

CHAPTER IV

THE OBJECTIVE OF SAUDI ARABIA TOWARD YEMEN CIVIL WAR AND SAUDI ARABIA INTEREST TO CONTROL THE ACCESS OF BAB EL-MANDEB

This chapter examines the objective of Saudi Arabia Intervene in Yemen Civil War, Saudi Arabia in maintaining the existence as the hegemonic power in the Middle East region, the explanation will focus on economic and political factors, Saudi Arabia foreign policy under King Salman to access of *Bab el Mandeb* in and the battle in seizing sect domination of the strongest Sunni and Shia in Yemen.

A. Saudi Arabia in Maintaining the Existence as the Hegemonic Power in the Middle East Region

Saudi Arabia in order to maintain the stability of the country, looking for allies who may be able to assist it's in accomplishing its mission. The country that adheres to this absolute monarchy is very influential towards the security situations in the Middle East country. Especially in terms of political stability, economy and security in the Middle East is highly dependent on Saudi Arabia, especially in Yemen, since the year 2010, Yemen is in a situation of war between Shia Houthi group and a group of government which presenting Sunni. Saudi Arabia which is a neighbouring country with Yemen, feel they need to protect Yemen because Saudi Arabia has considerable interest with Yemen. Yemen is also a country where Saudi Arabia and Yemen repeatedly carry out patrols on the border of the two countries to maintain the security of both countries. This is done by Saudi Arabia so that the Houthi

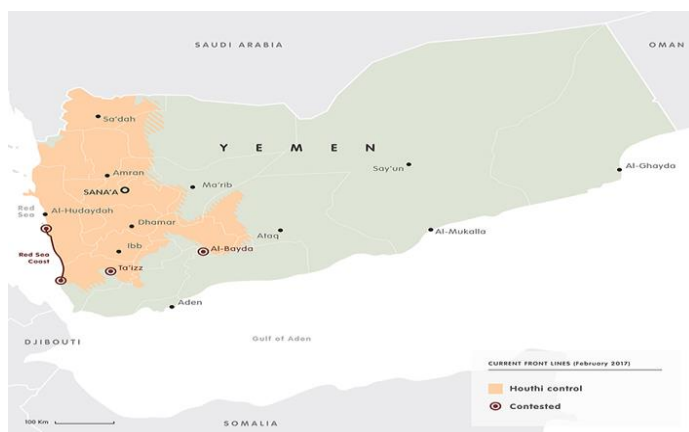
movements, especially in Northern Yemen which have a large and strong majority of Shia, can be dammed. One of Saudi Arabia's policy which is also agreed by the Government of Yemen to stem the Houthi group is to perform the operation namely "operation of scorched earth". The movement of the Houthi group has also made Saudi Arabia worry, because the movement is trying to overthrow the official government of Yemen and turn it into a Shia leaning state, which is certainly contrary to Saudi Arabia's Wahhabis Sunni ideology.

Looking back on the history of Middle East, it is true that the existence of a confrontation between the Sunni sects and Shia sects, all of whom follow Islam have dragged on throughout the history of this region, especially in Yemen. It is known the most adherents of Shia doctrine after Iran in the Middle East is the country of Yemen. In the past, the region of the Middle East after World War II, when the imperialists withdraw, countries are formed with the old legacies, namely the situation is divided, ethnic and religious groups are separated and then combined in many different countries. In the middle of some hundred million Arabs it. The Arab world itself, has long been divided due to the presence of two major factions are equally embraced Islam, Sunnis who occupied the majority and Shia who occupied a minority has been providing mutually hostile blood for tens of centuries. The Group of adherents of Shia sect that most were in Iran and this is the causes of the contradictions present in the region. The battle is going on between the Houthi rebel's members of the Shia Muslim minority who are to be supported by Iran and Yemen government forces backed by a coalition of 10 countries from a majority Sunni Muslim country was led by Saudi Arabia. This statement is to glance at an existing fact that Saudi Arabia and Iran both are ardent enemies that want to expand their powers on the

territory of this Arabian Peninsula, Yemen is a field where the feud between Saudi Arabia and Iran began to show their strength. The civil war that existed in Yemen is seen as an appropriate reference to see who is the actual owner of the power of the Arab world, the government of Yemen that Houthi separatist hostile groups supported by the government of Saudi Arabia, while the Houthi group also has its own supporters, namely the state of Iran.

Yemen, a country that has a very long history of civilization and their remarkable, is now trapped in a war and violent conflict. The deadlock and there is no consensus in the political strife of words has led Yemen became a battleground and prey for the capture of a larger influence in the geopolitical map of the region. The foreign forces involved have been accused of exploiting the crisis to expand the scope of their respective interests in the region.

Picture 4.1: Yemen's territory (Houthi VS Government in Yemen)



Sources: <https://www.ecfr.eu/mena/yemen>

Interventions undertaken by Saudi Arabia to Yemen certainly raises a lot of pros and cons in the international system, especially the government of Iran which seeks to change the stigma of outside parties that what was done by Saudi Arabia against Yemen solely just to satisfy the ambitions of the country itself. Saudi Arabia's foreign policy to attack Yemen caused an escalation of conflict in the region. This conflict also became a fight between Sunni Muslim countries led by Saudi Arabia and Shia Muslim countries led by Iran. By using the party that was made into a battle doll, the second civil war succeeded in destroying Yemen. (Manea, 1994)

The war happens in Yemen is also indicated to a show of strength between Saudi Arabia and Iran that has the ambition to become a hegemon in the Middle East region. Two series of this power has been going on for a long time. In launching its action, Iran is known to be carrying shipments loaded with weapons against Houthi rebels to fight against the authorities who assisted by Saudi Arabia. This action is clearly visible that the conflict in Yemen is an ideological battle between Sunni and Shia. Not only that, the international community again questioned Saudi Arabia, that in Saudi there are Shia group which number around 15 percent of the total population of Saudi Arabia. Obviously this raises the question of why Saudi Arabia wants to eradicate Shia in the country of Yemen, but if thought of in their own country there are also Shia that even potentially provide direct threat against the government rather than Shia that are outside of their territory. Surely this polemic is increasingly complex with the emergence of the questions about whether the Yemen war is instead as a sectarian war or the struggle for the throne of hegemony in the Middle East region.

In this chapter the author tried to examine more deeply about the objective foreign policy that affect Saudi Arabia to intervene against the civil war in Yemen. Because if just looking at the ideological identity and return to power of the legitimate government of Yemen, it was clear this policy will only be detrimental to the parties in Saudi Arabia, this was revealed by Mohammad Bin Salman who at that time served as the Defence Minister of Saudi Arabia. “If just doing purely for the mentioned above, of course this is very detrimental to Saudi Arabia because the costs incurred are greater than benefits obtained” Muhammad Bin Salman statement. (Langer, 2018)

Some of the factors behind Saudi Arabia to intervene against the civil war in Yemen:

1. The Factor of Maintaining the Security, is a major factor driving force Saudi Arabia to intervene

In this era of globalization are universally defence of the country is the principal element and is one of the main pillars in the framework of maintaining a country in order to keep its upright as a country. To guarantee the sovereignty of the country, in maintaining the territorial integrity and the safety of the citizens required a formidable country defence systems. Post-Cold War, the concept of security have a lot of experience of development. There are three views about security:

- a.) The first view is that those who think that the scope of security is wider than merely military security
- b.) The second view is to oppose the expansion of scope rather than security are more likely to be consistent with the *status quo*
- c.) The third view is not only broadened the scope of that security is much broader than purely military threat

and the treat to the state, but also trying to streamline the process of achievement of human emancipation

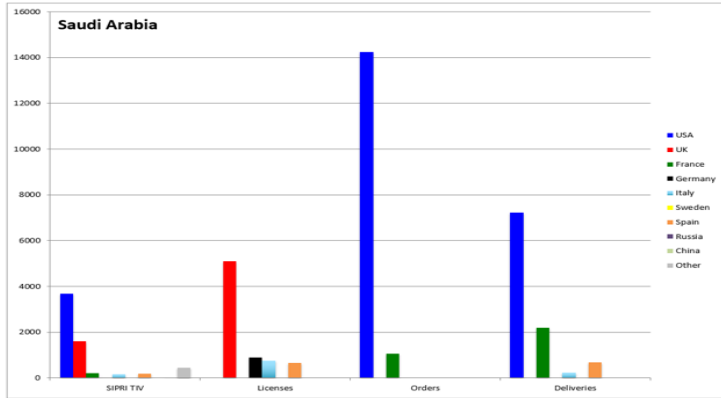
The national security conditions of Saudi Arabia during the cold war were not very stagnant. Because of the social and political conditions are constantly changing. Moreover, the in the current Millennium Saudi Arabia has also undergone transition turn of the King which certainly also change order in all the elements of his administration. The end of the era of the rule of King Abdullah Ibn Abdul Aziz al-Saud, marked the beginning of a transition to leadership that was quite different from that currently led by King Salman Ibn Abdul Aziz Al-Saud. At the beginning of the rise of King Salman as the King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, many are speculating about the future security of the region are mainly the Middle East. The condition of the region of the Middle East are very labile and the number of conflicts, whether vertical or horizontal, conflict very easily affected by succession politics of Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Saudi Arabia is a country that has a strong enough influence in the region. A very shocking thing, when the seat of leadership had just occupied in one week by the King Salman has done a very drastic change against his government. Where King Salman removed King Abdullah's people, especially in very strategic posts, including the defence minister, head of the national Security Council, intelligence, and a number of other posts, which became the centre of King Abdullah's policy.

Security is a special form of politics, all security issues is a matter of politics. But not all political conflict is a matter of security. Security became a major issue of political disputes when certain political actors threatening or using force to get what they want from the other party. (Kolodziej, 2005) As well as political, security is a phenomenon created by the will or human

action. In the classic conception of security, more defined as the attempt to maintain the territorial integrity of the country from the threats that appear from the outside. The conflict between countries especially in an attempt to expand the empire colony brought the definition of security is only addressed to how countries strengthen themselves in an attempt to face the military threat. In the traditional approach, the State into a subject and object of the efforts pursued the interests of security. Development of strategic issues such as globalization, democratization, human rights and the rule of the phenomenon of terrorism has expanded way of view in looking at the complexity of the threat that exists and affects the development of the conception of security. The threat is no longer only a military threat but also include political threats, threats to social, economic threats, nor the threat of ideology.

Politically, the policies taken by the King Salman era, now tend to be pro against Islamic movement groups and have a quite different direction than their predecessor, King Abdullah. In the outline, it is quite visible that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, led by King Salman, is changing its political and security priorities by prioritizing Shia and its allies as the biggest threat to internal security and the region.

Picture 4.2: Saudi Arabia Support Government in Yemen to force the Houthi rebels



Arms sales 2015-2016
Licenses, orders, and deliveries in millions of US\$
SIPRI TIV in millions of TIV units
(See country notes for exceptions and data availability)

Sources:

<https://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2018/02/28/who-is-arming-the-yemen-war-and-is-anyone-planning-to-stop/>

A conflict in a country, certainly indirectly will give a big impact for the countries bordering that country. Understanding the political revolution is something that is very feared by a country. Because this understanding can easily mobilize the masses to make a revolution against a legitimate government.

The end of the Second World War, at the same time be the beginning appears the era of the cold war. Including countries in the Arab region are facing their own understanding of the revolution, known during this time that the countries of this region is quite an anti of the revolution. As the state system of the reign of absolute monarchy in the middle current of democratization very profusely, Saudi Arabia must take appropriate measures to anticipate such a possibility as early as possible.

Because if not treated immediately, it will give a big impact for the fall of the regime of absolute monarchy they are. This is because in the region of the Arabian Peninsula have been many authoritarian regimes falling in the wake of the Arab Spring which then becomes a benchmark for Saudi Arabia in taking an action to strengthen the stability of the security of its country.

The number of cases that occur against a neighboring country's post-war Arab Spring, making Saudi Arabia may have to take decisive steps to maintain the stability of the security in the region. This is the first hard effort once it can be seen from the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia to intervene to Yemen. At the request of President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi to the government of Saudi Arabia to help quell the rebellion that occurred in the country of Yemen also indirectly giving legitimacy to the government of Saudi Arabia to intervene.

On request directly from the President of Yemen Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi, the government of Saudi Arabia also believes that it is reasonable for Saudi Arabia to immediately intervene to the neighbouring country it is. As it has been known that, Southern part of Saudi Arabia is directly adjacent to the Northern part of Yemen's territory is also the strongest Shia base including the region which is also feared by the government of Yemen itself. In a simple can be likened to that of Yemen is the backyard of Saudi Arabia. Of course if we have a backyard, we have to give a fence or buffer to keep the backyard from being taken away, especially until it's taken away by someone else. This is a simple analogy of the conflict in Yemen and why Saudi Arabia must intervene, which is like a page that has been mastered by others, inevitably Saudi Arabia must take care of it as much as possible so that its country is not controlled by others. (Ismail, 2012)

This is why KJ. Holsti viewpoint of the criteria for foreign policy, namely the application of the values for the sake to maintaining the integrity of a country, is an important concern to be implemented. Not only that, in this case the policy carried out Saudi Arabia may be able to help other countries especially in maintaining security. Therefore, the policy conducted by the Saudi Arabia of course very large influence to its neighbours, in this case Yemen would certainly become the object to analyse foreign policy of Saudi Arabia since the Saudi Arabia also known as give such great attention towards Yemen.

Picture 4.3: Saudi Arabia’s Military Guarding in the Yemen Border



Sources:

<https://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/saudi/miksa.html>

- 2. The Second Factor, Yemen’s Strategic Position:**
Interventions are carried out for the political interests of Saudi Arabia.

The Middle East is a region that is always a concern of mankind from time to time, so many history etched in the region, started the golden age of cultural history that spans the Valley of the Nile, Euphrates and Tigris, appeared to surprise other political feud between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The feud between the two superpowers in the Middle East region then made a lot of bloodshed in various domestic, regional and international political interests in several conflict situations. In 2011 a new shock began from the political turmoil that occurred in the Middle East, the turmoil that occurred not only in one or two countries, but like a domino game, where one box collapsed, the other boxes followed alternately. It originated from the country of Tunisia, then any political turmoil quickly spread to other countries, such as Egypt, Libya, Algeria, and has not yet ended until now was Yemen. The condition of this turmoil to this day also has yet to find the point of completion, for in fact up to this time Yemen still experiencing turmoil that has not appeared to point the stopping of settlement and conflict.

There are three Saudi Arabia's interests in the conflict in Yemen. Among them was the political border, oil politics, and political ideology. If the Saudis can master the de jure Yemen, then Saudi Arabia could do the lobbies of the border that will certainly benefit for its empire interest is any foreign policy of a country based on the relative importance of a permanent nature which include three factors, namely the nature of the interests protected, the national political environment in relation to the implementation of these interests, and the interests of the rational. In this Saudi Arabia as a country, are required to take the strategy and policy which is both domestic as well as international nature that prioritize the interests of the nation above all issues,

so that strategies and policies taken by Saudi Arabia alone could support the national interests of its country.

Therefore, related to Saudi Arabia national interest in the Yemeni people's revolution that occurred in 2012, it is in the interests of Saudi Arabia's political hegemony to expand and even maintain its influence in Yemen for many years. Saudi Arabia utilizes the people's revolution of Yemen as a way to let those countries remain in its influence primarily the leaders of Yemen. Saudi Arabia controls Yemen by engaging in any field by approaching the Yemeni government only to obtain and maintain power or power both regionally and internationally.

Glancing to the conflicts happening in Yemen made many countries want to see directly and guessing what kind complexity of conflict, this makes Saudi Arabia as the nearest neighbours in terms of geographies also want to know. Not many know that Yemen has very varied natural resources, ranging from oil, natural gas, marble, coal, gold, lead, nickel, small copper, and salt, to seafood such as fish. Not only that, Yemen also has mineral reserves which include zeolite, talc, scoria, sandstone, perlite, magnetite, limestone, gypsum, feldspar, dolomite, clay and Celestin. (Thomas, 2012) Although soil conditions in Yemen belongs to the dry and barren, however there are two plant that thrives and is a major crop in the Highlands of northern Yemen, namely Coffee Arabica and khat (*Catha edulis*). The best coffee is grown in the highlands of Yemen, at an altitude of 4,500 to 6,500 feet (1,400-2,000 meters), where khat is also growing and thriving there. On the coastal plains and river valleys (*wadis*) in Yemen, there are plants with dry climates such as date palms, citrus fruits, bananas, cotton, sporges, acacia and tamarisk. In the highlands there are also various types of food crops such as melons, beans, grapes, eucalyptus, sycamore,

fig, carob and seeds. This is also, what later became an arena especially for Saudi Arabia to take part in expanding their wings in Yemen.

Talking about politics is always in the direction of interests, politics is often related to interests. But interest does not have to always be related to politics itself. This is what later made political experts agree to conclude that in politics there is always an element of interest. But still it's not the same as political interests.

The closeness between the leaders also became an important object under the influence of a country's political interests. As many have mentioned that the President of Yemen Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi in conflict resolution of his country also asked Saudi Arabia to help him in dealing with the conflict. This was then later made by Saudi Arabia as a direction from the previous policy which was more focused on internal problems of the Kingdom to become a policy that could make the Saudi Arabian State truly deserve to be a superpower in the Arabian Peninsula. Moreover, when Saudi Arabia knowing that the group which named itself Al-Houthi in the Northern region of Yemen, who had different views from Saudi Arabia and at the same time got support from its enemies, the Iranian state increasingly made Saudi Arabia confident about the policies decided by the country.

3. Sunni vs Shia: Camouflage parties who have interests, this factor to see battle in seizing sect domination of the strongest Sunni and Shia in Yemen.

Sunni-Shia problems, actually not only occur at this time, but have occurred in the Caliphate and then continued until the modern era. The emergence of these two religious groups that originated from the

political problems associated with power who most has the right to replace the position of the Prophet Muhammad as leader of the congregation or the head of State. This incident is clearly occurred after the incident, namely *tahkim* or peace negotiations between Ali Ibn bin Talib, who at that time served as the third caliph, with Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan who claimed to be the caliph. This *tahkim* event caused division in the group of Ali bin Abi Talib, making it appear that three groups of Muslims, namely:

1. The group that came out of Ali's ranks, and even opposed it, was called the *Khawarij*
2. The group fully supported Ali and did not recognize Muawiyah as the Caliph, known to Shia, and
3. Groups that are not included in support groups or opponents, called Sunni groups (Sulaiman, 2014)

Although the initial differences involved religious issues, but in its development it was more related to the issue of political power. This can be seen in the principles of both, such as the pillars of faith and pillars of Islam. Pillars of faith in Sunni teachings include six things, namely faith in God, faith in his angels, faith in his books, faith in his messengers, faith in the ultimate yaumul (doomsday), faith in Al-Qadr, all right bad from God. While the pillars of faith in Shia teachings include five things, namely At-Tawhid (Oneness of God), An Nubuwwah (Prophet hood), Al Imamah (Leadership or the Amiran), Al Adlu (Justice), and Al Ma'ad (believe in doomsday). Similarly, the pillars of Islam in Sunni teachings include five things, namely read two sentences of the creed performing prayers, carrying out zakat, carrying out fasting, and carrying out the Hajj. The five pillars of Islam are almost the same with the teachings of the Shia, but two sentences creed. In the teachings of the Shia there is no teaching of

syahadatain, so that the pillars of Islam include the prayer, zakat, fasting, Hajj, and region.

The most fundamental difference between Shia and Sunni Islam lies in the problem of caliphate (imamate). For Shia, imamate is an important issue and principle problem, because it is part of the faith and has a central position as well as the manifestation of the Lutf (grace) towards of his creatures as Nubuawah. As for the things the principles in the Shia belief is tawheed, nubuwah, divine justice, imamate and belief about the doomsday. While in Sunni Islam the question of Imamate (Caliphate) is not entirely rejected, but it is not a main principle in Islam or more to political and social nuances. (Basit, 2006)

The establishment of the institution of Imamate is fact to mankind humanity from evil and immorality. For that reason, God appointed a trusted Imam. That trust is Lutf to his servants and he is believed to be the successor and continuation of the prophetic mission so the priest must always exist. The existence of an Imam is the absolute thing, so that the temporary absence must be replaced by a Faqih until the arrival of Imam Al-Mahdi, who is commonly known as the area of Al-Faqih, which is implicated by Imamate in social political and religious life. While among the Sunni, there is no teaching as understood by the Shia. That is the teachings of understood by the Sunnis that Imamate was not a divine revelation and were not determined by its apostle, but were left to the people who chose whom they considered appropriate according to the situation and conditions and fulfilled the specified requirements. Therefore, the position of Imamate even though it basically to maintain the deals with religious matters, in some cases has a worldly character. Therefore, in the appointment of the Imam it was handed over to the crowd for deliberation.

In connection with this case, according to the author, if the Sunni Shia views from the perspective of Islamic thought, it is not a religion or something that must be obeyed or followed. Both of these groups are groups that understand Islam, analyse Islamic teachings with their respective approaches and methods, the results are relative, the truth is not absolute, therefore the difference between the two is more about the differences in *ijtihad* (the way each view), in a sect it is not a principle difference, it cannot even be denied in many ways, there are similarities with both or other Islamic groups, in which both originate come from the same tree branch. Therefore, between Shia and Sunni sect or the other there is no contradiction, that there is only differences in interpreting Islamic teachings.

Therefore, the difference between Shia and Sunni in the Islamic perspective is as a *Sunnatullah* which cannot be avoided by anyone even those differences will broaden insight and knowledge and become mercy. If it is realized that the results from a thought or interpretation, the result is relative, therefore, for matters of relative there should be no coercion of opinion and feel he is most correct, because the absoluteness of truth belongs only to Allah, does not belong to ordinary humans. Let the Shia and Sunni revolving *fastabiqul khoirat* in social life and community. Later history will judge and will sentence. Because of the Shia and Sunni is a social reality and history. (Basit, 2006) Therefore, in the scientific world, differences of opinion are considered reasonable and normal, which is not reasonable is to impose one opinion on others, so we do not have the authority to stated our opinions that is the most correct, while other than us is wrong, then in fact actually we have taken the authority of God as the determinant of truth.

After the passing of the Prophet Muhammad, the Sunni raised Abu Bakr to become the first caliph, then continued by Umar Ibn Khattab, and Uthman Ibn Affan. On the other hand, the Shia group argues that Ali Ibn Abi Talib, who is a cousin and son in law of the Prophet Muhammad, is a figure who deserves to be the successor to the leadership of the faithful after the Prophet Muhammad. Shia Muslims believe that Ali Ibn Abi Talib is elected through a direct commands from the Prophet Muhammad. Shia also rejected the leadership of the first three Sunni caliphs namely Abu Bakar, Umar Ibn Khattab, and Uthman Ibn Affan. These two different views are increasingly tense with the claims of Saudi Arabia which declares themselves as “the leader of the Sunni world”. In fact, as is known in this country there are two Islamic holy places, Mecca and Medina. On the other hand, Iran has the largest Shia population in the world and since the Iranian revolution in 1979 it has become a “the leader of the Shia world”.

The relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia are always tinged variety of various tensions. The conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia originated from the differences in views about a leader which then led to the “war” in order to fulfil the ambition to expand power. Saudi Arabia and Iran relations begins to heat up in 1979. The Iranian revolution, also known as Islamic revolution, that replaced Iran change from the Monarchy under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlevi to become the Islamic Republic led by the Supreme Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. According to Ayatollah Khomeini, the monarchy is not in accordance with Islam. While Saudi Arabia is ruled by a king and its form of government is Islamic conservatives. After the Iranian revolution, the country began to send support for Shia interests in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere in the Middle East. This was later seen as an opposition to

the conservative Sunni regime. Arab countries are also suspect Iran efforts related to spread its revolution to neighbouring countries. This revolution made Iran increasingly show its strength. Iran strongly supported Palestinian efforts against Israel and accuses countries like Saudi Arabia are not paying attention to the fate of Palestinians. Saudi Arabia only represents the interests of the West. Iran is increasingly outspoken against in opposing Saudi allies such as the United States under the leadership of Ahmadinejad.

This conflict later became an influence towards the Middle East and the world. In short, there will be a matrix of proxy war, where the two countries will not be directly hit, but will strength in other conflict areas. In Yemen, Houthi Shia rebel, alleged to have ties with Iran. With the reasons to support the official government under President Abd Mansour Hadi, Arab Saudis then sent airstrikes to attack the Houthi. “The Cold war” between the two major countries in Middle East is no doubt affected the stability of the region. The status of Iran and Saudi Arabia as the main exponents of Shia and Sunni Islam makes both of them then build alliances with countries that have the same theology as them. The aim is certainly to expand influence and power in the region. Saudi Arabia also strengthened relations with other Sunni governments including the establishment of the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council).

Saudi Arabia and Iran conflicts has always been associated with the Sunni Shia sectarian sentiment. The interference of Saudi Arabia in the Yemen conflict further increases the risk of creation of a covert war between Shia Iran who support the Houthis against Saudi Arabia and Sunni monarchs. Iran states that Saudi Arabia has intervene in Yemen, it is like being delivered by the President Hassan Rouhani, who called for an end to the interference of Arab countries in the conflict in

Yemen. The fall of Saudi Arabia and its coalition is an attempt to stem and stop the politics of colonization of Iran that are being rolled and spreading Shia ideology in countries that are already clearly Sunni. The entrance to the Houthi group upon to overthrow the legitimate governments, because President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi is considered do the corruption in his country, so it must be overthrown. It is through this reason that Iran openly declares participation in helping a group of Houthis. But behind it all, there is a goal of Iran wants to be achieved, namely the spread of Shia ideology in the Sunni Yemen country. Iran and Saudi Arabia each other competing for influence not only in Yemen, but throughout the Middle East, and these two camps makes it the poorest Arab country a pagan. Saudi Arabia calls the military operation of the Al-Houthi group as holy war, while Iran condemns this military intervention, for violating Yemen sovereignty.

The escalation of Saudi Arabia involvement in the Yemen conflict can be explained in the following situations:

The conflict has intensified since 2004 and flared up again on August 11, when the Yemen military implemented the operation namely “operation of scorched earth” to against the Houthi Shia group. Houthi guerrillas took up arms against President Ali Abdullah Saleh government in 2004, by reason of a political, economic marginalization and religion by the government of Yemen supported Sunni Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia does not want the effects of Shia expansion, so it seeks to help the Yemen government which seems to have difficulties in dealing with the Houthis. The government of Saudi Arabia said it had the evacuation of creating what is called the Buffer Zone along the border with Yemen. This buffer zone is needed to launch an attacks against rebel Houthi

outposts in Yemen. The involvement of Saudi troops marked for the first time since the 1991 Gulf War, that this oil rich country has been deployed military power beyond its borders. The escalation of attacks against Houthi Yemen troops in the North, has been going on at the time of Muhammad Rashad Al-Alimi, Deputy Prime Minister for Security and Defence Affairs of Yemen, along with a political and security troupe visited Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Along with the visit, the conflict in Northern Yemen enters a new phase with the existence of a form of cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the Sanaa government, especially in the suppression of Al-Houthi groups which also increased.

As has been said by KJ. Holsti about one of three foreign policy, namely the element of time, which is medium term objective, is to increase the prestige of the country in that system, this indicator is assessed based on industry, technology, funds and military assistance, including spreading the power. In this case, of course either Saudi Arabia or Iran saw both of them can be whose will be the leader in the Arab World. The identity of Sunni and Shia ideology here must be as a positioned instrument for determining interests. Parties with an interest in this conflict can be said to make ideology an instrument for their ambitions to achieve their respective interests. It is very ironic to see how an ideology that has sacred values is mocked for the ambition to reach the interests of certain parties.

The Sunni Shia conflict the most prominent Saudi tension with Iran. Now days, the Houthi are supported by Iran have launched a lot of actions against Saudi Arabia, this is proven by the conduct of several attacks against on the territory of Saudi Arabia.

The following are three Houthi militia attacks on Saudi Arabia:

1. The Year 2015

Since the rebel deciding to attack Yemen in March 2015, Saudi Arabia has been intensively sending air strikes to ground artillery to attack the Houthis. However, on April 26, 2015, Saudi Arabia was shocked when Houthi militia attacked Najran, its territory near the borders of the two countries. The attack killed one soldier and wounded two other Saudi Arabia. Then it continued on April 30, 2015, where an attack from the Houthis killed one of Saudi Arabia soldier in Najran. The attacks took place along 2015 and killed dozens of people, who mostly Saudi Arabia soldiers and several others were civilians.

2. The Year 2016

In the year 2016, the attack on using missiles into Saudi Arabia from Yemen continued to be intensified, especially in Saudi oil drilling facilities, although not as intense as in 2015. But reached its peak in October when a ballistic missile is directed to the Holy city of Mecca. This missile attack was dropped before reaching Mecca. Since 2015 to 2016, the Houthi have launched at least eighteen ballistic missiles into Saudi airspace to areas such as Jizan, Asir, and Najran.

3. The Year 2017

Early in the year 2017, Houthi militia attacked Saudi warships on the Red Sea, killing two marines. Then in February, the Houthi returned to release ballistic missiles which led to a power plant in Jizan. In March, Saudi officials reported that the national defence fired on four ballistic missiles originating from Yemen. Two months later, the Houthis reported that their forces launched a ballistic missile in Riyadh before the arrival of US President Donald Trump.

Saudi Arabia later said, they shoot down the missile in its Southern region. In May, two consecutive attacks directed at Saudi Arabia border guards in Najran. In June, a series of similar attacks also occurred along the border. And in July, as many as three attacks were carried out, which killed dozens of Saudi Arabian soldiers on patrol in Najran. Then on Wednesday, July 26, the Houthi claimed to have detonated one management facility of Saudi oil in Yubun, but there had been no confirmation from the Saudi authorities. Most recently the attacks using ballistic missiles long range to Mecca but was shot down by the military at Taif.

Obviously this does not make Saudi Arabia silent since the attack was launched by the Houthis, the Saudi Arabia led military coalition with air strikes to stop the movement of the Houthi rebels. Dozens of tanks, armoured vehicles, private transport vehicles and hundreds of Yemen soldiers trained in Saudi Arabia were involved, arriving in Yemen via Wadia's Northern border post in Yemen. This military assistance came from the Sharura region, Saudi Arabia, and was aimed at the Houthi rebellion. (Wibisono, 2015) Saudi Arabia is trying hard to stem the flow of Iran influence in Yemen. In response to the Al-Houthi rebellion that resulted in the chaos of Yemen, which would also threaten the stability of the security of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.

B. Saudi Arabia Strategy to Control the Access of Bab El-Mandeb

According to John Lovell, the strategy is any predesigned set of moves, or series of decisions, in a competitive situation where the outcome is not governed purely by chance (Masoed, Studi Hubungan Internasional Tingkat Analisis dan Reorisasi, 1989). But

according to Carl von Clausewitz, strategic is the long-term plan.

Sometimes the interpretation of strategy is often equated with the tactic, but either Strategic or tactics are two different things. According to Oxford English dictionary, the tactic is defined as an action or strategy carefully planned to achieve a specific end. The strategic and tactic are two components which interconnected each other. The strategy can be defined as a plan that has prepared in order to achieve the objectives and either national interest of individual that has been set before (Sukmawardani, Iran's Foreign Policy Strategy Overcome the Embargo in 2012-2014, 2016). A strategy is a more long-term because strategy tends to use in order to achieve the main objective, while the tactic is more short term because it is a part of the strategy implementation and also can change due to the situation.

The strategy that has been designed would become guidance to the policymakers in order to achieve the objective and a national interest of the state. There are two components in the strategy; they are the offensive component and defensive component. These two components have different purpose and objective in the implementation. The offensive component is used in order to get the benefit while a defensive component is used in order to prevent the disadvantages that might become from the policy that has been designed (Sukmawardani, 2016). In the other context, a strategy is categorized as problem solving or conflict resolution. A strategy emphasizes the problem solving rather than becoming the winner of the conflict.

Saudi Arabia economy condition characterized by the presence of progress or improvement of the economy and prosperity of peoples (among others,

driven by increase in world crude oil prices up to mid of the year 2008). But the condition is still considered insufficient by the leaders of the country and a directive was issued that Saudi Arabia must be able to become a country that is one of the best investment destinations in the world. The policy taken is to conducting economic reforms, improvement of investment conditions, and the most important, is so called “ambitious project” called the (10x10) program or make Saudi Arabia one of the Top 10 Most Competitive Nations in the World by 2010.

Saudi Arabia is the largest manufacturer and exporter of petroleum results. The economy of Saudi Arabia which is associated with the petroleum results, namely the petrochemical and petroleum. The State Company Saudi Aramco, the world’s largest listed oil company has supplies and produce Hydrocarbon, the result of a rich oil which then became the main source of wealth of Saudi Arabia.

1. The Source of the Wealth of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has a Petro line along the 746-mile, also known as East-West Pipeline, which runs through Abqaiq complex of Saudi Arabia to the Red Sea. The Petro line system consisted of two pipelines with a maximum capacity of 4.8 million bbl/d. The pipeline is 56 inch with a capacity of 3 million bbl/d, and is currently capable to transport around 2 million bbl/d. The 48 inch pipeline has been operating in recent years as a natural gas pipeline, and then converted into an oil pipeline by Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia also operates a liquefied natural gas pipeline Abqaiq-Yanbu with a capacity of 290,000 bbl/d. However, this pipeline is now operating with full capacity and cannot be converted into an oil pipeline. Saudi Arabia also has two additional pipeline that run parallel to the Petro line

system and avoids the Strait of Hormuz, but no one was able to channel an extra volume of oil in the Strait of Hormuz is closed at any time. Iraqi Pipeline in Saudi Arabia (IPSA) of 48 inches with a capacity of 1.65 million bbl/d which runs parallel with Petro line. Saudi Arabia also took ownership of IPSA and turned it into a natural gas pipeline to power plant. Saudi Arabia has not yet planned to return the function of the pipeline to a crude oil pipeline. The other pipeline, such as the Trans Arabian Pipeline (TAPLINE) from Qaisumah in Saudi Arabia to Sidon in Lebanon, or strategic oil pipelines between Iraq and Turkey, have not been used for years due to war damage, rarely used, or political strife. The pipeline links need to be fixed heavily before being used to distribute the massive oil. The oil in small quantities, at least several hundred thousand barrels per day, can be transported by trucks in the Strait of Hormuz is closed. This oil exports play an important role in supplying energy to large economical countries such as China, India, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan as well as limiting the price of oil, gas and petroleum products globally. About 15.2 million barrels of oil per day from 17 million barrels of oil per day were transported from the Strait of Hormuz. (PILLAI, 2006)

2. The Location of Bab El-Mandeb

The Strait of Bab El-Mandeb are officially located between Yemen and Djibouti, but the area around the strait is also occupied by Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, and semi-autonomous Republic of Somaliland. The region has long since become a trading post for merchants who sailed between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. Explorers and traders of ancient Egypt passed through the strait to search for incense from the land of Punt. Alexander Agung ordered Greek forces to cross the Red Sea to reach the Indian Ocean. The Persians,

Romans, and Arabs gathered in the strait in ancient times. Since the Suez Canal was opened in 1869 and oil began to be traded through the Red Sea, the United Kingdom, French, Italian, United States, and Soviet competed for power there. (Reuters, Saudi Arabia to resume oil shipments through Red Sea lane, 2018)

Picture 4.4: Map of Bab El-Mandeb



Sources:

<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2017/6/28>

This strategic line became the motive for Saudi Arabia to intervene in Yemen, because the Bab El Mandeb route that existed in Yemen is very influential on the Saudi Arabian trade route which is due every ship that departing or arrives from Saudi Arabia will pass through the strait, thus the controlled the strategic

lines is the main motive of Saudi Arabia to intervention against Yemen.

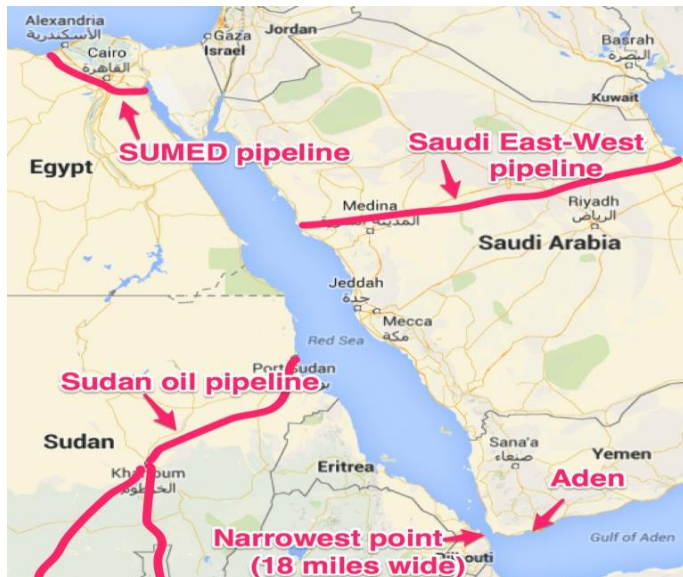
Bab el Mandeb ever since it used to be a centre of history and civilization that is able to control or stop the shortest trade routes between Europe, North Africa, India and East Asia. However, a series of recent events in Yemen, including the capture of a number of ports on the Red Sea coast by Houthi rebels, Saudi Arabia and Yemen bombings by making the future of this increasingly dreary straits. According to U.S. Energy Information Administration, around 3.8 million b/d of crude oil and distilled waters across the Bab El-Mandeb in 2013. Therefore, Bab El-Mandeb is an important post on the world trade route.

Therefore, here we can see why the Bab el Mandeb strait has become a strategic trade routes and can accelerate time and cut travel costs by taking the shortest route to reach the Suez Canal. Saudi Arabia is worried that the Houthi revival would interfere with access, including the control of the Bab El-Mandeb line. The United States Department of Energy considers that the Bab El-Mandeb line is the fourth busiest oil lines in the world and is considered as a choke point for world oil transit. Choke point is the transit point for oil distribution to do the deployment capacity restriction function to maintain the availability of oil sector in the country. There are seven of the most important choke points in the world, namely:

1. Hormuz Strait
2. Straits of Malaca
3. Suez Canal
4. Bab El-Mandeb Strait
5. Danish Strait
6. Turkish Strait

7. Panama Canal

Picture 4.5 Strategic Lines of Bab el Mandeb



Sources: Google Maps

The rapid development of the area west of Yemen Houthi rebel as well as the occupation of the Yemen capital, Sanaa, in September attracted the attention of

large regional player's interested parties in maintaining the stability of Yemen and the access to the waters of Bab El-Mandeb. Egypt is one of these players. Because Egypt controlled the Suez Canal, the government of Egypt decided to support the Saudi-led Arab coalition to attack the Houthis so that the Red Sea which culminate ended in the Suez Canal remained secure.

Saudi Arabia, a country that views Yemen as an inseparable part of its national policy, is unable to control Yemen internal politics through diplomacy and manipulation against the Yemen traditional leaders. Sultan Ibn Abdul Aziz had Yemen and Saudi Arabia relations for several years and was very familiar with between the tribes in Yemen. "Playing behind the scenes lately has no results, so Saudi Arabia feels the need to take action that is steadier".

The hypothesis used in analysing using the framework of thinking that hooking a condition a country's national interest in influence the foreign policy of the country. The strait of Bab el-Mandeb is a shipping channel between Cape of Africa and the Middle East. The strait is also a strategic link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. The strait is located between Yemen, Djibouti and Eritrea as well as connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea. Most of the exports from the Persian Gulf that transit on the Suez Canal and SUMED Pipeline also crosses the Bab el-Mandeb. Approximately 2.9 million bbl/d of crude oil and refined oil products through these waters in 2009 with the aim in Europe, the United States and Asia, rose to 3.8 million bbl/d in 2013. (Mansyur, 2008) (Alkaff, 2015)

Oil shipments of the North through the strait of Bab el-Mandeb are increasing in the year 2014. More than half of oil traffic, around 2.1 million bbl/d, moved north

to the Suez Canal and SUMED Pipeline. The strait of Bab el-Mandeb is only 18 miles wide at the narrowest point. The tanker are forced to pass through two lines as wide as two miles for the cruise exit sign in the Persian Gulf. The closure of Bab el-Mandeb made tanker ships from the Persian Gulf unable to reach the Suez Canal or SUMED Pipeline or forcing them to revolve around the Southern tip of Africa, so that adds to increasing the time and cost of transit. In addition, the oil trade to the South from Europe and North Africa could not capitalize on the shortest routes to Asia via the Suez Canal and Bab el-Mandeb.