

CHAPTER II

THE BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND YEMEN

This chapter will be divided into several sub chapters. It starts by explaining the basis of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy and the political dynamic between Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

A. The Basis of Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy

The foreign policy of Saudi Arabia is obtained by setting principles and facts based on geographic, historical, religious, economic, security, and political factors. The principles shaped within major framework of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy such as good-neighbor policy, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, strengthen the relations with the Gulf States and the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, strengthen relations with Arab and Islamic countries for the benefit of common interests of these countries, as well as advocate their issues, adopt nonalignment policy, establish cooperation relations with friendly countries, and play effective role in the international and regional organizations. This policy is activated through several circles such as Gulf, Arab, Islamic, and International Circles (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016).

The first foreign policy of Saudi Arabia is *Gulf Circle* (Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE, and Bahrain). This Gulf circle is important to Saudi Arabia, in addition the similarities of existing political and economic systems. This circle has a historical connection, blood relation, and unique geographical environment that can bring Arab Gulf countries together in advancing the region. In 1981, Saudi Arabia and the five Gulf States agreed to form the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The organization aims to fulfill the wishes and aspirations of the six Gulf States on both the official and public levels in the fields of politics, security, economics, and so on (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016).

According to the Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia (2016), the Saudi Arabia's foreign policy in the Gulf Circle is based on major permanent basis and principles that are:

1. The security and stability of the region is the responsibility of the states of the region.
2. The Gulf States have the right to defend their security and maintain their independence according to their own discretion and as guaranteed by the international law to confront any internal or international challenges.
3. Decline the interference in internal affairs of these countries, and work out to cooperate and stand against any aggression on one of the state members, with regard to any aggression, at the same time member states consider aggression on one country as aggression on all member states.
4. Strengthen cooperation between the Kingdom and the member states of the GCC in different political, economic, security, social, cultural fields and others, through deepening and consolidating relations and ties among member states.
5. Coordinate policies of the GCC when possible, especially toward the regional and international momentous issues. Such cooperation and coordination were obvious during the crisis witnessed by the region, especially during the Iraq-Iran war, and the Iraqi invasion to Kuwait.

6. Take serious and persistent action to solve all disputes (especially border disputes) among the countries of the region through understanding that is based on brotherhood and good neighboring principles.
7. Sound enthusiasm on the importance of economic coordination among member states through continuous support for unifying economic policies and establish suitable integrated contexts, paying special attention to coordination with regard to oil policies of the member states in a manner that serves their interests, considering that oil is the strategic source of these countries.

The second foreign policy of Saudi Arabia is *Arab Circle*. Saudi Arabia realized the importance of joint Arab action and unification of Arab stance. On March 22, 1945, Saudi Arabia and six Arab countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen) founded an organization called Arab League. The Arab League formulated a charter in the form of coordinating economic activities between Arab countries including trade, communications, culture. Moreover the Arab League forbade its members from using violence against each other (Jatmika, 2014).

The third foreign policy of Saudi Arabia is *Islamic Circle*. Saudi Arabia concerns in this circle were to devote and dedicate its potentials and resources to serve issues of Islamic World and achieve the motives of solidarity and unity based on the fact of belongingness to one belief. The Islamic symbiosis was the method to regain Muslims position and honor. For the sake of achieving Islamic solidarity, Saudi Arabia sought and initiated together with their Islamic countries to establish a non-governmental organizations, Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) established on September 25, 1969 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016).

The last foreign policy of Saudi Arabia is *International Circle*. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was eager to establish equal relations with the great power connected to the Kingdom through a series of interests. These interests emerged as a result of the Kingdom's growing major role in both Arab and Islamic worlds. It took place where the Kingdom sought out through both worlds to expand the Saudi move on the level of international society. Therefore, it tried to react with the effective and significant international policy centers and took into consideration the consequences and responsibilities resulting from this policy. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was proud of being a founding member of the United Nations in 1945. The Kingdom strongly believed that the international peace was a part of its foreign policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016).

VISION 2030

Saudi Arabia's vision in 2030 have delivered by Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdel-Aziz Al Saud (Saudi Arabia Government, 2017):

The first pillar of our vision is our status as the heart of the Arab and Islamic worlds. We recognize that Allah the Almighty has bestowed on our lands a gift more precious than oil. Our Kingdom is the Land of the Two Holy Mosques, the most sacred sites on earth, and the direction of the Kaaba (Qibla) to which more than a billion Muslims turn at prayer. The second pillar of our vision is our determination to become a global investment powerhouse. Our nation holds strong investment capabilities, which we will harness to stimulate our economy and diversify our revenues. The third pillar is transforming our unique strategic location into a global hub connecting three continents, Asia, Europe and Africa. Our geographic position between key global waterways, makes the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia an epicenter of trade and the gateway to the world (p. 6).

B. The Political Dynamic between Saudi Arabia and Yemen

Since Saudi Arabia was established in 1932, Saudi Arabia has been putting some concerns on Yemen politically, and often militarily—regularly giving negative outcomes for Yemen. If viewed from Saudi Arabia's foreign policy classification described in previous sub chapter, Yemen is included in the second foreign policy of Saudi Arabia in Arab Circle. Saudi Arabia and Yemen founded an organization called Arab League. The Arab League created a charter in the form of organizing economic activities between Arab countries including trade, communications, culture, and also the Arab League forbade its members from using violence against each other. Since Saudi Arabia has been involved for a long time in Yemeni domestic politics, Saudi Arabia is important in Yemen's foreign policy. Yemen considers Saudi Arabia as the dominant state in the Arabian Peninsula and directly adjacent to Yemen's land (Whitaker, 2015).

1. The Treaty of Ta'if, 1934

The Treaty of Islamic Friendship and Arab Brotherhood was commonly known as the Treaty of Ta'if focusing on its international borders_(Al-Maghafi, 2012).

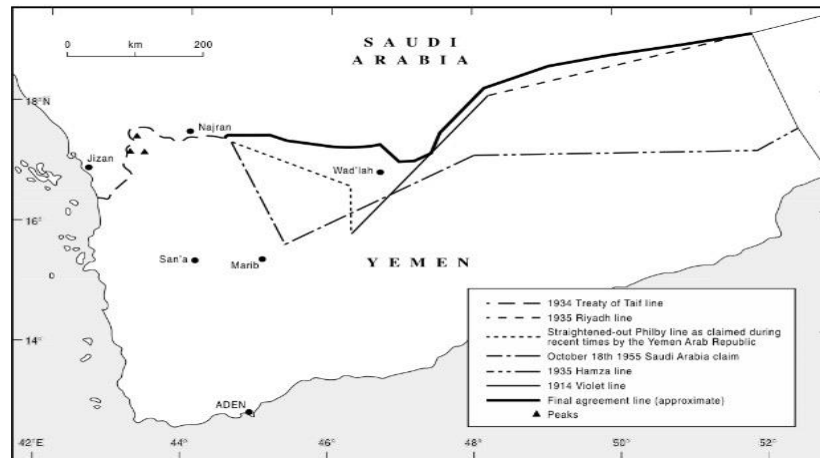


Figure 2. 1 Maps of the Saudi-Yemeni Boundary Treaty

Source: <www.dur.ac.uk>

2. Yemen's Civil War (1962-1970)

The North Yemen Civil War began in 1962 because a coup was against the state royalist government and a quarrel between supporters of the new republic of the state and those who supported the old order. Saudi Arabia intervened by supporting the royalist actions, equipping royalist tribes and hiring hundreds of foreign mercenaries. Meanwhile, Egypt supported the republic. The conflict, often seen as a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, was renowned for its brutality and the inability of Egyptian troops to defeat the rebels (Al-Maghafi, 2012).

3. Yemeni Unification (1990)

Republic of Yemen was formed in May 22, 1990, with the merger of two regions. The Yemen Arab Republic (Northern Yemen) was ruled by Ali Abdullah

Saleh and People's Democratic Yemen (Southern Yemen) was ruled by Haidar Al-Attas. This unification of Yemen brought the concern to the Arab Kingdom due to the democratization that occurred in Yemen could affect the stability of the kingdom (Whitaker, 2015).

4. The Oil Factor

In 1989, the northern Yemen began to produce oil. They produced about 200,000 barrels per day. Although the production was not as many as other Yemeni neighbors, it was very important for Yemen as a poor country to reduce its dependence on the other country, Saudi Arabia. Due to its location in the north and in the border of Saudi Arabia, it caused the tension to prolong increasingly around the border areas (Whitaker, 2015).

5. North-south War (1994)

A civil war took place in Yemen in May, 1994, four years after this country's unification. A war resulting from the developments between former Northern and Southern Yemeni leaders. Northern forces gain support from Islamists which were able to defeat the Southern forces. Saudi Arabia was involved in this civil war by helping the losers, namely the Southern troops by providing military assistance (Whitaker, 2015). Saudi Arabia also provided protection against some Southern

leaders. This civil war was also caused due to the economic imbalance between the Northern Yemen and Southern Yemen. Ali Abdullah Saleh (Northern Yemen's Leader) wanted the North to be also entitled to the natural resources, economy and security in the South (Makovsky, 2010).