

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, led by the Al-Saud (Saud Family/House of Saud) using an absolute monarchy government system since 1932. Saudi Arabia occupies most of the Arabian Peninsula, in the Western part bordering the red sea and in the East bordering with Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia is directly borders the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar in the East, Oman and Yemen in the South. The country has an area of approximately 2,150,000 kilometres with a population of 31.7 million, the capital is Riyadh also the largest city in Saudi. Saudi Arabia is the fifth largest country in Asia and the largest country in the Middle East after Iran. Saudi Arabia is a country with a population of 100% Muslim, Sunni Islam conservative form of 85-95% of Sunni Muslim and Shia is 15-5%. (Dowley, 1998-2018)



Sources:

Hunt, K. (2017, Juli 27). *The Middle East freezes out Qatar: What you need to know*. Retrieved October 26, 2018, from CNN: <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/06/06/middleeast/s>

Saudi Arabia is an Islamic state, which has a close relationship with Islam, whether in ideology, religion and culture. Although Saudi Arabia is using religious guidelines and a form of absolute monarchy government, this does not make Saudi Arabia turn a blind eye to international relations. Saudi Arabia actively establish bilateral relations with several international organizations such as the UN, OIC, Arab League, GCC and other international organizations. Saudi Arabia foreign policy is divided into several phases which appropriate with its development and its power. The foreign politics of a country cannot be removed from the political situation in its country. The ideology of Saudi Arabia which contra radicalism and combination of the characteristic of Wahhabis which makes foreign policy have several phases. These phases have a relationship and are elements of the policies and ideals of Islam is Saudi Arabia.

These phases are:

1. Dynastic Alliance (1932-1956)
2. Arab Cold War (1956-1967)
3. Aid and Oil Politics (1967- present) (Ayyub, 1982)

In the first phase of the year 1932 Dynastic Alliance in Saudi Arabia lack of economic sources, and lack of military capabilities, which then made King Abdul Aziz do diplomacy or pragmatic politics in order to realizing security for its country. For this policy, Saudi Arabia shows the existence of Islamic awareness, proven by the existence of the giving military assistance to the Palestinian people secretly to carry out the insurgency that aims to reduce the influence of the United Kingdom in Palestine in year 1936-1939.

Saudi Arabia wants to show their solidarity with a high attitude of Arab countries in order to show its resistance to the division of territory in Palestine. Different from the previous phase, the second phase of Saudi Arabia on more careful in taking the decision that there is an affinity relationship with other countries that could be a pioneer of radical ideologies that led to democratization. This country really avoid radical ideologies, Saudi Arabia has the view that the ideology of radical Islam that would culminate in revolutionary movements. In the cold war, the government of Saudi Arabia tried to offset the pan Arabism and Islamic solidarity. Saudi Arabia also trying to establish friendly relations with the Islamic countries of the non-Arab, such as Iraq. Where in the year 1965 arising reaction from Cairo who alleged that Saudi Arabia and Iraq willing to form an Islamic pact as a tool to destroying Arab unity. Under King Faisal, Saudi Arabia foreign policy against Arab countries can be categorized as a political conservative. Saudi Arabia does not want any changes of the status quo as well as the existence of territorial changes on Arab countries due to the federation or integration made by Arab countries at that time. Besides Saudi Arabia always seeks to ward off a revolutionary ideology, as propagated by the pan Arab countries that based in Cairo. To compensate for the revolutionary flow of Arab republic, Saudi Arabia seeks friendship with other Arab monarchy countries such as Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Libya and Yemen before the revolution of Moammar Qadafi in year 1969.

In the third phase which started in 1967, Saudi Arabia emerged as a dominant country and they try to change the balance of power in the Middle East as well as trying to increase the wealth of its oil (Jatmika, 2001). For that Saudi Arabia become the OPEC and OAPEC leadership council. Until now the role of Saudi

Arabia are still influential, and very vital in determining world oil prices as well as to take a moderate policy line in rejecting extremism in the world's petroleum. Saudi Arabia formulates his policy to maintain the stability and economic prosperity and does not damage the peace of human life. In this third phase, since 1967, in the foreign policy, Saudi Arabia has three main objectives, namely: (Harwanto, 1995)

1. Support Arab countries including Palestine against Israel. This support also addressed in order to achieve the Arab-Israel peace. Saudi Arabia knows that Israel has the capability to destroy its oil fields.
2. The achievement of stability and security, as well as the struggle to stem the influence of radicalism, especially communism which is considered the main danger for the religion of Islam and wrong Arab culture.
3. Promoting Islam by fight for an Islamic revival in the global environment. As for some of these program is to advance the social and economic development in the Islamic world include spreading the values and norms of Islam. Among them is the establishment of Islamic Banks in the value of being able to provide the benefits and assistance to Islamic countries. The ability of economic, military and social belonging to Saudi Arabia makes this country has an important role in terms of donations or assistance to Islamic countries. Assistance provided by Saudi Arabia towards Islamic countries is estimated at nearly 96% in 1976, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of them given to Arab countries.

In 1970 the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia could be said to be more active than in previous years. The ideology of Islam not only serves as a tool of foreign politics, but is continuously further strengthened the

authority of Saudi Arabia as enforcement of Islamic values. Saudi Arabia currently has an important role in regional and international politics, which is in accordance with the direction of its liberal and Pro-Western foreign policy.

Saudi Arabia as a country of non-oriented block also has relations with countries that aligned, basically with countries in Asia and Africa especially with Islam. This is because Saudi Arabia would like to raise an international Islamic solidarity. Saudi Arabia who joined in the OIC also trying to enhance cooperation with OIC member. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia relations with the Gulf counties that joined in the Gulf Cooperation Country, also Arab League.

Based on history, Saudi Arabia and Yemen have had close relationship. Both of two countries at that time also have the harmony and good partnership. Even they also has cooperate in military, economics and culture (III, 1990). Saudi Arabia and Yemen also are two of the seven founding regional organization, namely the Arab League. The Arab League was included in the international organization which has a regional typology of the intergovernmental organization in which membership is composed of countries that are in one area. The Arab League was made as an instrument of foreign policy especially by these two countries that is Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

Conflict, is the right word to describe the condition that occurs in Middle East region. The conflict happened not far from the problems of the authoritarian state leader, the opposition between Sunni and Shia, terrorism and political of oil. Yemen, is one of the poorest countries in the Middle East since 2004 until now is currently facing an internal conflict between the government of Yemen with a rebel group namely *Al-*

*Houthi* (Southern Yemen and Northern Yemen). As time goes by, this conflict becoming complex with the emergence of new parties involved in the conflict.

Historically, the conflict that occurred in Yemen is already happened before the existence of Arab Spring. In 1962, the military coup took place in Northern Yemen that ended the era of empires and initiated the new era which is republic. After the government of republic establish that was dominated by the Sunni, Sa'ada region that located in Northern Yemen which is the main base of the Shia camp already isolated, this is the government do to prevent them. Yemen was led by President Ali Abdullah Saleh did improved their relation with Saudi Arabia because the Wahhabis regime and also because they have the same interest to ensure that Yemen is never governed by the Shia.

In August 2009, the government of Yemen began to move offensively by doing an operation named "Operation Scorched Earth", as the movement to fight with the rebels. The battle that happened largely in the area of governance Sa'ada in Northwest Yemen, but in its operations against Houthi rebels, the government of Yemen has not succeed to crush all Houthi rebels.

At the moment, Yemen can be said as a new nation that was born from a conflict of civil war where the people in Yemen they still live below the poverty line. The government of Yemen also now face new conflict on the right against the Houthi rebels that based in Northern Yemen to against the government, and trying to occupy Yemen. Saudi Arabia had already actively contributed in the Yemen conflict, as well as now participated to help the government of Yemen.

On September 17, 2014 became the beginning of the Yemen conflict still going on this day, Houthi forces

doing fierce battle with government troops in Yemen. Houthi's carry out attacks the capital of Sanaa with using mortar weapons, they also successfully attacked the palace of the Prime Minister after previously attacking the President palace. This makes Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi as the new elected President declared to retire from his position.

At the beginning of the year 2015, in 25 March Yemen President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi declared to resigned from his position, he then fled from the capital of Sana'a with the help of the UN Security Council. On 27 March, 2015, President Hadi retract his statement and set the city of Aden as the new capital in the impermanent. Then President Hadi openly asking for help to countries of the Arabian Peninsula, which led by Saudi Arabia as the higher power in Middle East region to fight against Houthi rebels, then Saudi Arabia undertakes the request and began to sending his troops into the city of Sana'a to finish off the Houthi's forces.

Furthermore, there are two things that are interesting examined in this regard. Firstly, the position of the Saudi Arabia country is seen as a *hegemonic power* in the Middle East. Second the existence of forces that try to threaten the Saudi geopolitical, finally pushing Saudi to intervene. But one thing of it all is that the Saudi intervention into Yemen was a military conflict that certainly involves problems of economic, geopolitically, and religion. The title of this study is **“The Intervention of Saudi Arabia in Yemen Civil War in 2014-2017”** This undergraduate thesis is the completion of a task and as the graduation requirement of an undergraduate student in Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

## B. Research Question

Based on the background, the research question for this research: “**Why did Saudi Arabia Intervene in Yemen Civil War from 2014-2017?**”

## C. Theoretical Framework

The problem above can be explained by using one foundation theory. The theory is an abstraction that represent an object, character of an object, or a certain phenomenon. (Mas'ood, 1990). The function of a theory is to organize ideas, perception, and as a symbol in the form classification and generalization.

In order to answer the research question above, there are one theory and one concept that will be applied. In addition, the theory and concept that are applied have relations or connection with the rational actor and the decision making process units. This as an analysis because the problems occurred are very complete and not only can be explained by using one single part analysis. The theory of Foreign Policy Objectives by K.J. Holsti will be helpful in analyse the Saudi intervention to Yemen. This are going to be used as framework on this undergraduate thesis.

In this thesis, I use some particular terms, those are Civil war, Houthi's group, terrorism, political stability and foreign policy theory by K.J. Holsti. **Civil war** is one of the phenomena that occur in countries that have order of government that is not yet stable, civil war is a war which is not two or more countries that are at war but the presence of some fortifications which later became factions within a political entity. (Kantor, 1961). **Houthi's group** is a stronghold of the separatist group or who are in Yemen, the original purpose of the formation of this group is Houthi's ousts Yemen

previously deemed to have lapsed. Meanwhile **terrorism** is a crime that poses a terror action or even a large number of casualties performed through the propaganda of hatred and weapons mass killers. **Political stability** is the idea that government, state or federal controls and that things seem to be stable and running fluently.

**Foreign Policy**, according to K.J. Holsti, Foreign Policy is an action or idea designed to solve problems or make changes in environment (Holsti, 1981). Generally, the function of foreign policy of each country is to ensure the national interest of the country and maintain the national security, prestige, as well as the benefit for the sake of the country.

K.J. Holsti divides the objectives to be 3 main criteria as followed:

**a) Value, which is placed on the state's objective, as the main facts to encourage policy makers, it is done based on the resources who owned by the states in order to achieve the goal.**

Saudi Arabia in maintaining its influence in the Middle East region, trying to do some policies that can expand its influence, as a goal to defend the value and interest such as ethnic, religious or linguistic unit (Holsti, 1981, pp. 145-146).

**b) Element of time, this is a time period where the state needs to set in order to achieve the objective of the state.**

In the second criteria, Holsti split two objectives that are more dominant in the state are:

1. Medium term objectives, is to increase the prestige of the country in that system, this indicator is assessed based on industry, technology, funds and military assistance. (Holsti, 1981, pp. 148-149)

As it known that Saudi Arabia maintaining its influence has a lot of help to Yemen, in terms of increased economic and sending military aid. This demanding Saudi Arabia to make immediate limitation of time in order for the goal to be achieved could be efficient.

2. Long term goals, is a plans, dream and view on political organization in the international system. The goal is for peace, power and balancing security. (Holsti, 1981, pp. 151-152)

In this case no one knows for sure what long term goals of Saudi Arabia to intervene the civil war in Yemen, this section further analysis will be used to know it. Clearly, here Saudi Arabia will act in accordance with the foreign policy that has been accepted. The ideology that adopted by two sect in Yemen make Saudi Arabia want to take a step to solve the problems. This section also the existence of Saudi Arabia countries will be at stake, and Saudi Arabia with other Arab peninsula decided to help Yemen to fight with the rebels in the country.

**c) The type of goals demand, this criteria include the objective that would be brought by the state to other states due to its foreign policy.**

On this last criteria, Holsti try to combined both criteria which is value and element of time. This will affect the image of this Saudi Arabia country on the future and the future conditions of its country, by expanding the influence of the country with changing or maintain the

behaviour of other countries, through individual policy makers under the influence of King Salman.

Foreign policy can be defined as the strategy or action plan which is designed by the policy makers in one particular country in order to face other country or as a respond to the international politics, and also contain a specific national objective which was existed in its national interest terminology. Foreign policy made by one country as a respond to the action made by other country.

Saudi Arabia, with using their stability and influence, plays an important regional and international role. Working diligently to many address of its major international and domestic concerns, the Kingdom is a confident participant in world affairs and keeps an ever vigilant eye toward its own internal safeguarding. (Saud, 2017)

The intervention of Saudi Arabia to Yemen is one of the King Salman policy as a new ruler of Saudi Arabia. King Salman trying to strengthen his position by trying to convince the public and the royal family through policy intervention. In applicative, it is applied by building military alliance along with Pakistan, Morocco, Sudan, and the Sunni countries against Shia. Where in this case Saudi led coalition votes as a form of resistance and prevention against the influence of Shia. The efforts made by the King Salman votes as a form of Saudi Arabia geopolitical moment.

#### **D. Hypothesis**

Based on the background, because the hypothesis of this research are:

1. Maintaining the existence of Saudi Arabia in the Middle East region, as the hegemonic power from the

influence by Shia Houthi based in North Yemen by using several strategies to overcome civil war in Yemen.

2. Saudi Arabia has a goal and an economic interest against the access of *Bab el Mandeb* as the largest oil line which is has already controlled by Saudi Arabia in the border of North Yemen and South Yemen.

## **E. Methodology of Research**

The research used qualitative method. It is used to explain the problems of the thesis and to verify hypothesis based on empirical data. The sources or information are collected from secondary data. Meanwhile, there are some literatures and data from the internet such as journals, e-book, articles, e-news, report and others reliable sources. The level of analysis of this thesis is state level namely; Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The writer will limit the discussion only in Saudi Arabia intervention in Yemen civil war 2014-2017.

## **F. Scope of Research**

In writing this research, the writer will limit the scope of research. This aims to simplify the research process and have more concern on Saudi Arabia in Yemen Civil War and Saudi Arabia's existence in the Arabian Peninsula and the Arab World. Other hand, this research also describe about the reason behind Saudi's intervention's towards Yemen Civil War, and the policies that are taken by Saudi Arabia towards its intervention on this civil war. Meanwhile, this research will use the previous data from 2014-2017 to know how big the intervention done by Saudi Arabia in the Yemen Civil War.

## **G. Purpose of Research**

This research aims to highlight and achieve some purposes as followed:

1. To describe the form of Saudi Arabia intervention in Yemen Civil War 2014-2015.
2. To find out the causes of the intervention of Saudi Arabia toward Yemen Civil War 2014-2017.

## **H. Outlines**

In this research, the writer limits the outline of the thesis as described as follows:

**Chapter I:** examines about the background of the problem, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, the methodology of research, the scope of research, the purpose of research, and writing system.

**Chapter II:** examines about the geography of Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia political system, the leadership of ruling family, and Saudi Arabia has relations with several international organizations.

**Chapter III:** examines about the dynamics foreign policy of Saudi Arabia, the reformation of Saudi Arabia foreign policy, including the harmony relations between Saudi and Yemen before their start the conflict in the era King Salman policies, the forms that Saudi Arabia intervene in Yemen Civil War 2014-2017, the forms that will discuss in this chapter is the strategy that used by Saudi Arabia to intervene Yemen, starting with diplomacy and then using the hard diplomacy or military actions, and the impact of Saudi Arabia intervene Yemen civil war.

**Chapter IV:** examines about the objective of Saudi Arabia toward Yemen, including the factors and the

causes of Saudi Arabia intervene in Yemen Civil War. Meanwhile, this chapter also discusses Saudi Arabia intervene in Yemen Civil War to maintain its existence in Middle East country, the explanation also want to explained that Saudi Arabia trying to maintain the access of *Bab el Mandeb* in and the battle in seizing sect domination of the strongest Sunni and Shia in Yemen.

**Chapter V:** contains the conclusion of the research.