reform a gain for the public, and not quite worthy to enter into a settlement.

5. A New Bahraini “Oslo” Scenario

In 2001, the opposition dealt cautiously with an offer presented by Sheikh Hamad to vote on the National Action Charter in order to start a political reform project taking Bahrain out from the neck of a bottle after a quarter of a century. The opposition expressed its concern that the vote on the Charter would be seen as a green light for the king to make one-sided constitutional changes, and eliminate the Constitution of 1973.

The King Confirmed to the opposition that “the son of Isa bin Salman

will not cancel a constitution prepared by his father”⁽¹¹⁾, and official statements to his son Crown Prince Salman were issued confirming the remaining of the Constitution of 1973⁽¹²⁾. Similar statement by the former Justice Minister Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa, who chaired the committee preparing the National Action Charter emphasized on the limited role of the Shura Council – proposed by the Charter- in non-binding counseling, so the legislation and Monitor to be exclusively the prerogative of the elected Representatives Council.

The opposition considered these assurances sufficient enough to vote on the charter, influenced also by the “shock” style practiced by King Hamad, promoting to the public a set of “historic” procedures. While he adopted cancelling the law and courts of the state security, releasing political prisoners, allowing the exiled to return and creating a positive climate for freedom of expression.

The vote on the Charter was an exceptional opportunity to restore respect for the legitimacy of the People and to correct the course of relationship between the people and the ruling family. And it was hoped that citizens would be invited to elect the National Council (parliament) to carry on the constitutional amendments proposed by the Charter, so the King issues it in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Constitution of 1973.

However, the king surprised the political movement and issued a new constitution in 14 February 2002, contrary to his promises to preserve the Constitution of 1973, and form the parliament with full legislative powers.

That negatively affected the confidence that was about to be built between the ruling family and the opposition. Where then it started to be difficult for the opposition to believe statements, promises and assurances given out by the king or one of his partners on the subject of reform.

What even deepened the mistrust were the experiences of the last ten years, which witnessed the monopoly of the regime on the public,

11 see the following link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-REw_XOxxM4

12 Al Ayam Newspaper, February 5, 2002.

and the issuance of laws restricting freedoms, as well as breaching of the electoral process. While the prevailing security solution since February 14, 2011 has executed the possibility that the negotiations and undocumented agreements are the way to a new charter and the mechanism out of the current crisis.

The lack of confidence in the King transfers the negotiations file with the opposition to his son, the Crown Prince, where an issuance of a royal decree granted him- the Crown Prince- full authorization (February 2011). Yet, the Crown Prince was already commissioned to follow the national dialogues since October 2004.

The absence of such confidence made the opposition ask the Crown Prince to submit a written initiative for the negotiations to be conducted upon, instead of the oral undocumented talks (March 2011)⁽¹³⁾.

An important sector of the protesters in the Pearl Roundabout (February- March 2011) demanding to bring down the regime and not enter into a loose dialogue contributed in not immediately responding to the initiative of the Crown Prince that was already unscheduled.

The impact of not honouring what was agreed upon in the Charter will shade the relationship between the opposition and the ruling family for coming future periods. However, there is another view which believes that such breaches will make various parties make greater efforts to reach into standardized formats, though this understanding forget that even in the standardized formats parties can still find loopholes to evade their commitment.

The written consensus cannot be a substitute for good intention, which is supposed to cover the atmosphere of dialogue and the implementation of the agreements. However, some question whether the opposition manages its dialogues with the authorities on the Palestinian way, or the Syrian way? Both were unable to preserve the Arab right! Yet, in the first dialogue turns almost to an end, not a means, while interim deals are a prominent feature in the Palestinian negotiating style, which led to the stalemate of "Oslo".

On the other hand, the Syrian negotiator, before the start of the

13 *Al Wasat Newspaper, October 10, 2004.*

negotiation (and not dialogue) requires leading the negotiations to the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation of the Golan, or else it does not enter into a negotiation path with unknown results.

Neither Palestinian nor the Syrian dialogue managed to restore their occupied land, but the first granted legitimacy for the occupation, and entered a maze that never led to the end of the tunnel, losing a lot of land and ground, while the second still holds on to its discourse and did not yet lose the Golan officially.

Perhaps Al Wefaq entered the maze of a Bahraini “Oslo” through its participation in the Parliament of 2006, and it may have enabled the authority to make a lot of temporary “Glory” out of it, but it ultimately exposed the authorities, revealed the falsity of its project, and pulled out its popular legitimacy.

The spring of Bahrain has saved Al Wefaq from the “Oslo” tunnel and I’m not sure if that will also save it from getting involved in another “Oslo”.

The resignation of Al Wefaq from the Parliament (February 2011) eliminated chances of returning to the legislative institution without changing the rules of the game, and its audience shall continue to asks: What has changed in order to get back to the Parliament?

The parliamentary experience of Al Wefaq between 2006- 2011, was not as successful as hoped in terms of legislative and regulatory achievement. Perhaps the most expressive on Al Wefaq disappointment is its inability to pass formal and secondary constitutional changes (May 2010).

The matter has bypassed that extent to the negative experience with the king, who came loaded with promises, but the first ten years of his reign was dominated by radical political problems.

The official pressures on the supreme Shiite religious clerk in Bahrain, Sheikh Isa Qassem, and leader of Al Wefaq Sheikh Ali Salman seem incapable at all in budging their positions for reform. You will not find in the history of the opposition -throughout hundred years of struggle- moments with lifting of the white flag, but its history without a doubt is full of normalization of conditions characterized by tyranny.

Moreover, the presence of symbols of “objection party” in prison such as (Abdul Wahab Hussein, Hasan Mushaima, AbdulHadi Al Khawaja and others), who contributed to the start of February 14 movement also did not contributed for the opposition to enter into loose settlements.

It is true that they will not be able under the current circumstances of the imposition of a historic settlement; however, their influence is capable of imposing a real veto to any settlement that does not get approved by them.

So far no signs of refraction appear on the two most prominent symbols in prison (Hussein, and Mushaima), after nearly a year and a half of their arrest. And perhaps their presence and others in prison will remain linked to the ability to get compromises out of them in order to force the demand movement to submit to sore concessions.

However, the confusion that the regime would face is that Hussein and Mushaima had gone through negotiations during the nineties uprising known as the “initiative” (1996). The initiative required the popular leaders to calm down the street, followed by political dialogues to help to get out of the crisis.

And as usual, the authorities did not stand by their promises, and returned the leaders to the prison, including the leader of the uprising the late Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri.

The political dialogues which Hussein and Mushaima contributed to helped to reach to the Charter settlement (2001), in which the king has invested for issuing a new constitution. It was very crucial that Abdul Wahab Hussein and Hassan Mushaima called to boycott the 2002 elections, and then ascend their rhetoric in 2011, in a historic moment, turning towards the demand of turning Bahrain into a Republic.

All this reduces the ability of the moderate opposition and the authority to maneuver, where the Secretary-General of Al Wefaq Sheikh Ali Salman expressed this fact clearly when he said, “The life sentence on Hussein and Mushaima means the Bahraini crisis will remain forever”.

The situation is even bleaker viewing the experience of Ayatollah Qassem and the Secretary General of Al Wefaq Ali Salman with the King’s promises that were never implemented, whether those related to the report of Al Bandar or political reform through parliament.

Summary

Based on the above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

First of all, an access to a settlement is probable, given that it happened in 1923, 1973 and 2001, and when participating in the 2006 and 2010 elections. That means expecting the authorities' concessions might be considered a red line at the moment. And it also means the possibility of the political opposition societies to contribute in promoting, or understanding the unforeseen settlement, or maybe not confronting it.

Secondly, the settlement is likely to be fragile or temporary (New Bahraini Oslo Model), rather than a national agreement. In the sense that it is difficult for the forthcoming settlement to be permanent/historical, but I most would likely say that there shall not be a settlement at all than reaching to a historic one. Whereas, assuming a solution marked by sobriety and permanence, would most probably mean the authorities' setback, as happened in 1973 when the constitution was suspended, and in 2002 when a new constitution was issued without a referendum of the people.

Thirdly the current way does not give opportunity to say that the authorities and the opposition will be forced to provide historic concessions, where none of them can make the other surrender.

The Cold War in Bahrain will most likely continue even after 2014, and it maybe interspersed with periods of hot war, where the regime is hard to reform, and will not make substantial concessions in light of a movement that is unable to access the capital, and does not threaten the decision center.

The opposition has often experienced and tasted the repression and the political and its audience still remains steadfast and adheres to its discourse in democratization. This means that the achievement of the "Manama Document" that expresses the aspirations of the opposition for a constitutional monarchy will not be obtainable. The political game as existed before February 2011 cannot achieve stability and prosperity.

Fourthly the moderate opposition (Al Wefaq and Waad Societies, and their partners) are counting on being on the right path in history, but

this is not yet enough to achieve a historic victory.

The classic parties model (such as Al Nahda of Tunisia, the Muslim Brotherhood Movement of Egypt, Al Wefaq in Bahrain, the Justice and Development Party of Morocco, and the Iraqi Da'awa Party) were and still are opposition parties facing dictatorial systems for a long time, and are also popularly rooted, and institutionally powerful, with regional and international connections, yet, cannot achieve victory in stifling security conditions. The "Muslim Brotherhood" has waited eight years to reach power thanks to the January 25 revolution, and so is Al Nahda movement that leads Troika in Tunisia after an unexpected revolution by its leader Rashid Al Ghannouchi. The Moroccan Justice and Development Party reached the prime minister's post thanks to a revolution, relatively responded by Mohammed VI voluntarily. Whereas the Iraqi Da'awa Party came to rule in Baghdad after the U.S. overthrew Saddam Hussein.

Demanding Al Wefaq (or any other classic party) to achieve a revolutionary victory is like asking pilots to undergo a surgery, where none of the classic parties could ever achieve that. However, its important achievement is to refuse to bow to the inevitable reality and facing the conflict with its cadres, money and political and religious umbrella.

When the classic political force does not achieve a historic victory on the dictatorial authorities, the Bahraini »Radical Party« is chained behind bars, and does not own the tools of change, as it did in February and March 2011⁽¹⁴⁾.

Fifthly perhaps the model capable of fundamental change is the revolutionary movement, similar to that which toppled former Presidents Mubarak of Egypt and Tunisia's Ben Ali. It is the one which prevailed in Bahrain between February and March 2011, and its reactivity, aftershocks, effects and repercussions are still prominent.

The strength of the popular movement on the ground will be serious currently, and it may be ready to come on the scene in 2014. The popular

14 See: Abbas Busafwan, *the Bahraini opposition: the failure of the soft and hard opposition*, Al Quds Al Arabi, London, June 24, 2012.

movement may storm again at any moment like in 2011. It is a moment, though, that may lay ahead Bahrain for quite some time unless there was a conviction that even a revolution can be planned in advance. It is not true that a revolution is like an unpredictable earthquake, where I assume it could happen synthesized through preparing the ground for its boom.

Sixthly all of this does not mean, necessarily, the immunization of the opposition societies from going into a new “Oslo model”, and that is due to some objective conditions, and others related to the prudent nature of the opposition. Where the current moderate opposition is based originally on gradual settlements in order to reach better results, unless it got an opportunity to pass a penalty kick to achieve an unexpected goal.

Nevertheless a new “Oslo model” can be back-breaking for the Al Wefaq. More importantly, it may direct a harsh blow against the popular movement, as the Palestinian “Oslo” case did and overstrained the “Fath” movement.

Seventhly the arrogance of the regime prevents it from reading the local and international variables, whereas the ego of the popular movement prevents it from expecting to break, even though it happened in the fifties and nineties. However that break did not prevent its revival in other times.

This does not help but to say that the Bahraini ground will continue to be a scene for tension that will only be solved through a solid and historical settlement based on a national consensus.

CONCLUSION

With regard to the political situation in Bahrain, this report is a rich sample to study the structure of the tribal rule in the Gulf, which had been far away from understanding the principle of the sovereignty of the people.

In addition, the conditions in Bahrain appear to continue with instability and tensions for periodical times due to historical reasons and geopolitics⁽¹⁾, whereas it could in this time form an example of democracy, co-existence and economic prosperity.

With a bitter memory of experiences from tyranny, it is still difficult to say whether the demand for democratic transformation in the form of a “constitutional monarchy” would reflect the wishes of the people.

The royal family's management has often exacerbated the political situation, starting with dissolving the elected parliament in 1975, passing through a constitutional change in 2002 that disrupted

1 Abbas Busafwan, *Geopolitics and Democracy in Bahrain*, Al-Akhbar Lebanese Newspaper, December 20, 2011.

a historical public settlement. Not to mention the very negative experience of co-existence with the royal family during the past ten years after transforming the country from a state into a kingdom. The very 'strategy of King Hamad' is the most blamable here.

So, the biggest dilemma facing Bahrain is the failure to avoid a direct conflict between the head of the State (the King) and its wide popular sectors, as they see one another as opponents that should be excluded from the political process.

The main opposition strives to avoid that and to direct its entire anger and dissatisfaction at the Prime Minister instead of the king in order to avoid an open war with the regime, and to open a door for it to search for a settlement. This would be more complicated if the target was the king himself.

Whether King Hamad was aware of being at the head of the demanded change or not, he seems very angry at the protest movement, which he considers a personal challenge. It appears that the man may be convinced that the chances of popular consensus, without him making concessions are limited. That is why his policies are coercive and violent, instead of bending to the storm, or making a wise call and looking for a settlement. Anger washes away wisdom, most of the time.

The main concern lies in a more tense situation that might go on for some long time, especially when the King very enthusiastically and amazingly adopts the suggestion of a confederal integration with Saudi Arabia. This sends a lot of negative signals to wide segments of the society, especially the Shiite majority.

The authoritarian structure of the regime limits its ability to read the variables, when it goes on using old tools to deal with new situations that requires more understanding in this new era. Frankly, the settlement in Bahrain is awaiting a royal concession to make the people partners in decision-making, which could be reached through productive dialogue. Any unclear or gov-imposed calls, even if accepted by some parties in opposition, can hardly be expected to sustainably succeed.

Furthermore, those constitutional amendments approved by the King

on 3 May 2012⁽²⁾, cannot be the door for reform. When the alliance with Saudi Arabia could only be an escape and deepens the feeling of power ruling without the involvement of the people.

A local understanding (with the support of regional and international actors) to hand over decision-making to the people with reducing the absolute powers of the royal family, seems the most effective solution to the issue of Bahrain. If the bloodshed continues the regional tensions will surely escalate. The proposed idea of a constitutional monarchy sounds attractive, specially because the abolition of the monarchy, or deepening its absolute ruling pattern seem to be uable to maintain stability in the country.

The King who issued the 2002 Constitution is wrong to believe that challenging the constitution is a challenge to himself, where his mind should better be focused on the interests of Bahrain before harm reaches his family and palace that is already collapsing as never before.

It is important to note that the thought of the impossibility of overthrowing the king seems unrealistic and contrary to historical experience⁽³⁾. A scapegoat is always easier for the ruling family and its regional and international allies than giving up on the ruling institutional structure (the change model in the 20s when Hamad replaced his father Isa bin Ali, is an example).

I am not certain that the displacement of Sheikh Khalifa would solve the problem unless it was used by the king to provide initiatives of governance restructure and its mechanisms towards greater democratization. The success of any settlement will be subject to a confession by King Hamad of his wrong hostile strategy toward the oppositions and wide segments of his people. A strategy that certainly took the country into a dark tunnel. The continuation of the current

2 See: Abbas Busafwan, *Bahrain: "Fragile" Constitutional Amendments, Boosting up the Crisis and not Resonating Locally and Internationally*, May 29, 2012.

3 The Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh was displaced from his post and AbdRabuh Mansoor Hadi replaced him. This scenario might be present in the Syrian case as well. As in to look for an alternative for President Bashar Al Asad.

ruling elite, especially the King's right hand and Minister of his Royal Court Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, whom the main political groups avoid conflict with, will not be easy to pass. Khalid bin Ahmed seems more dangerous, considering his extremist views, to the country than the King's uncle Khalifa bin Salman.

In my estimation, the scenarios for change in Bahrain circles around implementing a change in the major crew that rules the country, ends with overthrowing the king and/or the Prime Minister and/or the Minister of the Royal Court, and to seek to address the deep imbalances in the power structure, through restructuring it in the interest of the people. It is a Traditional resolution for a complex case, but it is also so customary between a monopolizing rule and those who are marginalized.

The strategies of "cleansing", excluding the opposition, "Walking on the edge of the abyss", and "I or they" as well as the strong desire of monopolizing ultimate power and wealth of the country made the King lose the support of his people in the past ten years. So, Without doubt, adhering to the same "strategy" would be the worst option. while stepping back from the obvious "Hamad Strategy" would ensure the goodness of Bahrain, from at least slipping into worse situations that could perhaps save the shaky monarchy from falling apart.

Appendix

Appendix number 01:

The summary of King Hamad Speech on the occasion of the last ten days of the holy month of Ramadan, dated, 29 August, 2011:

In a speech to the nation, the King said his government's aspiration is "for tolerance and shunning violence, and not for excessive punishment that affects our unity, cohesion and national co-existence".

In the address broadcast on Bahrain Television, and relayed on other television and radio stations, he spoke of reconciliation.

"When we see workers at their places of work and students at their learning institutions, while some other workers are not working and some other students are not studying, we are prompted to look into their situation in order to help them join their colleagues and classmates.

"Such an accomplishment will benefit the workers, the students, their families and the whole nation," he said. "These are our orders to the concerned institutions and they should implement them more quickly."

The King's remarks on the occasion of the last 10 days of Ramadan, came as more than 400 Bahraini students, who were suspended during the unrest earlier this year, were this week reinstated.

Referring to those who were charged with crimes in the past, His Majesty said that "even though we do not wish to interfere in the process of justice and the application of the law, we stress that all civil cases will have their final ruling issued in civil courts".

"We would like to emphasise that we do not anticipate putting everyone on trial," the King said. "There are those who were charged with abusing us and senior officials in Bahrain, and we today announce that we forgive them as we hope that they understand that abusing us and others in fact offends everyone and achieves nothing."

The King also noted that the Supreme Judicial Council will oversee compensation for those killed or injured during the unrest.

He stressed that the past months of this year have been painful for all Bahrainis, but he said Ramadan has contributed to the restoration of cohesion and "made us all recall our traditional interactions, compassion and fraternity."

The King said the decision to set up the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry was "the best indication of our full commitments to knowing the whole truth and to giving people their rights".

He also commended on the outcome of the National Dialogue. "Your agreements on further reforms are highly appreciated, deeply welcomed and greatly supported."

Congratulating Bahrainis on Eid Al Fitr, he said he hoped Bahrain now "will witness a new stage of outstanding productivity, cohesion and stability as our reforms move forward."

Appendix number 02:

The text of the King's speech at the opening of Parliament, 9 October, 2011:

In the name of God, the most Compassionate, The most Merciful.

Dear brothers and sisters, members of the August National Assembly,

Peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you.

We would like first to congratulate the new representatives on their victory in the parliamentary by-elections and to congratulate all of you on the start of the second session of the third legislative term.

We were, like the rest of the nation, very pleased with the national spirit that prevailed in the National Dialogue and our happiness was increased thanks to the success of the parliamentary by-elections and the full membership of the Council of Representatives. These successes were a powerful indication that Bahrain, a strong country by the will of God, is well capable, thanks to the collective consciousness of its people in protecting its gains and records and of overcoming all challenges.

On this auspicious occasion, we wish to congratulate the Bahraini women who have proven their aptitudes to compete for, and win, the honour of serving this nation and participating in the nation's building process and in the reforms.

We praise God for His great blessings, as Bahrain has always been a good and blessed country and its history tells the story of the hard-working and tenacious Bahrainis who adore their country and love their wider family, the people of Bahrain.

Brothers and Sisters,

Our gathering today is held in the Isa Cultural Centre, the same place that hosted the National Dialogue under the leadership of the Speaker of the Council of Representatives and under the care of the legislative branch in cooperation with the government.

It was a consolidation of our firm and unlimited commitment to supporting the state of laws and to reinforcing the role of constitutional institutions and the principle of cooperation between the branches.

The outcome was the visions of the National Dialogue, which we supported and endorsed. They reflect and embody the depth of the civilized affiliation of the nation and its generous people. Dialogue is the language of civilizations and the means for success and goodness.

Brothers and Sisters,

Economic growth and employment are currently the main challenges in several regions in the world. We are proud of our policy of

economic openness that has been Bahrain's choice over time, while preserving positive growth rates and continuing to create adequate job opportunities shall remain the major challenges. Our economic policy should also remain all-inclusive and integrate everybody as the Government focuses on encouraging investments and on providing all facilities to investors.

In this regard, we commend, with great pride and appreciation, His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, in leading the government and in tirelessly serving national interests.

We also laud His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, for his determination in boosting achievements and preparing for a brighter future for future generations.

Brothers and Sisters,

The Bahrain Defence Force BDF is the shield that protects the homeland and protects its gains. That is the only priority for the personnel of the BDF, officers and soldiers. They are the impregnable fortress of the nation.

On this occasion, we praise their honorable training, equipment and organizational standards. We also thank the personnel of the Ministry of the Interior and the National Guard for their loyal services. They assumed their responsibilities fully in preserving law and order and in ensuring the security, tranquility and serenity of the citizens and residents.

We are also pleased to express our appreciation to the units of the Peninsula Shield as a force of goodness, security and peace. They were a model of the full cooperation between the countries and people of the Gulf Cooperation Council and were also a natural extension and an integral part of the forces of each of the GCC member countries.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Bahrain is proud of the political and defensive support from our brothers in the GCC countries which reflects the status of the countries within the Council.

We stress that the Kingdom of Bahrain will exert all its efforts to develop and reinforce the outstanding fraternal relations between the GCC countries. The premise is that in the world of force, there is room

only for the strong.

The strength of the GCC stems from the faith of its leaders and the stress of its peoples on the need for cohesion, unity and the development of its institutions. We will strive towards further coordination, integration and interdependence among the GCC countries in all areas in order to achieve unity.

Based on our pride that Bahrain enjoys within the international community and its full support to the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, we have personally participated in the 66th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York City. We talked in our address to the heads of states about the progress of our nation and conveyed the aspirations and ambitions of our people as well as their democratic progress.

We stressed that the civil state system stemming from our cultural, political, social and religious nature is the most suitable for our country and enhances national cohesion.

In conclusion, I wish you all success. Do move forward under God's blessings, filled with faith and determination to deepen the culture of dialogue and democracy and promote its practice. Our eyes, minds and hearts shall remain open to all those who wish to join this one-country-one -nation in its Arabian identity and Gulf roots. We will support all those who endeavor to boost steady and positive progress without jumping stages or reversing course or stalling advances.

May God protect Bahrain and all its people and grant them health, wealth and happiness.

Peace and God's mercy and blessing be upon you

Appendix number 03:

The Letter by the Monarchy, January 15, 2012:

In the name of the Almighty God, the most Merciful and the most Gracious

Dear citizens,

Peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you.

We are pleased to address you today, as we move forward on the path of development in order to enable Bahrain to run for further improvements. This will be for the benefit of our beloved country, and in the interest of its honorable children, of course with the aid of Almighty God, and in adherence to the values of tolerance and coexistence in the light of God's law, and Arab traditions.

These are the values upon which we have all been brought up; and they have protected us against the dangers of intolerance and sectarianism.

Our loyal people have demonstrated that their will, despite all events, is devoted to continuing the reform project, to preserving the achievements of the Charter and the Constitution, and to accelerating progress and momentum through constitutional institutions. Today, we will continue this march with everyone with genuine patriotic desire for further progress and reform in all its forms, whether it is political, economic or social. That is of course on the basis of our common convictions that reflect the spirit of the times and meet the legitimate aspirations of all citizens for achieving further development that is consistent with the principles of a peaceful democracy.

Brothers and sisters,

It is beyond doubt that the National Consensus Dialogue recommendations have outlined the shape of the reform that we are aiming to achieve, and emanate from the solid base of our national experience, laid down by the historical consensus on the National Action Charter. We have instructed the Executive and Legislative Branches to implement without preconditions these recommendations, for which many parts of the society resolutely participated so as to move forward through comprehension and belief in the principle of national action encompassing everyone.

Accordingly, and in line with our mandate to propose constitutional amendments and to honor our promise, we will later issue a Royal Decree to refer to the Council of Representatives and the Shura Council, requesting the constitutional amendments as stated in the recommendations of the National Consensus Dialogue. The philosophy and motivation behind this request is to open new horizons

for our democracy, based on the National Consensus Dialogue recommendations, and to reflect our commitment to the stability of the nation, the unity of its people, and the realization of their aspirations. Whilst taking into consideration the best interests of the homeland, and the interests of present and future generations of citizens to develop our democracy and our political programs.

Brothers and sisters,

These proposed amendments bring greater harmony in the relationship between the Executive and Legislative Branches in order to achieve greater balance among both.

The amendments add new guarantees to be applied when exercising the right to dissolve the Council of Representatives. They require and entail consultation with the Chairman of the Shura Council, the Chairman of the Council of Representatives, and the President of the Constitutional Court, while previously it required only the consent of the King and the Prime Minister. Furthermore, in respect of the appointment of members of the Shura Council, the amendments call for a Royal Decree to be issued by the King prior to the order of appointment setting out the method, procedures, and guidance that govern the selection process.

To empower both Councils concerning preparation of the state budget and legislation, the proposed amendments extend the scheduled sessions of the National Council in its both Chambers, the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives, when necessary to pass draft laws regulating economic issues urgently requested by the government.

In addition, the amendments set out the competent authority for drafting bills, raising constitutional amendment proposals, proposing laws or draft Constitutional amendments, and determining the necessary period of time to refer such bills to the Council where the proposal was originated. These amendments allow both Councils to easily set the state budget, in a way that helps to effectuate the new budget at the beginning of the fiscal year, and preclude the announcement of a budget of more than two fiscal years.

In line with the conclusions of the National Consensus Dialogue, these constitutional amendments aim to reflect the popular will in

the formation of the government based on its program. The Council of Representatives will discuss the government program after it swears the constitutional oath. Moreover, it has the right to approve or reject the government program, and if the program is approved, the government has secured the confidence of the Council.

In addition, the proposed recommendation consolidates the oversight role of the Council of Representatives as a sole monitoring Power. Thus, the recommendations grant the Council the right to end any cooperation with the government, and to initiate discussions on any public theme.

The amendments add additional guarantees to ensure the participation of the Council of Representatives collectively during the discussions of the questions addressed to Ministers, and to set a timeframe for the government to justify any rejection of the demands of the Council.

Alongside this, the Council has been given the constitutional right to question and withdraw trust from Ministers, as well as to set up Committees to conduct such questioning.

While the Constitution had previously given jurisdiction to the Chairman of the Shura Council to refer the bills approved by the two Chambers to the Prime Minister to pass them, and given him priority to preside over the meetings of the National Council, the amendments have vested these jurisdictions and this priority to the Chairman of the Council of Representatives.

Brothers and sisters,

We are confident that the Legislative Power will resume its constitutional responsibilities to make these amendments, responsive to the recommendations of the National Consensus Dialogue.

However, the historic step we make today will open doors wide to democracy and develop its exercise, enabling future generations to build on it to reach new heights.

We cannot fail at this point to emphasize that democracy is not just literature, or constitutional and legislative provisions. Democracy is a culture and practice, commitment to the rule of law, respect for the international principles of human rights, coupled with serious national

political action that represents all spectrums of society without exclusion or quotas.

In parallel with this crucial step that we take today, we call for other important steps to be made to reinforce the democratic culture and practice on the land of our beloved country. Likewise, we call upon all segments of society – the community and the family – to work together to ensure that our young people respect the law. This is a responsibility that must be shouldered by all, especially when respect for the law is linked to the principles of coexistence, tolerance, harmony and love.

Today, we are passing an important era in the history of Bahrain. Constitutional and political reform cannot be attained, or continue to exist, in a vacuum, but it is in parallel and closely related to economic reform, development efforts and to the social reform that takes into account the interests of all citizens of this country.

We will march together at this period of time to attain all these achievements with determination and resolve, praying to Almighty Allah to protect our country, our security, our stability and to bless our steps and sustain the unity of our voice, as he who listens to our supplication.

God save Bahrain and its citizens and give us His help, support and guidance, for He is the Lord and the Patron.

May peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you.

As a journalist and observer of the political, I can state that the notorious Prime Minister is not responsible for the path taken by Bahrain in the last fifteen years when King Hamad took over the reins of power and the initiative in the country.

The reign of Sheikh Khalifa of Bahrain was based on an iron fist between the years of 1971 and 1999. During this time he skillfully manipulated the different interests of groups and strata of the people. This enabled him to neutralize the technocrats, the middle class, the traders, and the traditional families and prevent them from firmly engaging against his tyranny.

However, the "cleansing" practices of King Hamad towards the opposition and large sections society, issuing a constitution without consultation, permitting wide scale naturalization of foreigners, and targeting anyone with a different point of view, because he believed that the Shiites constitute a strategic threat to the regime, contributed to a shift in public opinion from venerating the king in 2001[4] to calling for his overthrow in 2011.

Since the demolition of the Pearl Roundabout on 18 March 2011, the Crown Prince, has played a role described as the "Senior Director of the Public Relations" of the ruling family, and a strong defender of the dictatorship-based approach in a liberal way due to his failure during the past ten years to establish deep and broad relationships with the tribes and traders. He only has good relations with an isolated elite.

The displacement of Sheikh Khalifa will continue to be a reminder that the political system in Bahrain is hard to reform, and that the Prime Minister is its cortex.

Abbas Busafwan

BAHRAIN'S MONARCHY
Dreams Turn to
Nightmares



2016

ISBN 978-0-9931648-0-4



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