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**THE INFLUENCE OF ALHOUTHI MOVEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGION**

**MA THESIS**

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## **FOREWORD**

Foremost, I would like to thank Allah for helping me to finish this thesis which was not easy not just because of the subject is new. However, due to the evolution of the events in Yemen, it was hard to keep track of all these changes, so this reason made this subject is changeable and difficult.

During a year and a half, I re-read and re-write my thesis chapters more than once until I felt that I will not finish. Sometimes I had feel remorse for choosing this subject, but I felt comfortable after I was able to comprehend it. In spite of that I know my thesis will not stop the war in Yemen, I believe that if we want to solve any problem, we should know and understand the real reasons of problem. Similarly, I see that the problem of Yemen will not be solved unless we understand the real causes of the conflict and the war in Yemen. Hence, my thesis is considered as a step to build society awareness to understand the Yemeni situation that help society and Yemeni leaders to take suited steps to stop the reasons that are causing the conflict in Yemen.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor for supporting me. He consistently allowed this thesis to be my own work. Last but not least, I want to thank my family, my Great mother, grandparents, my beloved sister Abrar, and my Cousins Mymoona and Khadija for helping me to finish this thesis.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>GCC</b>	:Gulf Cooperation Council
<b>GDP</b>	:Gross domestic product
<b>OPEC</b>	:Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>IAEA</b>	:International Atomic Energy Agency
<b>UAE</b>	:United Arab Emirates
<b>UN</b>	:United Nations
<b>ICRC</b>	:International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>ISIS</b>	:Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
<b>BOP</b>	:Balance of power theory
<b>BOT</b>	:Balance of threats theory
<b>P5+1</b>	:The P5 namely China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States; plus Germany. It is a group of six world powers which, in 2006, joined together in diplomatic efforts with Iran with regard to its nuclear program



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## **THE INFLUENCE OF THE ALHOUTHI MOVEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGION**

### **ABSTRACT**

After Yemeni revolution in 2011, the Houthi movement emerged to the forefront of the political scene in Yemen. By force, it has been able to impose itself as a political partner in the national dialogue and the process of peaceful transition of power. To support its political position, the Houthi movement depends on arms to extend various regions of Yemen. It takes advantage of the political and constitutional vacuum in Yemen and by the time it was able to overthrow the legitimate government and occupies the capitol easily. After that, Houthi movement has become a key engine of the political scene in Yemen that of course will effect on the political scene in the Middle East. All that affects made some changes in international relationship in the Middle East, so researcher will try to monitor these changes, which may lead to the emergence of new alliances in the Middle East. Also it tries to answer this question of whether we are at the edge of a new Middle East or not.

**Keywords:** *The Houthi Movement, the Conflict in Yemen, International Relationship, the Middle East, ISIS, Iran, the US, the Gulf States.*



## **ALHOUTHI HAREKETİNİN ORTADOĞU BÖLGESİ'NDE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ÜZERİNE ETKİLERİ**

### **ÖZET**

2011`de Yemen devrimi sonrasında, Huthi hareketi Yemen siyaset sahnesinde ön plana çıktı. Ulusal Diyalog Konferansı siyasi sürecinde, kendisini zorla kabul ettirdi. Yemen`de siyasi konumunu sağlamlaştırmak ve birçok şehri ele geçirmek amacıyla silah kullandı. Anayasanın ve siyasi otoritenin yokluğundan faydalananarak zamanla meşru hükümeti devirmeyi başardı ve çoğu kenti ele geçirdi.

Huthi hareketinin Yemen siyasetinde bu şekilde önemli bir yere sahip olması gelecekte tüm Orta Doğunu etkileyebilir. Tüm bu olaylar Orta Doğudaki Uluslararası İlişkilerde değişikliklere neden olmuştur.

Bu araştırma ile Huthi hareketinin Orta Doğunun Uluslararası İlişkilerdeki meydana getirdiği değişiklikleri ve bu değişikliklerin yeni bir Ortadoğu inşa etmeye etkili olup olmayacağı açıklanmaya çalışılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *yemen savaşı, Orta Doğuyu, Huthi hareketi, Uluslararası İlişkiler, ISIS, İran, ABD, Körfez Devletleri.*



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

For a longtime, Yemen has suffered from the fragility of the political and security situation. In spite of a period of relative stability experienced in Yemen since 1990 until the beginning of revolution in 2011, the powerful central state project remained absent until now. The absent of state project caused a lot of problem in Yemen in different aspects, the biggest problem is the dispersion of the decision between the state and the tribes and armed groups that led to happen unrest and protests in various regions of Yemen especially in the North and South.

In North regions especially in (Saada), the protests were turned to armed conflict between armed militia (Houthi Movement) directly with the state. Since 2004 until 2010, there was six rounds of conflicts, the last one was stopped before the Yemeni revolution in 2011.

During the so-called Arab Spring, the Houthi Movement actively participated in the Yemeni revolution that led it to become an essential part of the components of the Yemeni revolution. So it could easy to participate in the political side in decision-making and to impose itself in any future political process in Yemen through its participation in the national dialogue which continued over two years. However, at the same time Houthi Movement benefited from its military capabilities to expand in various regions of Yemen to impose its political decisions as commensurate with its state project which it aims to do from the beginning.

Since the fall of capital in 2014, the Houthis caused a lot of changes in Yemen scene, but the biggest impact of the Houthi Movement was the fall of the state. The occurrence of a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia in Yemen as it was formed the first alliance includes ten Arab and Islamic countries.

This alliance is the first alliance of its kind since the fall of the colonial period in the Middle East, hence this research discusses these changes to determine the impact of the

Houthi Movement in the form of international relations in the Middle East in the coming period.

The first chapter will include the introduction and theoretical framework, the second chapter discusses related information to the Houthi Movement, its historical background, political emergence and its impact on various social, political and economic aspect in local level, while the third chapter discusses the Houthi Movement and strategic changes in the Middle East at the regional and international level, finally, the research includes recommendations of the study.

### **1.1 Statement of the Study**

Since the fall of the colonial period in the Middle East, there was not relative stability, but a lot of wars and turmoil despite these strikes there was no change in international alliances in the Middle East for long time. Because any change in the Middle East, especially in the Gulf region, will threat the interest of the USA and international system.

The importance of the Gulf region is the presence of the oil and the USA seek to protect it to keep its interests. But after what happened in Yemen the USA and international system interests may become in a real threat. Because the Houthi Movement made some steps, maybe it led to change in former alliances in the Middle East.

This research is trying to study these changes and looking into the possibility of impacts on three levels. At the first, Researcher will study the changes in the local level, so researcher will study what is the influence of the Houthi Movement on different aspects, especially on the security, economy and geopolitics of Yemen during 2014 and 2015. In the second level, researcher will study the regional changes, so this research will discuss the effects posed by the Houthi Movement on Gulf security that are consistent with the interests of Iran and its project in the region.

The research will examine if the role of the Houthis will lead to proxy war in Yemen, then this thesis will study the changes that happened in international level. So as to study the influence of the Houthi Movement on the stability of the region and the impact on various

fields at the international level to know if that change will create new alliance in Middle East.

## **1.2 Justification of the Study**

Although there are many works on the Houthi Movement, they merely focus on one factor or another instead of looking at all the factors together. This study seeks to fill this gap through studying the effects of the Houthi Movement at various levels by studying the situation of each party to the existing conflict in Yemen in different levels to make Yemen scene clear.

The research also seeks to study the reasons that led to the emergence of the Houthi Movement and caused spread it dramatically to become a real threat to the security of Yemen and Gulf.

Researcher wants to understand the Yemen situation to give a convincing recommendation on the Yemeni situation. because the negative impact of the Houthi Movement will not stand on a local or regional level, but it will reach an international level because of the importance of Yemen's geographical location in the region and world.

In the Yemeni scene the events and causes are interwoven because of the multiplicity of parties to the conflict and because of the complexity of the scene being linked to historical and tribal dimensions. So Yemen characterizes from other situations in the Middle East, but researcher will try to focus on the overall objective through the following question: What are the changes caused by the Houthi Movement in international relations in the Middle East? So that research can answer this question researcher will try to answer the following sub-questions because its answers would be give the answer of the main question.

What are the effects of the Houthi Movement at the local level in Yemen? What are the effects of the Houthi Movement at the regional level for the Middle East? What are the effects of the Houthi Movement on international level?

### **1.3 Objectives of The Study**

In order to complete this study, it is very important to point out the objectives that the study wants to accomplish. The objectives are related with the general questions and the sub-questions, so research want to answer those questions whether the changes will contribute to appear new Middle East in Arab regions or if the changes will be formed new relations in Middle East, and if it could to stop the conflict, or if it could to create relative stability?

The new Middle East means that the current conflicts may divide the countries of Arab region that will create new countries and new alliances in the Middle East.

The Middle East has different resources of conflicts, such as the monarchy system which still control everything in Gulf Region, Iranian project which started since Islamic revolution, the war in Iraq and Syria and the influence of Arab Spring in different countries in the Middle East. All that factors make it so difficult to know whether the new age of new Middle East will start or not yet, but through trace the changes that happened during 2014 and 2015 researcher try to give Complete answer of that question.

### **1.4 Literature Review**

Many works have been written on the Houthi Movement such as (Aldagshi, 2010; Peterson, 2008; Boucek, 2010). A lot of scholars and writers have discussed the topic of Houthi Movement from different angles; this search will use those literatures as that commensurate with the chapters of Thesis.

Researcher found some literatures that discussed some aspects of the research topic, so the literature review is divided into two sections. The first section provides available literature on the topic of the influence of the Houthi Movement in various local aspects. It provides literature on the historical background of the Zaydi Social Movements, the emergence of the Houthi Movement, the explanations of the conflict between Yemeni government and the Houthi Movement and how could that movement controls the state later.

The second section of literature review outlines the international relationship in the Middle East, the reasons and factors of the conflicts that may be will effect on the alliances on it, after presenting that literatures as that commensurate with the topic, researcher will link between the two sides of literature review to answer the questions of research.

According to J.E. Peterson (2008), the researcher studied the different details on the sixth round of the internal war that happened during 2004 until 2010 in Yemen. The researcher indicates that there were a lot of reasons that contributed in that conflict, but the abroad factors played a big role in the incidence of that internal war.

Since the presence of the Wahhabi Movement, which is considered as an extension of the Saudi Arabia, that paying Zaidi sect, which was known as (Believing Youth) group and aims to revive the Zaidi, that stop threatening Wahhabi tide. But in front of lack of response from government that group transformed to armed group, which is known as the Houthi Movement, entered into a war with the state that lasted for years.

The researcher also confirms that Iran has a great role in supporting the Houthi Movement. Some evidence indicates that the founder of movement Hussein al-Houthi has visited Iran several times and met with Iranian officials. Also, his father and some members of the Houthi family also visit Iran during the war; through the events it is clear that already the biggest reason for the current war in Yemen is foreign interference.

Ahmed Aldagshi (2010) this study was one of the first studies which studied the Houthi Movement on the political and religious aspect. A researcher Ahmed Aldgshi shows that the Houthi movement seems to belong to the Zaidi which is Shiite Sects that linked Jaroudi doctrine. This sect appeared in an earlier period in Yemen, which is closer to Jaafari Shiite in Iran, however, there are differences in terms of conditions of the (Wali) or governor between the two doctrines.

The researcher confirms that the emergence of the Houthi Movement linked to internal and external factors. The most important internal factor is the Historical roots of the Shiites in Yemen that represented by Zaidi doctrine while external factors linked to the Iranian project in the region, which began since the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979.

Hence this research presented the Iranian -Houthi relations because the effect of the Houthi Movement largely associated with abroad support.

This study was after the sixth round of the war between the Houthi and government, so the main conclusions of this study that it warned of the possibility of the return to war again. Hence the Houthi Movement in fact associated with weapons since its appearance and it did not much believe in the political aspect as evidenced by the fact events.

Christopher Boucek (2010) discussed the different aspects that lead to war in Saada through focus on the main reasons that created anger among Zaidi sect, which tried to stop the social injustices because they had suffered for decades as a result of political marginalization. In addition to the fear of the spread of Wahhabism in the northern governorates that is considered as stronghold of the Zaidi. In fact, Wahhabism was one of the main reasons that contributed to the emergence of the Houthi Movement.

The researcher confirms that the six round of conflict increased the experience of the movement in military sphere, so through this research we can know more about the Houthis capability. According to the result of the six round of conflict that happened between the Houthis and state, this movement is considered as a strong group as a result of military experience and the weapon that was able to get it. But they were not able to drop state by their current capabilities. In fact, they benefited from many of the political and security vacuum in Yemen to impose themselves on the Yemeni scene.

In Ramón Blecua's paper (2015), the researcher presents some points that explain the Yemeni scene. As he said that the current conflict resembles the conflict that occurred in 1962 which aimed to restore the dynamics of power in the region. The external parties involved in the former conflict aimed to achieve its influence in the region by the influence on its neighboring countries or by affecting the countries, which shares with it in the system or ideology interest. But the researcher points out that the current conflict is more dangerous than former due to the worsening humanitarian and security situation in Yemen.

Also he emphasizes that the worsening situation in Yemen would threaten international security in the coming period because that many of the members of the radical groups have joined the public resistance that will make it difficult to carry out the task of fighting

terrorism in Yemen. Ramón study concludes that during the coming period it will be required to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States to reconsider their dealings with the different Yemeni parties to insure themselves from Iranian interference and other threats.

According to Paul Salem (2014), this paper emphasizes that the revolution of 2011 dramatically affected in the region through the big results on the various political and security aspects. The conflict between Sunnis and Shiites has increased during the clashes which urges in Syria. In addition, the political side lost its value after it has been down the Egypt's government because it belongs to the political Islam that encouraged the radical groups to appear more in the region.

The paper also emphasizes that the conflict in Middle East reached its peak by the entry of Russia in the Syrian scene directly. Adding to that the nuclear deal, which happened between Iran and 5P+1, will effect on the trends and drivers in the Middle East. But the study points out that there are other factors that affect in trends and actors in the scene of the Middle East.

The P5+1 refers to the UN Security Council's five permanent members, which includes China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States; plus Germany. In 2006 this group joined together in diplomatic efforts with Iran with regard to its nuclear program.

There are a large number of young people who are unemployed. Also they suffer absence of identification as a result of the lack of government response to their demands. In addition to political instability and the existence of social media, it facilitated for those young people to create their own worlds which is exploited by some terrorist groups.

Also the Continuing ideological and sectarian conflict threatens the stability of Middle East to weak economic side and the absence of the good performance of civil society organizations could protect society from sectarian or denominational split.

This paper also emphasizes that the impact of the conflict in Yemen would be in large scale if the bad situation continues that will cause the flow of refugees to neighboring countries, also it will affect the population and economic aspects.

Finally, researcher concluded that the effects of the war in Yemen will be the most important dilemma in the coming decades in the Arabian Peninsula. Because of that the current conflict in Yemen allows to the external intervention to work on the deepening of tribal and sectarian divisions and opened the way for more outside influence. (Salem, 2014).

Bassel F. Salloukh (2015) research indicates to the role of the outside intervention by the great powers which played large role to threaten the security and stability of the Middle East. Research emphasized that the conflict between different great powers in the Middle East does not aim to drop each other, but it aims to maintain the influence of the state and its presence in the region in order to build its regional influence.

The researcher also confirms that the popular uprisings intensified interaction between the local and regional levels in the development of international relations of the Middle East. In the current scene in the Middle East, the security and threats competing systems are intertwined to defend its geopolitical interests especially in Yemen. It has witnessed devastating internal and geopolitical battles due to weakness of economic conditions and the weakness of state institutions. Also it invited outside intervention in internal affairs causing the failure of the revolution in 2011 under the initiative of the Gulf, which replaced the authoritarian president by another authoritarian president.

By tracking the previous literatures, we can sum up the basic idea associated with the research topic of the influence of the Houthi movement as follows. Houthi movement mainly linked with external support adding to the weakness of the political and economic structure in Yemen, making it susceptible to external interventions as most of the previous literatures pointed out that the biggest problem Yemen is facing truly the foreign intervention.

Despite the lack of clarity of the Iran role in the Yemen war, through the events and Iranian official's remarks, it is clear that the war in Yemen is managed a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Of course their objects are different, while Saudi Arabia aim to maintain its security, Iran aims to implement its project in the Middle East. Beside the regional

conflict there are other conflicts linked with alliances in the Middle East. (Bassel F. Salloukh, 2015).

F. Gregory Gause (2015) talks about alliances in the Middle East and present the arguments of Mark Hass who argues that it is not simply power that defines the structure of an international system, in fact identity also structures the system. So the states that share common ideas about suitable legitimate principles of governance will tend to each other.

Also in systems characterized by ideological bipolarity, alliances will tend to follow ideological lines and be stable, but if there are more than two transnational ideological principles in the system, in this case the building alliances will be very complicated. But to protect the international system, the building alliances among different nations ideology is not impossible.

In cases of ideological multi-polarity, the state's leaders will avoid alliances that seem logical from a power perspective because they fear of the ideological stance of a potential ally. In the Middle East is in a situation of both power multi-polarity and ideological multi-polarity, that increase the factors of war, Iran has been the biggest beneficiary of the conflicts that occurred in the region during the previous period, so some countries in the region allied against this threat, but that alliances remained based on identity.

Research paper conclude that the recent changes that have occurred in the Middle East increased the influence of the Iranians, so Saudi Arabia by new king started to reconsider of the threat issue that really face it, and downplaying the Muslim Brotherhood threat to Saudi domestic regime security, and thus opening up the possibility of a Turkish-Saudi alliance against Iran, but after nuclear deal there will be some changes in the Middle East especially after the rapprochement between Iran and the United States. (F. Gregory Gause, 2015).

Curtis R. Ryan discusses the results of the changes that have occurred in the Middle East after the nuclear agreement, however, that despite the gains to Iran through that convention, this does not hide the current challenges that existed in the Middle East since 2011.

The research paper suggests that the Arab countries since 2011 changed their security priority, instead of worry about threat of Israel and Iran, they worry of the people, who are demanding change. but in front of the recent nuclear agreement, Arab states called on to form a military alliance, but that has not been implemented, because the states have different interests, and different security priorities. This research paper focused on security issue, although there are changes in the priorities of the different system and alliances in middle east, however, the security issues still remain, as a main factor in current regional alliances in the Middle East.

## **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

The international system depends on power and international relationship between different states, but it is difficult to understand international relations. However, there are different ways to understand it, the prominent one is political theories.

Political theories appeared to help us to understanding the political process in the world, to get more understanding of nature of international conflicts, and to know the main causes of wars. That theories did not appear suddenly, but in fact they linked with historical efforts, which tried to give pursuit answer of the questions about power and safe of states.

Although the worthy of the different political theories, they still can not explain different aspects of international political process, but some of them could be linked with reality, and give some pursuit answers of important international events, by suggest some principles and norms which make international political scent more clear, one of the most famous is the realism and neorealism theories.

The important point to understand anything is linked it with its nature, or linked it with its environment, so the realism theory focused on the basic reasons of the conflicts, it linked between historical approaches and reality outcomes of the different events that it studied. Historically there were a lot of wars and conflicts in various countries, according to realism theorists there were different reasons to start that wars, but in fact there was specific reason, which realism theory focused on it, it was the power, the power is the main reason that caused those wars, so realist theorists questioned why the different countries tried to get power?

There are different answers for this question, but the pursuit one, the answer of the realism theory, which imposes that the nature of states is aggressive, because they want to survive as Waltz stated, the nature of international system is anarchy, that creates different threat for countries, which are always worry about the threats that endanger their safety. (Waltz,1997)

The anarchy in the world creates a lot of problems and threats to different states, because there is no dominant state that manages the relations between states, moreover to prevent an attack against each other. That make state concerned about its security and interest, so this theory justifies aggressive behavior by States in an effort to maintain its security and survival.

According to realism theory the international system based on anarchy, that mean all states should make anything to protect their security, in addition the state must seek to get power to survive. However, there were different critics of realism theory, because it justifies the aggressive behavior of the States, and imposes that the system world similar to the forest. So there was renewed and evolution of some principles of realism theory, one of them is new Structural Realism, which depend on tow side Defensive Realism, and Offensive Realism theories, which has different approaches to explain and describe the changes in the political event.

The defensive realism based on the main principles of realism, anarchy system and important of power, but it justifies of the aggressive behavior of the States by self-help system, as Waltz stated that the states should to define its security by itself. This system imposes that if the state did not prepare itself to define itself, it will not survive. Also he justifies that the aggressive behavior is not unnatural, in fact it linked with international system, were the anarchy is a part of international system (Waltz,1997)

The states fear from attack of other states, on other word the states want to protect its interests, but the Chaotic system creates a lot of dangerous, which prevent state to live in lasting peace. So “that makes countries in the self-defense situation permanently, the status of self-defense gives states a strong reason to obtain different kind of weapons, to achieve the main goal of the states, survival”. (Waltz,1997, p.118).

After the first and second world war the international system changed, a lot of political and international events appeared, that the political theories did not able to explain it, but some of that theories were able to clarify some of those events as we mentioned before, one of that theories was defensive realism theory, which justified the aggressive behavior of the states, because the anarchy and absence of hierarchical system.

Although the defensive realism theory was able to explain a lot of political events, and motivations that pay states for aggressive behavior, it could not explain why some states do not stop the pursuit of power, although there is no directly threatened by other states. So the self- help system was not an enough reason to explain the behavior of states between each other.

After that new theories appeared, such as idealism, liberalism and institutionalism theories, which imposed that the states should not to act aggressively toward each other, because the international institutes can organize the relations between states. That prevent the anarchy to threaten their security, because that international institutions can protect the interests of its members of states, and prevent the conflict between each other. Through creates alliances and the Sanctions system, which use to stop threats of some states. Those theories tried to give new perspective of international relations, by focus on the corporations and political process, which may can prevent the reasons of conflicts and wars.

Those theories gave appropriate thesis and convincing answers on the economic side, but they did not talk mainly about the security aspect as Mearsheimer said in his article (*The False Promise of International Institutions*, 1994), as he believed that these theories largely successful in explaining and developing the economic aspect of international relations, but these theories have not addressed significantly the security issues, that are considered are the dominant reasons of states to pursuit more power.

Mearsheimer assumes that the international institutions were able to govern relations between states, but they were unable to prevent the causes of war, as the chaos still exist in the system worlds, because there is not yet any centralized state. Despite the fact that the USA became a greater force in the world, in military, economic and cultural sides, however, the USA is still not able to impose itself as great power which could create

hierarchical authority. There are many states still jostling to get more power, to obtain hegemony, which seen by Mearsheimer as a main reason that can maintain the security of the state, and maintains its interest in the chaotic system (Mearsheimer,1994).

The Cold War affected on international relations, and created new critics of different political theories, although the international institutions create new system, which was able to resolve a lot of problems, and making global rules to support international peace through the international Conventions, however, states are still Continue to obtain more power. The international conventions were not able to change the nature of the chaotic system, in fact it became a new dominance tools, that use by some great powers, so that tools are created new threats of other states, which decided to stand in front of those institutions.

That was clear from their performance, they are a part of a weapon of some states, which won after World war II, and because of that the competition of power increased, so different states seek to get new weapons more than past, that makes the threat of states from each other more than ever before. That what Waltz warned it before when he talked about the need to create a balance of power, he noted to that the seek to get power should link with aim of self-defense only, not in order to increase strength. So as we see now the intense competition between the states makes it difficult to control that competition, therefore it is so difficult to control the threats that come from different states in the global system. (Mearsheimer,2001).

Mearsheimer, who stressed the importance of arms to reach more of power as it only way to protect the state and its survival, he also emphasizes that the international system creates strong incentives for countries to gain power more than competitors. Nor the state should only gain more strength, but it must to seek hegemony to obtain the largest amount of force, so that it becomes difficult to threat by other states. (Mearsheimer,2001)

In fact, it is so difficult to appear a dominant state, because the competition for power is still present. Despite the fact that the United States is currently strengthen economically and militarily, it is not dominant state because of China and Russia, which were not possess a military force as United States, but they a nuclear arsenal. Although those countries have strong arsenals that prevent threatening from any other states, they did not stop trying to get more power to get dominance. Because of the intense competition

between states to get more power, that contributes to continue chaos in the international system according to the realism theory. (Mearsheimer,2001).

Mearsheimer depend on principles of realism theory, he suggests the principles of offensive side of new realism theory, in fact he thought that the states are both offensive oriented and defensive oriented, because all states try to balance between interests and threats, when they deal with other states. (Mearsheimer,1994).

Through balance between interest and threats states are able to gain more power to protect itself against threats, of course offensive theory committed to the basic of principles of realism theory, but it adds more reasons that justify the aggressive behavior of states between each other.

Mearsheimer supposed four assumptions, that the theory of offensive realism based on it, firstly, the survival is the principal goal of every states, that mean the states should give its security a big attention to protect itself against the any threats, because threats in any time maybe appear. If the state does not prepare itself to face that threats it will be in dangerous, so it should take all steps that will maintain its security and survival. (Mearsheimer,2001)

Second, states should act as rational actors, that mean the state should balance between threats and interests during dealing with other states, so when the states want to cooperate between each other, they should consider to how they will get benefits from each other. According to Mearsheimer the cooperation and alliances between different states, is just as a tool, so that tool will not protect state if it does not prepare itself against threats, or if it does not balance between threats and interests. Third, states possess some military capacity, that creates fear between states from each other, because that military capacity creates really threats against states, which should increase its military capacity, where it can use it to protect its survival and security if it faces any sudden threats. (Mearsheimer,2001)

Fourth, state is not sure about the intentions of other states, so that confirms its fears from others states, because it does not know when the other states will take step to threaten it directly through use that military capacity. In addition to the chaotic system in the world support the state's fears, so all those reasons encourage state to continue its aggressive behavior towards other states. Also that reasons encourage states to continue their efforts

to acquire more power to reach a hegemony, because there is no other way to maintain its survival (Mearsheimer,2001).

After the Cold War the international system changed, that war happened between communist and capitalism, which won and imposes imperialism, as what Kenneth Waltz considered that imperialist politics is the major cause of war in the world. (Waltz,1997)

The prominent outcome of the Cold War was that instead of the multipolar system the unipolar system emerged, according to the theory of balance of power, the unipolar system creates a lot of problems because of the competition between states, that threats the international stability. So the different state should try to rebuild that balance through the formation alliances, John Mearsheimer has considered that (alliances generally are temporary marriages of conveniences, today's allies can be tomorrow's enemies and vice versa) (Mearsheimer, 2001).

In fact, alliances become as a main political tool in international politics, because it can play a great role to maintain the security of state. The importance of alliances become from three reasons, Firstly, “alliances are seen as forms of international cooperation among states, commitments towards each other” (Bennett 1997: 846). Second, “sometimes alliances are seen as means of foreign policy. That form the state behavior with other state. Third, alliances have often been related to the outbreak, or prevention, of war and international conflict” (Oest.2007, p.25).

International relations are linked to alliances as George Liska stated, alliances become as a political tool that the state use it to maintain its security, and maintain its stability. So different states use alliances to strengthen its power and limit the influence of threats by stronger state (Liska ,1962).

According to Waltz the threats depend on the state capabilities, so if the state has got high capacity, its threat will high also. Hence the Balance of Power theory suggested that states form alliances to balance stronger states, for two reasons. First by aligning against the strongest power or the potential hegemony. To stabilize international system states must ensure that no one state will dominate the system. Second, by joining the weaker states to create that balance. (Oest.2007).

States will respond to any change in the international system, as what waltz said by Balance of Power theory, because that changes will change the balance of power, so all the states should attention for that changes to prepare itself to any threat will come from the great power. In contrast the Balance of threat theory which depends on the neorealist principles, the anarchy system threatens the stability and security of states. So it suggested that the main threat does not necessarily come from the strongest power, sometimes it come from the weaker state, because there are other important factors that maybe create the resources of threats. Walt considered the level of external threat as a function of some factors: distribution of capabilities, offensive capabilities, geographic proximity and perceived aggression intentions (Walt, 1987)

In addition to the previous factors, the identity sometimes become as a resource of the conflicts and war, Bennett noticed that the identity is the most reason that lead to war in the Middle East especially in the Arab countries. So the power is not the main reason to outbreak wars, thus it is not the main threat that threaten the international security. (Dwivedi, 2012) In fact, the situation of the Middle East is extraordinary, because this region suffers from instability. This is due to two reasons, with an internal factor as diversity of identities, ethnicities, denominations and ideologies, in addition to external factors, which linked to the intervention of great power.

Extraordinary situation in the Middle East related to internal factors, which linked to history of this region that characterized by religious and ethnicities conflicts, because this region includes diversity of identities, which is considered as main resource of conflict. But these reasons were not the only resource of conflicts.

In fact, the political system was sometimes the main resource of conflicts especially in the contemporary stage. Also the external factors played great role to renew the old reasons of the conflicts to get power in different countries in the Middle East especially after the colonialism stage, which started after the Second World War. The political system still the main reason to conflicts in the Middle East countries because the monarchy systems and republican or semi-democratic systems, in fact there was not democratic system in the Middle East countries, because the government of almost of them are military governments.

There are other factors that played different roles to make the Middle East one of the most conflict zones in the world, one of those factors is the emergence of the oil in the Arabian Peninsula. Because the oil was and still is the most important resource of power, which associated with the interests of the great powers, that greatly affected in dealing with the various Middle East issues files by great power.

In fact, any change in region maybe create negative effects on the interests of the great powers, hence the reason for support some authoritarian systems by great power become clearer. Because any change that might affect the international political system that maybe creates a threat to the states.

In fact, states are working to maintain their interests through the establishment of alliances, which lead to protect their interests. In the Middle East great power tried to maintain their interests through alliances, that works to create a relative stability in the region. Before the Cold War those alliances were characterized by relative balance, which mentioned by balance of power theory, but after the fall of the Soviet Union, the alliances in the Middle East characterized by unipolarity. So the current polar system in the Middle East is considered an extension of the Cold War, this significantly effects on the region's stability and security.



## **2. THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOUTHI MOVEMENT ON LOCAL LEVEL**

The situation of war in Yemen related with different factors, so it is difficult to understand it. But by addressing factors, study the different aspects that caused it and created the circumstances which formed it we can understand it.

In fact, the situation of war in Yemen did not suddenly happen, but it started before long time ago. The importance of understanding this war was not linked on its influence on the local level only. But because it took regional dimension, it became threaten the security of the region. The aspects of the war in Yemen linked with historical and social and economic problems, which started because external intervention, and due to weak system and authoritarian government that ruled Yemen before the last revolution in 2011.

The situation of war in Yemen took new step with the Houthi Movement because they considered as a new actor in Yemen scene. This chapter addresses the different aspects that caused the emergence of the Houthi Movement. The different roots of religious and political aspects facilitated to the Houthi Movement to control the capital that caused the fall of the state and made them as a major actor in the region.

Also through this chapter discuss the different reasons played main role to change the goals of this movement, where it changed from religious education side to armed side, and presenting the main events that happened by this movement before it became as a major actor in Yemen scene.

### **2.1 General Background of the Houthi Movement**

When the revolution in 2011 was started, the hidden problems appeared to surface because there were a lot of problems had not any resolutions before the revolution that make it as a main threat to Yemen's security. Also because of the weak performance of the

transitional government, these problems continued until it caused internal conflicts in four years since the revolution began in 2011.

There were lot of reasons that caused the Yemeni revolution. The main reason related with the former president who has worked on promoting the conflict in the various provinces. He contributed to create a various reasons of a conflict between tribes; also he worked to weaken the political side. In other words, he did not give opportunity for the other parties to contribute in the political side. Also, he used the terrorism file to justify his tyranny and he tried to apply the project of inheritance which began on the military side and created many problems still plaguing of Yemen. (Al-Ahmad, RT, 2015)

The security side also played main role to cause that revolution. During the last ten years, the Yemeni government entered in different conflict in various provinces especially in south and north of Yemen. the conflict in north started in 2004 in Saada, which started as protest against the ignorance of social demands. (IRIN, 2008)

In fact, the conflict in Saada related with historical expansion which linked with Zaidi sect in Yemen. The conflict in south started in 2007 when the Southern Movement protested to retake their rights because they have suffered from political marginalization and lack of rights in different aspects since the Yemeni unification in 1990. (Mudabsh, 2010). That protests and unrests have impacted heavily on the security aspect in Yemen, so it contributed to weaken previous government which has been unable to control the anger of the people in the revolution of 2011.

The bad economic situation and the lack of services contributed to increase public anger which started as a peaceful protest, then quickly turned into a public outcry and overthrew the previous government in late 2011. In fact, the popular anger played a major role in the revolution which has worked in turn to change the Yemeni scene.

The continuing of conflict in Yemen greatly affected in the political side, so the Yemeni government became weak that effect on the security side not only in Yemen, but in the region as a whole. Because the state's role became absence while the role of tribes, rebels, and some radical groups have started. During three years, the transitional government tried to create stability by stopping the role of other groups, but it could not because it was weak due to the Gulf initiative which required the participation of the former regime in the

transitional government. (Al-Muslim, 2015). So the transitional government was not able to do anything that caused to deteriorate the security situation more.

The emergence of the Houthi Movement as an integral part of the political process increased the challenges of security in Yemen that allow to external parties to intervene more in the internal affairs of Yemen. So the number of main actors has increased in the Yemeni scenes that make it difficult to predict the outcome of the current conflicts.

The Houthi movement participated in the political process through participation in the national dialogue, but it relied on the military side to increase its political gains. After it was able to drop the capital, it was able to drop the state too.

After that, it imposed the so-called Revolutionary Committee, so Yemen entered to a new phase of the conflict between the political parties that participated in the revolution against the Houthi Movement and its ally with the former president Ali Saleh. After the development of the conflict in Yemen into a civil war, the Houthi Movement managed to expand in the southern and central provinces in Yemen that expansion threaten Gulf state security. So they form a coalition led by Saudi Arabia which began its first military operations since March 2015.

## **2.2 The Houthi Movement between Religious Education and Armed Conflict**

The Houthi movement emerged as a religious group which interested in religious education in Saada and it located in the north of the capital Sanaa. The group's name was (believing youth) through it the Zaidi sect tried to retake its rights.

In Yemen there are two doctrines, Shafi'i and Zaidi sects. Zaidi doctrine had become the official doctrine of the state since the Imam Hadi was hold the power (Yahya bin Al-Hussein Bin Qassim Alresi) a person who put the rule of imam, who must a descendant of the Prophet Mohammed through daughter Fatima.

The Houthi Movement linked to Zaidi doctrine which applied the Imami system during its ruled of Yemen. The Imamate regime is a theocracy regime ruled by the cleric who has special specifications. So Zaidi Sect ruled Yemen nearly a thousand years until the first revolution in Yemen that was occurred in 1962. At that date, it was the first time the

Yemenis were able to drop the Miami system in Yemen, from that date Zaidi Sect was not able to return to power again. (Aldagshi,2010)

The Zaydis represent approximately one-third of Yemen's estimated 25 million citizens, the majority of whom are Shafei, one of the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence. Most of Zaydis are living in the northern highlands with their main strongholds in Saada, Hajja and Dammar governorates as well as the capital Sanaa. (International Crisis Group,2014)

In spite of that the Zaydism is a branch of Shiism, it distinct from Jaafarism (also known as Twelve Shiism which found in contemporary Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and Lebanon). The core differs between Jaafarism and Zaydism which is Zaidi doctrine holds the leader of the community (the imam) must be (said) or descendant of the prophet Mohammed through the daughter Fatima. (International Crisis Group,2014)

But the Jaafarism believes on base (the Hidden Imam) that mean there is other person who can be (imam) according to specific conditions. Because of this difference between Zaydism and Jaafarism many political experts doubted about Iran's attitude toward the Houthi Movement and they were not sure if Iran will support it or not .(Boucek,2010)

The followers of the Zaidi sect suffered from the political and social marginalization for long time, so they tried to resolve their problems by direct complains, and through creates the (believing youth) movement. Also they aimed to revive the Zaydi doctrine by focusing on the religious education as well as it sought to unite Zaidi sect in order to pressure the government to restore rights.

The roots of the Believing Youth go back to the year 1982 in Saada when some Zaidi leaders started preaching the philosophy of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. In 1990, there was new legislation that allowed the establishment of political parties after the unification of the Yemeni Republic (i.e., the Law of Political Organizations and Parties). That allow to Zaidi sect to organize themselves through form political party, which was known as a (right party) and (The Union of the Believing Youth), then represented a religious and educational side of Zaidi sect. (Anouti,2011).

(The Union of the Believing Youth) formed by some Zayids leaders as Badreddin Al-Houthi who emerged as an influential religious and political leader, Mohammed azan, Hussein al-Houthi and others. Some of them took part in the first elections through (Right

party), but the party has won only two seats. One of them was the share of Hussein al-Houthi who retired from politics activities and started to focus on the (Union of the Believing Youth). By the time, he tried to achieve specific objectives especially the revival of the Zaidi sect.

Also he used his speech and lessons to criticize the government which led to the split in the movement and deep discounts between the leaders of (Believing Youth). All That led to split the movement into two parts, the first one continued the educational objectives which it was created Believing Youth, while the other part have known as (Ansar Allah) tended to use arms and insurgency to recovers their rights.

In fact, there are many reasons that contributed to transform the goals of (Believing Youth) from religious education side to armed side. But the most prominent reason was the lack of the Yemeni government's response to the popular grievances in Saada generally and for the Zaidi community in particular. Also, the nature of Yemen which includes tribal environment and the proliferation of weapons that cause the Houthi movement resorted to impose itself by force after it realized that the government is not serious in solving the social, political and economic problems suffered in Saada province. (Aldagshi.2010).

### **Wahhabism in the Zaydi Heartland**

The Wahhabism consider as one of the main reasons that contributed to emerge the Houthi Movement. It got support from external parts that weaken the stability in Yemen and allows to more intervention by different external part that caused the current war in Yemen.

The Wahhabism is branch of Salafi Islam, which known as Muwahhidun "Unitarians" or "unifiers of Islamic practice". It established by the reformer Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792) who started that movement to reform the religious situation in some region of Najd, through advocating a purging of practices such as the popular "cult of saints", and shrine and tomb visitation, widespread among Muslims, which he considered idolatry (shirk). Eventually, there was a pact between a local leader Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab and Saud the founder of kingdom in Saudi Arabia. (Global security org, 2016)

Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab promised to offer political obedience versus that gets protection and propagation of the Wahhabi movement. So from that time until now, the alliance between political and religious side in Saudi Arabia impacted on the political type in Arab region, that effected so much on political situation in Yemen because it near from Saudi. Especially, when that movement spread in north of Yemen in Dammaj. (Global security org, 2016)

During the eighties, Wahhabism spread in north of Yemen by Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi'i in his area in Dammaj by establishment of the Dar al-Hadith in Dammaj that seek to spread of the Wahhabi Salafi ideology among Dammaj population in Saada. Wahhabism ideas based on the fight against polytheism and atoned the other if it does not consistent with their ideology that created hostility with other Sunni currents as well as Shiites. And because of the fundamental differences between Zaidism and Wahhabism, the Wahhabi activities became a real threat to the Zaidi community because Saada is the stronghold of the Zaidi in Yemen. (Yemen press, 2013)

Because of the spread of Wahhabism dramatically, Zaidi sect has worked to organize themselves in the (Believing youth). They also made many of the complaint to the government in order to stop those threats which related to finance by Saudi Arabia to Yemen.

In fact, Saudi Arabia has played a major role in the spread of Wahhabism in Yemen by the finance support to the Dar al-Hadith in Dammaj. It aimed to weaken the Shiite Zaidi sect which is a fundamental threat to Wahhabi Salafi doctrine. That support took steps and stages during the eighties and nineties and it was great and directly, but after that it became indirectly because of popular protests carried out by the Zaidi sect in Saada. In addition, the blockade of Dammaj played a big role in weakening the Salafi movement in northern Yemen.

The blockade of Dammaj happened because of the government's preoccupation with popular protests in 2011. The Houthi Movement blockaded strictly on Dammaj in 20 October 2011, but the Siege of Dammaj took serious phase during 2013 and 2014. (Yemen Post Staff, 2013).

The conflict and the Siege of Dammaj ended with an armistice agreement which condition a ceasefire on 15 January, and the deportation of all the Dammaj population. (Global time, 2014)

There are several reasons that contributed to creating extraordinary situation in Yemen. The fundamental reasons linked with internal factors that linked to various problems in political, social and economic side that caused to create current conflict in Yemen.

The conflicts between government and Houthi rebels linked with historical reasons that happened after the fall of the Imamate rule in 1962 which ruled Yemen more than 1000 years. (Aldagshi, 2010), After that, the Zaidi sect was marginalized for many reasons, one of the reasons is the political struggles between different Yemeni party that created a severe case of competition and made political situation depend on power-sharing and compromise. All this led to marginalize some political actors as Zaidi sect. In other words, the republicans feared of a return of the Imamate rule, so they contributed to increase that marginalization of the Zaydis who felt threatened by the amalgamation of the southern Sunni majority in the Yemeni society. (AL-Zaydi,2009)

Historically, the political situation in Yemen related with the role of tribes that still effects on the Yemeni scene until now. The previous government did not try to reduce the influence of tribes, but on the contrary, it exploited it to serving its survival as long as possible.

The former president Ali Saleh worked to buy loyalties through allocate a budget for some tribes, so the role of state became decentralized and weak while the role of tribes became more strong. (Al-Ahmad, 2015) That threatened the security and stability of Yemen because these tribes participated in the internal conflicts, which happened between state and rebels, causing the continuing of conflicts that affected greatly on the economic, security and political side in Yemen.

It is worth mentioning that, one of the larger Yemeni tribes (Bakil tribe) participates in the current conflict in Yemen. In fact, there are two big tribes in Yemen that compete historically to get power, (Bakil tribe) and (Hashed tribe). Since the first revolution in 1962 (Hashed tribe) was able to achieve political gains, through their participation in the

revolution, while (Bakil tribe) did not gain anything, so they are fighting with the Houthis to create a balance in the tribal forces. (International Crisis Group, 2009)

During the rule of former president Ali Saleh, the development projects absented of many Yemeni provinces because the previous government focused just on the military aspect. Moreover, the mismanagement played main role to weaken the economic side, so many of the Yemeni provinces was damaged because of the absence of basic services as a service of electricity, water, education and hospitals.

Sada was one of those affected cities, the Zaidi sect thought that Saada suffered of the marginalization systematically since the 1962 revolution that impacted on its historical role and created a threat to the existence of the Zaidi sect in Saada. Due to the absence of development projects and basic services, popular discontent has spread quickly among citizens in Saada. Hence, Hussein al-Houthi, the founder of the Houthi Movement, exploited the popular anger in criticizing the government performance and called for reforms that working to provide basic services in Saada. In addition, through the critical speeches he tried to restore the role of the Hashemites in political side. (Anouti, 2014)

The religious reasons and social reasons that contributed to the emergence of the Houthi Movement that linked to each other because the Houthi Movement belongs to the Zaidi sect. It is based on Class system, firstly, the rulers who belong to the descendants of the Prophet Mohammed, then the judges class, then the working class.

After the first revolution in 1962, this class system was over, but it remained exist within the rules of the Zaidi doctrine believing that it is a requirement of the ruling to be a descendant of the Prophet. (Aldagshi, 2010), The Zaidi doctrine became in real threat when the Salafist doctrine spread in north regions because the Salafist doctrine does not believe that the ruler should be a descendant of the Prophet, On the contrary it believes that is fad and it doesn't belong to Islam. Hence the disagreement started between the two doctrines Salafist and Zaidi in Saada. (International Crisis Group, 2005,)

Yemeni government tried to stop the Salafi tide in north of Yemen because that tide related with support of Saudi Arabia which has spread in northern Yemen since the eighties. Yemeni government tried to stop that tide through supporting the religious schools,

summer camps of the Zaidi community in order to weaken the influence of the Salafi movement in northern Yemen. As well as its desire to weaken the influence of some streams of political Islam as a Muslim Brotherhood movement, but after that supporting Yemeni government was not able to control the activity of the Zaidi movement especially after the defection of Hussein al-Houthi from (Believing Youth) to establish the Houthi Movement. This movement became a real threat to the former regime through critical speeches that has worked to create mass protests in Saada.

The external interventions played great role to weaken the political situation in Yemen that prevented the stability of Yemen. In fact, the external parties exploited the internal conflicts to achieve its goals and interesting, through support some internal parties that agree with its goals.

The external interventions did not start during 2014 and 2015; however, it started before long time by various external parties like the role of Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the previous revolution in 1962. But the current conflict linked with two levels of intervention, the first level related with regional level and the second level related with international level. On the regional level, the main actors are Saudi Arabia and Iran while on the international level the main actor in the current conflict is USA. (Al-taweel, 2015)

### **The Influence of Internal Factors**

There are several reasons of those interventions, some of reasons related with goals of the various external parties which have different goals. For Saudi Arabia, the interference in Yemeni affairs is considered as a part of policy to preserve its security. Particularly, there are wide borders between two countries in order to secure its land border with Yemen. Saudi Arabia has worked on various stakeholders to support the Yemeni scene after the revolution in 1962, but at the same time it worked to use its soft policy in Yemen through support of the Wahhabi Movement in Saada. It wanted to weaken the Shiite ideology Zaidi movement because it is different in many basics with the Salafi ideology especially in political side.

Because of that support, many social problems appeared between the Houthis and residents of Dammaj in Sadaa. In front of the raise of those religious social problems in Saada, residents complained to the government that did not respond them and that led to

protest which is began in various regions of Saada. Later, it turned into a war between government and Houthis in different regions of Saada. (Barak, 2010)

While the goals of Iran linked to its expansion project in the Arab region, it aimed to increase its power and influence in the world. The Iranian project seeks to support both Shiite movements in the Middle East to strengthen its presence. Since the occurrence of the Iranian revolution in 1979 Iran has undertaken a project of revolution to export it into various Arab countries as commensurate with its project. (Al-Nafisi, 2010)

Although the big difference between the two doctrines the Zaidi and Twelver doctrine (Jaafari), Iran supported the Houthi Movement in its armed conflicts. In spite of the absence of clear evidence to confirm that, there are military experts assert that Iran is supporting the Houthi Movement in different levels more than a military and logistical level. That became clear after the recognition of Tehran representative in the Iranian parliament, Ali Reza Zakani, who is close to the Iranian supreme guide Ali Khamenei, said: "Three Arab capitals have today ended up in the hands of Iran and belong to the Islamic Iranian revolution". He noted that Sanaa has now become the fourth Arab capital that is on its way to joining the Iranian revolution. (Middle East Monitor,2014)

The USA interventions linked with Counterterrorism File that started since the attack on the USS Cole in 2000 by al-Qaeda, (Al-bab Website, 2015). As it has signed cooperation with the Yemeni government, the current USA interventions come to influence the political side in Yemen, to influence of selection of the next government, so that it will be cooperative government such as the previous government. During the years of 2014 and 2015, the USA political changed towards Yemen affairs, especially in late of May 2015, when the USA coordinated dialogue with the Houthis in Muscat which the Yemeni parties rejected involved in it. (Albasheer, 2015)

Despite the aggressive slogan that carried by the Houthi Movement against the United States, Yemeni military experts believe that America supports the Houthis to continue its project of Counterterrorism File in Yemen. Also some political analysts see that the main reason that explain why the United States does not deal with the Houthi Movement as a real threat, such as al-Qaida, because the Houthi Movement does not represent a real

danger to the USA interests in the region, because they do not belong to radical Islamic groups.

During the last two years, the external intervention in Yemen affairs was increased because the weakness of the political situation in Yemen, due to the bad performance of the transitional government. In addition, the growing of economic and security challenges made it easier for foreign parties to take advantage of the internal conditions in order to achieve their interest on the security side as the case of Saudi Arabia and America, or to build influence as the case of Iran. Many studies suggest that if the external support missed, the Houthi Movement will return to its former position and will not threaten region security because its security impact will be restricted to a limited extent in the northern areas in Saada. (Fikir Center for Studies, 2015)

For different reasons, the conflict between state and the Houthi Movement started, but the main reason linked with fear of state from the influence of the Houthi Movement on political side. Especially after the critical speeches by Hussein al-Houthi who encouraged popular discontent in his speeches that began to criticize the Yemeni government's performance. He uses the Houthi Movement logo (Death to America and death to Israel, curse on Jews and victory to Islam) as a means of earning a lot of supporters. (Anouti, 2011)

In fact, that criticism of the government increased in 2003 after the invasion of Iraq because Hussein al-Houthi criticized the government for its cooperation with the United States. But that criticism did not turn to direct conflict until June of 2004 when the government decided to arrest Hussein al-Houthi and some of his followers in Saada. This step led to the explosion of a fierce battle between the Houthis and government security forces.

These clashes lasted for three months resulting in the death of Hussein al-Houthi during those skirmishes. After his death, there were five main rounds of conflicts between the Houthis and the Yemeni government erupted from 2004 until 2010 as follows:

The first round happened on June to 10 September 2004, it took place in the Marran Mountains where Hussein al-Houthi had been hiding because the government tried to

arrest him. During those battles, government declared that the Houthi Movement threatened stability of Yemen because it tried to be as Hezbollah in Lebanon. After three months of severe battles, Hussein al-Houthi was killed. After his death, the government declared a unilateral end of insurgencies, but it did not resolve any of critical and sensitive issues that caused that conflict. (Sultan,2004)

The second round started after six months of the declaration of the unilateral cessation of hostilities, in March 2005, after the state declared war again, the former president Ali Saleh tried to get rid the leaders of the Houthi movement through this round. But later he tried to use negotiations to weaken them, but they did not accept that negotiation, this round stopped in late 2005 without solved any problems that sparked the conflict.

The third round also started after six month of the last round, it began from late 2005 to late 2006. In this round, the pro-governmental tribesmen (and some pro-Houthis tribal fighters) played main role in conflicts. This round characterized by two main factors, First, after Hussein's death his brothers Yahya and Abdul Malik emerged as new rebel leader. Second, before the presidential and local elections, the government wanted to settle the conflict. In this regard, the government tried to resolve some problem in Saada through named a new governor for Saada District and released the prisoners of the Houthi Movement. (Anouti.2014)

The fourth round happened after the end of both residential and local elections in late 2006. It started in February to June 2007 by intimidating of Al Salem Jewish community of Saada. For the first time, this round was peculiar and the conflict spread outside of Sadda District because it is the first time that the regional party direct intervention through Qatari mediation efforts. These efforts aimed to resolve problems between Yemeni parties, also it aimed towards reconstruction and development in Sadda district. Some political analysts argue that the Qatari mediation was as the indirect reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. (Barak,2010)

The fifth round of conflicts erupted from May to July 2008 because the Qatari mediation did not hold as expected. In this round the government accused the Houthis of violating the ceasefire through two violent episodes: firstly, the assassination of a member of parliament and the attack on a Sunni mosque in Saada. This round characterized by both

the spearhead of fighting to Northern Sana'a, then the direct interference of the Republican Guard under the command of the president's son, Ahmad Ali Saleh. This round stopped when former president declared an end to fighting during his 30th presidential anniversary in power. (Anouti.2014)

The sixth round erupted after more than one year of peaceful relations between the Houthis and the government. The war erupted from mid-August 2009 to 19 March 2010 for two main reasons of this round. Firstly, the different committee settlements did not include real solutions for the main reasons of conflicts in Saada. Second, Saudi Arabia accused Houthis by infiltrating its border and the shooting of the border guards in the second November 2009. So that was the first time to direct interfere by Saudi Arabia in Saada conflict. After that intervention, there was direct and indirect criticism aimed at intervention between the Saudis and Iranians erupted, so political observers have warned of the possibility that these confrontations turn into a regional war. (Al-Ansi, 2015)

### **2.3 The Houthi Movement and Arab Spring**

Before coming of Arab spring, the political situation in Yemen was bad that facilitated protests to spread faster in different district. Those protests affected on the different aspects in Yemen situation that caused a lot of changes in economic, social, and political side. But the prominent change was that the Arab spring served the goals of the Houthi Movement, which found great chance to impose itself in the Yemeni scene as a main actor.

The main reasons that led to spread the protests among Yemeni governorates are that the deterioration of the economic side played main role to weaken political side. In other words, the internal conflicts in northern and southern of Yemen were as a main threat of security side. In addition to the inheritance project, the former president tried to implement it at any cost that step increased the popular discontent. Political parties tried to reform that problem through national reconciliation, which took place in 2007, and suggested that the extension of Ali Saleh Provided that he gives up the inheritance project. But they were not able to stop him because the Yemeni situation is complex. So when the revolution erupted in 2011, different Yemeni parties considered it as suitable reformation to resolve the complex problems.

That revolution allowed different new actors to contribute effectively in political side. In fact, the changes served the political marginalized groups such as the Houthi Movement. Especially, after decades of the political and social exclusion during the Saleh period who adopted on the policy of creating problems and use the Houthi Movement as a part of his plans to liquidate the military and political opponents.

The Houthi Movement benefited from the revolution in 2011 in various aspects especially in political side. But before its arrival to power in early 2015, the Houthi Movement benefited from the revolution in the social aspect. It was able to break the social isolation to connect with various political parties and social groups.

Previously, the former regime created a bad image of them as rebels fighting the state, but through revolution the Houthis succeeded in showing themselves as an oppressed group like other Yemeni groups. This helped them to create a plausible broad popular and helped to build bridges of communication with the various Yemeni parties. In addition to their positions against the Gulf Initiative, they approved by most of Yemen's political parties that position supported them as a strong actor and enabled them to impose themselves in the national dialogue.

The Houthi Movement benefited from the revolution to engage strongly in the political side. In fact, the Houthi Movement is not a political party, as what observers point that, it is fighter group or group of rebels. However, it was able to pressure of the transitional President Abdu Rabbuh Hadi to increase their representation in the National Dialogue Conference, which was held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013 and until 25<sup>th</sup> January 2014 under the Gulf Convention. The National Dialogue Conference aimed to calm the violence situation in Yemen by bring the views of the political parties and work to create the causes of political stability through the re-drafting of the constitution and reorganize the army.

At the beginning, the Houthi Movement opposed the Gulf Convention, but after that they joined strongly to national dialogue through their representatives. Their numbers swelled to 35representative out of 565 members from various political parties, civic organizations and community groups such as (women and youth) (Arab Center for Research, 2014)

After ten months, the national dialogue congress concluded that the signature on the document to the output of the dialogue and included the items called for the restructuring of the parliament and the Shura Council to be shared equally between northerners and southerners. (Finely,2014)

In resolving the issue of Saada the documents called for the prohibition of the presence of armed militias, and the delivery of weapons to the state and extend its influence across Yemen. (Aljazeera,2014)

Also the next constitution included that Yemen is a federal state of six counties, (Gubary,2015) but some parties refused the idea of the federal state. So on September 21-2014 after the Houthi Movement seized power was signed peace and partnership agreement, they stopped the Secretary General of the Conference on Dialogue Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, when he went to present a draft constitution through a presidential meeting. The rebels blocked his way, kidnapped him and took him to an unknown destination, (Saba net,2015)

The rebels justified this move as arrest to stop a coup against the peace and partnership agreement because they did not agree with the outcomes of the new constitution, which is pleasing to the external projects that aims to dismantle the country into warring cantons, as what will happen if the country divide to six regions within a federal state. (Fikir Center for Study, 2015)

During its political participation, the Houthi Movement did not stop the expansion outside Saada. political observers point out that there are several factors that helped the Houthi Movement to expand easily. One of those factors is the role of transitional president Abdu Rabbo Mansour Hadi who supported the rebels in order to weaken the influence of political and tribal centers. that was clear when he did not stop the armed operations of rebels in various northern districts.

On other hand the Gulf Countries have played an indirect role in enabling the Houthi Movement in order to undermine the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen. Especially, after the arrival of many Islamic movements to power in the Arab spring countries because the Islamic movements are considered s as a real threat to the Gulf State security and monarchy systems. In addition, the expansion of the Houthi Movement made

it as a main and strongly actor in the Yemeni scene by creating an impression to the United States and the international community. The Houthi movement can be relied actor to save the interests and security in Yemen.

Especially, as they share with those international parties with anti-al-Qaida or Sunni extremism that it differs ideologically and ideology. It was clear within the support of the international community to the Houthi Movement through the lag in issuing stiff penalties against violations carried out by the Houthi Movement before and after the coup.

Previously, the interim President Abed Rabbuh Mansour Hadi raised the list of those who threaten Yemen's security and progress of the transition process, but the international community did not arrest or stop any one of them. They issued resolutions and ineffective sanctions that did not include specific measures, so that threats and problems increased where became as a real threat of the region security. (Blecua,2015)

## **2.4 Fall of the Capital**

Historically, the security of Sanaa associated with the nearby provinces is the most important of those provinces. And the closest province to the governor of Sanaa was Amran which was equipped earlier to become one of the strongest militaries in Yemen to be able to protect the capital. ‘the 310 camp’ was responsible for the protection of Amran that camp was led by brigadier Hameed Al-Qushaibi who quit his position as head of brigade in ‘the 310 camp’ in Amran Governorate during the 2011 Yemeni uprising, (Aljazeera, 2011). But later he resumed his position when the Houthi Movement stormed the Amran governorate. Before the conflict started, there were protests which turned to conflict between ‘the 310 camp’ and the Houthi Movement. During that conflict, the Head of ‘the 310 camp’ demanded the government to supply the weapons to camp, but the government did not respond to him that caused to fall down the camp easily. As a result of the fall the Amran province, the capital Sanaa became unsecured, so it was dropped with ease.

Before the start of conflicts in Amran, the Houthi Movement entered into an intense conflict in Dammaj. They surrounded the Salafis and prevented the delivery of food and

medicine to them. Prompting international organizations and neighboring countries intervene to stop the human suffering in Dammaj.

After that intervention the committee reconciliation reached the decision to displace all Saada residents. After that, the Houthi Movement continued its expansion towards the other provinces and entered into an intense conflict with the tribes. By collaboration with former President Ali Saleh it was able to defeat them until it arrived to Amran Governorate. (Jumaih, 2014)

After the fall of Amran Governorate, the Interim President Abdu Rabbuh Hadi went to visit Amran province and declared it safe province. According to some analyst, this step declared the corporation that combine between Hadi and the Houthi Movement earlier, but that cooperation did not continue after the fall of the capital.

In 19<sup>th</sup> September/2014, the Houthi Movement stormed the Yemeni capital easily. That was not due to the proximity of the distance between the two provinces, but rather there was a military betrayal. So as Yemeni military experts indicate the same scenario which happened in Imran was happened in the capital also. (Reuters, 2015),

Since the Houthi Movement began its expansion, it has worked to take advantage of popular discontent to win popular support, which gives them legitimacy in what they are doing. The Houthi Movement used the same tactic to topple the capital. Popular discontent has increased because of the deteriorating economic and political situation especially after the issuance of Accord Government decision that led to lift subsidies on oil derivatives. In front of that resolution Abdul-Malik Al-houthi called onto organize mass protests in the capital, those protests continued in conjunction with the storming of the capital.

Although there are plenty of campsites in the capital, there was no military resistance. There was a small resistance by military forces loyal to Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar that resistance continued for month and four days. Retired Brigadier General Mohsen Khaddrof said that it was not surprising that ten gunmen of Houthi rebels entered to the Supreme Command of the armed forces headquarters to take 50 tanks and 40 carrier rockets, unless there is a betrayal. According to the report of dimension center for studies and Research, the approximately 70 % of weapons and military equipment became the property of the Houthi Movement. (Fikir Center for Study, 2015)

After that, the Houthi Movement control of all state facilities and called for new agreement, which called (peace and national partnership), also it spent the formation of a new government led by Khaled Bahah, replacing the so-called National Accord Government. That agreement also included the appointment of advisers to the Yemeni President from Houthis and the Southern Movement. (Saba net, 2014)

There were different factors that played main role to fall down the capital easily, some factors linked to internal reasons while some other linked to external intervention. The internal factors associate with changes that happened after the revolution in 2011 because after that date some Islamic parties were able to reach power in some Arab spring countries, which is designated as the emergence of new actors in the scene of the Middle East. But in fact the new actors were unwelcome because they represent a danger for some Arab countries which used ignored those Islamic parties, especially Muslims Brotherhood movement.

In Yemen after the revolution the (Reform Party) which belong to Muslim Brotherhood movement was considered as a real threat to the Gulf countries, so the Gulf Initiative tried to stop the violence actions and tried to stop any reasons that may create threats for them.

The Gulf initiative included a clause stating that the transitional government must be formed by former party " General People's Congress ", and the opposition parties "The Joint Meeting Parties" which included (the Reform Party). (Fikir Center for Studies, 2015), So during the transitional period, the transitional government was not able to do anything because the members of the previous ruling party were obstructing the decisions of the transitional government. That caused bad performance which created popular discontent and exploited by the Houthi Movement later to impose itself as a defender of the revolution.

In fact, the Interim President Abdu Rabbuh Mansur Hadi played big role to support the Houthis, who was face the same enemies, represented by the strong authority of tribes and some military and political leaders. So Hadi tried to use them to weaken his strong opponents whose represent a real threat to the stability of the country because of the

conflict of authority. In addition, the interim president delayed some important decisions that caused the ignition of the civil war in Yemen currently.

The political situation in Yemen is affected by the Gulf Initiative that gave Ali Saleh immunity, which gives him a big chance to impede transitional government. Some analysts have seen that immunity came to give Ali Saleh another opportunity to retake power because during three decades Ali Saleh was appropriated person to keep the external interests in Yemen.

Beside the influence of the immunity to the internal factors, there were other external factors which played great role to affect badly on the stability of Yemen. Historically, Yemen was vulnerable to external interventions, which have affected on the various political, economic and social side. Yemen currently suffers from the same problem, but right now the direct intervention come from Saudi Arabia and the United States. Saudi Arabia Justifies its position to defending the security of its borders and the United States is seeking to fight al-Qaeda and terrorism in Yemen.

During nineties, Saudi Arabia support Salafis in Dammaj region in Sadda that step aimed to weaken the threat that come from the Zaidi sect, but that position changed after Reform Party reached to power. The Gulf States prefer the Houthi Movement more than Reform Party, which belong to Brotherhood Movement because the Houthi Movement was not strong enough as Islamic parties.

Furthermore, the USA and international community press to differ internal and external parties to deal with the Houthi Movement as main actor in Yemen scene. While the transitional government failed, the Houthi Movement proved their worth on the ground, through its expansion in different regions outside Saada. That created an image to show that Houthi Movement will be a strong alternative instead of the weak transitional government. In addition, the international community considered the Houthi Movement as a suitable partner to fight against terrorism due to ideological differences between the Houthi Movement and al-Qaeda.

Some observers point to that there is a main relation between the internal and external factors in Yemen scene. Because without support the external parties, the Houthi Movement was still as a group of rebels in Saada not a main actor in power. On other

hand, if there were not internal factors as absence of strong political system, which able to protect state from external intervention, the external parties will not able to interfere in the internal affairs of Yemen.

Of course the fall of the capital affected on various aspects especially on political side because that fall caused the state fall. The Houthi Movement was able to fall republican regime after more than half a century that caused changes in various economic, political, and geopolitical aspects. When the Houthis entered to the capital, they imposed themselves through the occupation of government institutions and the official headquarters. After that, they declare and signed a peace and partnership agreement with the other parties on 21 September 2014. (Blecua,2015)

The purpose of Peace and National Partnership Agreement was attempted to resolve the crisis between the Houthis and the other political components in Yemen. It included seven items; the most important is restoration the influence of the state and its territory and the removal of political and security tension of Sanaa. As well as the formation of a joint committee to stop all hostilities in the governorates of Al-Jawf and Marib in specific time, but the Houthi Movement refused to sign the security supplement which provides for the extradition of the weapon. (Deutsche Welle,2014)

Despite the Houthi Movement called for that agreement, supervised it and proposed different items. It was the first of turned on that agreement on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015, after attacking the home of interim President Abdu Rabbuh Mansour Hadi and the Republican Palace where the prime minister was lived. (CNN,2015)

The Houthis imposed house arrest on the president Abdu Rabbuh Hadi and the rest of the members of the transitional government. Later, they began to intervene of president decisions, which led him and Prime Minister to offer their resignation on 22 January 2015. But the parliament did not hold to accept the resignation or refuse it as provided by the constitution. As a result, Yemen entered into a constitutional vacuum, so the Houthis announced what so-called the Constitutional Announcement in 6<sup>th</sup> February2015.

They dissolved the parliament and they formed the Revolutionary Committee led by Mohammed Al-houthi to work instead of the dissolved parliament (Lackey,2015). Hadi and Prime Minister remained in house arrest until they managed to escape to Eden. Then

they retracted their resignation and Hadi announced Aden as a temporary capital on 21 February/2015. Also he announced that all the resolutions that issued since the overthrow of the capital is not acceptable because it was taken by threat. (BBC,2015)

In early March, Eden has seen political and security tension after the decision to dismiss Abdul-Hafiz al-Saqqaf, who was general in Yemen's Special Security Forces in Eden, one loyal to Ali Saleh, who represent the real source of threat to the security of the state legitimacy and stability. Al-Saqqaf rejected that decision that led to armed clashes, which broke out between private security forces and the national army. These armed clashes did not stop, but turned into a civil war after the Houthis declared war with the support of the loyal forces to former President Ali Saleh, under the pretext of the fight against terrorism and to arrest of Interim President Abdu Rabbuh Hadi.

But on 24 March 2015, Interim President Abdu Rabbuh Hadi faced a speech to leaders of the (GCC) requesting immediate assistance to Yemen. Also he was including military intervention based on the principle of self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, and on the basis of the Charter of the League of Arab States, and the treaty of defense Arab joint to protect Yemen. (Alarabiya, 2015)

On 25 March, forces loyal to former president seized the Aden airport and the home of interim president was bombing by warplane. After that, Abdu Rabbuh Hadi left to Saudi Arabia, then Saudi Arabia declared a storm packages in Yemen on 26 March 2015.

That process included alliance with ten Arab countries and the logistical support of America. The storm packages aimed to protect its border with Yemen and in response to the invitation of the interim president Hadi, So the development of events and the entry of Saudi Arabia directly in the conflict. The conflict in Yemen shifted from a local level to a regional level that means the political crisis in Yemen will not be resolved quickly because the external parties entered to the Yemeni scene. Some experts indicate that the Saudi intervention may lead Iran to direct intervention in Yemen that will lead to a regional war and will affect the security of the entire Middle East.

## **2.5 The Houthi Movement Impact on the local level:**

Yemen is suffering from a severe economic political crisis in the current circumstances, but this crisis did not appear at the moment. In fact, it has started since the year 1991 as indicated by dr. Mohammed al-Saadi, Minister of Industry and Trade in the last government. The crisis happened as a result of rising unemployment and corruption and throughout decades the bad economic and political situation did not change a lot.

The revolution of 2011 has affected badly the economic situation. The transitional government has contributed to the damage of the economic situation too by removing subsidies on petroleum products which greatly affected the price of consumer products and led to increased popular discontent. The Houthi Movement has exploited that discontent to seize the power of the state illegally. (Al-Sharabi,2015)

According to a study published by Al-Jazeera study center, the collapse of economic situation in Yemen took several phases. Yemen mainly depends on two economic supplies, firstly, oil resources that are used to finance government spending. Secondly, the foreign aids, in which the Gulf States represent 60% of them that led by Saudi Arabia. During the last five years (2009-2013), there was a budget deficit between 16% and 27% as for the fiscal year 2014, (Al-Rajehi,2016). The Ministry of Finance did not prepare the final accounts as a result of the absence of government, so it did not adopt such accounts.

After the entering of the Houthi Movement to Sanaa and after the formation of a new government according to (peace and partnership) agreement in 2014, the government has not been able to prepare the budget for 2015. So, it approved the adoption of the budget in 2014 as a temporary counterbalance for the year 2015 until it is able to prepare the new budget, but that did not happen because the Houthi Movement overthrew the interim president with the support of former president Ali Saleh.

During the last five years, successive governments have adopted to finance the deficit through domestic borrowing from the central bank without a cash cover and actual income that resulted in a bad impact on the economy and political situation. In addition,

2015 witnessed a sharp decline in state revenues as a result of the war which increased the budget deficit significantly. So, the public resources were estimated in the state budget for 2015 at \$ 10.3 billion, the oil sector contribution estimated by 46%, tax and customs increased by 31.8%, the foreign grants expected to be 8%, and the other resources coming from internal sources. (Al-Rajehi, 2016)

The expenses in 2014 estimated by 13.4 billion representing operating expenses 80% under the state budget for 2014 and it has been approved by the Government of Khaled Bahah (government of peace and partnership) as a counterbalance for the fiscal year 2015. According to the January report of the Central Bank of Yemen, the total expenditures at the end of December is estimated to be equivalent to \$ 8.5 billion. (Al-Rajehi, 2016)

On the other side, the public revenues suffered a significant decline due to the suspension of oil revenues that affected the business activity sector, which means tax revenues and customs became lower, as a result of the substantial drop in imports. In addition, the Houthi Movement used the public revenues to finance the war. According to the study by Al-Jazeera the total revenue that can be collected during 2015, is estimated to be the equivalent of \$ 4.6 billion, and therefore, the deficit will be including is equivalent to about \$ 3.9 billion. Currently the available source to finance this deficit is an overdraft, which some estimates indicate that arrived to the equivalent of \$ 7.5 billion. (Algabri, 2016)

According to some analyses, the insecurity is the main reason for the deterioration of economic conditions. The Houthi Movement takeover of the state weakened the security causing several challenges facing the economic situation in Yemen.

The lack of security is the reason for the decline in oil revenues due to repeated attacks on oil pipelines. Also, the decline in the price of oil globally impacted the Yemeni economy which depends mainly on oil. As a result of absence of the state, many of foreign companies departed from Yemen which caused stopping the investment process because there is no state that protects the investor. The exodus of foreign companies created a main problem in energy because there were 180 companies that left Yemen including 34 companies operating in oil and gold sector. (Noon post,2015)

Because of the insecurity, al-Qaeda activities were expanded which created a real threat to the foreign companies. On other hand, the Yemeni economy was dramatically affected when the donors cut financial aid since the Houthi Movement came to power.

According to the prime minister in the transitional government Khaled Bahah, Yemen is currently going through a critical stage because of stopped foreign aid which the Gulf States represent 60% of them. Also he said that the Gulf States informed Yemen early that the aid will stop because of the absence of the state. Although the donor conference held in Riyadh and New York in 2012 recommended by \$ 7 billion and \$ 698 million to support the peaceful transition in Yemen and implementation of economic reforms, it has not been delivered to Yemen because the donors do not trust the Houthi Movement. (Al-Rajehi, 2016)

Moreover, the bad-management of the state by the Houthi Movement contributed to further deterioration of economic conditions. So, Yemen currently faces two fundamental challenges, the first is associated with a deficit problem. It happened as a result of the halt in oil revenues and external grants budget adding to the irresponsible spending of the money of the central bank by the Houthi Movement, which caused the country's reserve decrease of foreign currency. This made the Central Bank of Yemen loses its main tool to keep the price of the national currency that caused negative impact on the economy in Yemen. (The World Bank, 2016)

Furthermore, the negative impact on the economy will not be limited to Yemen, but it could have significant repercussions on the international economy. According to a risk manager in Mitsubishi Company Tony Nunan, if the current war in Yemen continues, that will increase geopolitical risks in the Middle East. Also this will affect the international economy because of the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb which is one of the most important oil ports and it is the pass of the gulf oil shipments to Europe and the Mediterranean Basin. (Al-falahi, 2014)

The Human side affected significantly by the current war in Yemen, but in fact violations of human rights are not linked to the current war, also it linked mainly to the absence of the rule of law. The previous system worked on the consecration of armed conflicts and

created problems between different tribes and armed groups. The judicial corruption has contributed significantly to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen too.

According to dimensions Center for Studies, during 2014 and 2015 these violations have increased dramatically. In 2014, the number of victims has raised triple more than in 2011, and in 2015, the number of victims increased fourfold from 2014. Until now, no one know the true number of the death toll from the Houthis because the media blackout.

That report indicated the 2014 was the worst year has passed on Yemen because the fall of the peaceful options after Houthis dominated the state. Houthis Movement used weapons of the state to break into other provinces and entered in open war with the tribes and popular resistance that increased the human suffering in Yemen. (Abaad Studies and Research Center, 2016)

The human rights watch report pointed out that the political process failed in Yemen that affected badly on the human side because the absence of a political solution that allowed to internal conflicts to start. Although the political transition process in Yemen focused on rights issue, there was not any step to stop the violations of the human rights even the outcome of the national dialogue. The national dialogue suggested solutions to stop rights abuse, but it has not been implemented because of the Houthi Movement coup. The report indicates to the increasing of the human suffering because the internal war that happened after that coup, such as the recruitment of children by the Houthi militia and increased the number of displaced people who loss everything because the war. Those people went to some schools as a shelter because there was no other place for them and that created new problems such as that many of children were not able to continue their education. (Humen Rights Watch, 2016)

The report also indicates to some old problem such as the lack of women rights, add to the down attacks carried out by the United States, which caused the deaths of many innocent civilians, the mines which spread in various conflict areas. In addition, the absence of freedom of expression became worse after the coup because many of reports point to various violations by the Houthis, such as the attacks on journalists, kidnapped them and killed them directly or arrested them in some places that were a targeted of the

coalition aircraft. Also this movement was closing, destructing and looting of many media organizations that are against them. (Amnesty International, 2015)

According to the dimensions Center for Studies, the big problem is lack of food commodities as a result of the blockade imposed by the coalition forces which formed by Saudi Arabia. Also the air strikes by coalition forces have increased the number of civilian victims. (Al-falahi, 2015)

The report of Amnesty International indicates that the gross violations that have taken place in Yemen are not just linked to the Houthi Movement, but also all the parties including the transitional government. The report asserts that Saudi Arabia and coalition forces jointed in humanitarian violations in Yemen because of the province's policy carried out by coalition in order to weaken the Houthi Movement. Also it contributed to starving people in Yemen that falls within the war crimes. (Abaad Studies and Research Center, 2016)

During 2014 and 2015, Yemen saw worst phase in the human rights aspect. Not only because of the high number of civilian deaths, but because of increased humanitarian abuses of the lack of food, health care, and stop education, the continuing disappearance of activists, journalists and dissidents. Also the continuing violations of children recruited compulsorily and prevent them to continue their education; also it continued suffering of Yemeni women, especially after the internal war.

The security aspect is important for stability of any state. Actually, in Yemen situation the security aspects do not just link to maintain the stability of Yemen, but it also linked mainly to threaten international security for several reasons. One of these reasons is the geographic location of Yemen because it owns the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb which effects on the international economic and security side. Especially, after the presence of some extremist groups that are considered as a real threat to international security because they adopt assassinations and bombings policy.

Yemeni security situation includes two side, the internal security which effects on the external security whether regional or international security. The report of dimensions Center for Studies indicates that there are four parties, which threaten the internal security

in Yemen, especially after the Houthi Movement caused the collapse of the state and caused the internal war. It has threatened the internal security because the Houthi Movement looted state weapon and entered into a direct war with some Yemeni tribes, so the security situation in Yemen became very fragile because of those conflicts.

The second party is Al-Qaeda and its wings in Yemen, Ansar Al-Sharia and the base of the Arabian Peninsula. Those groups depend on the individual operations to make bombings, assassinations and attack targeting military and civilians. The report refers to the involvement of the previous system that funded those groups to weaken the security situation to derail the political transition process in Yemen. (Al-falahi,2015)

The report also mentioned that ISIS emerged in some southern region because of the government troops withdraw from that region. But ISIS was not able to control many places because of a dispute between them and the Ansar Al-Sharia, which led by Jalal Blaidy. So some reports refer to that if there will be conflict between the radical groups in southern Yemen, that will affect badly in security situation. (Al-sharabi, 2015)

The third party is the southern movement in Yemen, which is seen by political analysts as a part of the regional conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Some reports indicate that Iran has supported them since the start of protests while the fourth party were armed tribes in Yemen, which live in great challenges now, because of the defections that have taken place between the leaders since the start of the internal war. (Bahrain news agency, 2015).

Additionally, one of the important reasons that contributed badly in security side is the delay of the decision of the military restructuring that caused a large crack in the military (army and the Republican Guard). Also the security establishment (national and political Security) where these institutions suffered from divisions among its leaders and officials making it as a tool in the hands of the former president who used it in his alliance with the Houthi Movement in a final attempt to return the power. (Aljazeera,2014)

The International parties also affected and influenced according to internal security in study from the department Strategic Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Yemen. Researcher indicates that the intervention of several international parties in Yemen contributed to the deterioration of the security situation.

In fact, that intervention came for several reasons; the most important reason is to ensure the safety of international navigation in the Strait of Bab al-Mandab, as well as fighting al-Qaeda, which represented the most important motives of the international role towards Yemen. Despite the international role has contributed to the preservation of the Yemeni state from collapse, it failed to stop the conflict. The conflict has expanded because of the lack of forces balance in Yemeni beside the multiplicity of the regional conflicts and international geopolitical projects in Yemen. (Al-Mislami,2016)

Geopolitical aspect is an extension of the security side, also is it important to the political side. All the states seek to maintain the geopolitical side to keep its stability because any defect will effect on all other aspects. Hence the conflicts in Yemen will effect on the geopolitical side which will effect on other aspects, not just for Yemen stability. But maybe it will change the shape of the old Middle East that will effect on the international relationships in region.

Now the geopolitical side in Yemen linked to three main parties, the first party stationed in north and represented by the Houthi Movement that controlled the north region historically more than a thousand years. Hence the northern regions are considered a major source to supply the Houthi Movement by fighters and weapons in internal war, which rotates in the central and southern areas in Yemen.

In fact, the Houthi Movement benefited from the political fragility of the state to impose itself as a main actor in Yemen scene. Also they benefited from the political and tribal rivalries to empower themselves militarily then they entered to fierce war with conventional forces in Yemen and win at the end.

As a matter of fact, some reports indicate that the victory of the Houthi Movement did not associate with an increased its strength as much as that relied on the existing differences between the various actors in the former regime. That was clear when the Houthis stormed some central and southern provinces because the government army fights with them under the guidance of former president Ali Saleh. (Al-Mislami,2016)

The Second party in geopolitical aspect represented by legitimacy of president Hadi, the transitional government, popular resistance, and some tribes that stood with transitional

government to defend itself against the expansion of the Houthi Movement. Those parties stationed in the central regions and some southern areas. During the fighting, which began in 2014, the Houthi Movement did not control those eras because of the lack of popular acceptance for the Zaidi doctrine as well the strong popular resistance.

The third party represent by the extremist groups like al-Qaeda and other armed groups, which stationed in the southern areas since 2011, after the military forces withdrew from the camps and left the arms for those extremist groups.

The Houthi movement has adopted several strategies to spread over to other provinces. At the beginning, it got popular acceptance from oppressed groups that was oppressed by the former regime. But after that it relied on army and it relied on its strategic depth in the north areas to get popular support, it also benefited from the new alliance between it and former president.

The regional and international support for the Houthi Movement also played great role in increasing its influence and geopolitical strength because the expansion of the Houthi Movement and its ability to influence the decisions of the state. All that increased the confidence of the international community as it would be as a new regional player and that can maintain regional and international interests after the transition period in Yemen.

Also, the Houthi Movement tried to keep its relationship with Iran through the rejection of the proposals of National Dialogue, which decided that Yemen will be divided into six regions, two in the south and four in the north. Azal province will include Sana and Saada that mean the region of the Houthi Movement will not access to the sea and will threat the relationship between it and Iran, which try to access to the Bab al-Mandab strait. So the Houthi Movement rejected that decision, it also rejected the proposal of giving up their arms because it will lose the power factor which gives it a weight in Yemen conflict. (AL-Rammah, 2014)

On a regional level Yemen is the source of a direct threat to the geopolitical security of the Gulf States because the Houthi Movement is an extension of the Iranian threat. Some political analysts point out that the Gulf States have supported the Houthi Movement

earlier to weaken Islamic parties in Yemen, which considered as a real threat to the Gulf States since the arrival of some Islamist movements to power after 2011.

In fact, the UAE support the Houthi Movement directly during the transitional period. But Saudi Arabia attitude negatively, especially after it realized that the threat of the Houthi Movement was not real threat. During transitional period, Saudi Arabia realized that the Houthi Movement can be a useful neighbor to secure the northern border that are connected between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, so there was indirect agreement between Saudi Arabia and the Houthi Movement to dismantle the traditional authority, in return Saudi Arabia will not interfere to stop the expansion projects that carried out by the Houthi Movement in the various governorates. But after that the Houthi Movement made some changes in the geopolitical side that threat the gulf security. So Saudi Arabia was forced to direct intervention in Yemen to maintain the geopolitical security, which threatened truly by Iran. (AL-Rammah, 2014)

During 2014 and 2015, the Houthi movement achieved wide geopolitical objectives. Historically, it was able for the first time to exceed its strategic depth in the north area and expanded to the south taking advantage of the conflicts and differences between the residents of the south and the Islamist parties. But during 2015, it could not control new geo-political dimensions because of the lack of popular acceptance and strong resistance. Beside the start of coalition strikes that weakened the Houthi Movement militarily, hence it is expected that the Houthi Movement will back down to the old areas in the north, that mean it will not be as a regional actor more because it could not control the security internal.

The political process in Yemen passed on several internal and external challenges. In the inner side the political nature of Yemen played a big role in the failure of the political side because of the dispersion of the power between the state and other parties, whether armed or tribal groups. While external intervention played a major role in fueling conflict between the various political and tribal forces in Yemen that contributed to change the transitional phase from a political side to the armed conflict.

Some Gulf States have played a major role in supporting the counter revolutions in the Arab Spring countries, including Yemen. Because the Islamists reached to the power in

some Arab Spring countries after 2011, it considered as a real threat to Gulf States. However, the Gulf States dealt with Yemen in the same way; they thought that the Houthi Movement does not create a real threat to the gulf security because the armed groups are lacked of the political organization. But the Islamic movements, which considered as a real threat, possessed a political organization that makes it as a competitor in power. (AL-Rammah, 2014)

During the revolution in 2011, profound changes occurred at the level of conventional forces. Some new fundamental forces emerged and some disappear. So in current situation, there are three fundamental forces of the political side, interim president Abdu Rabbuh Hadi, who considered as a traditional rival of former president Saleh. also there are many factors that made him a primarily actor in the political process, such as an international support and regional acceptance because he is an interim president beside his influence in the government, the military and security services because he was vice former president.

Despite those factors, Hadi performance still weak because he depends on external support more than balance of the internal forces. All this impacted on his popular acceptance and his impact internally especially after proved his involvement in supporting the Houthi Movement previously.

The second political force represented by former President Ali Saleh who relied on his political experiences and military capabilities to return to Yemeni scene again. Some analysts point out that the return of the former president again to political scene was not due he possessed a new force, but because the absence of the traditional forces which were competing him in the power.

Those parties related with three aspects, military side represented by (Major General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar), tribal power that represented by (al-Ahmar chieftains), and in the political side represented by (Reform Party) which owns a vast popularity and a strong tribal ties were threatening the Saleh regime.

During the transitional, period Ali Saleh worked to weaken those parties, after that he was able to return again to the political scene. In addition to the tribal and military influence

of president Saleh, he still the president of the General People's Congress party and a majority in Parliament. He also has got large sums of wealth and a stockpile of weapons and nearly 6,000 troops, who are special guards, that he can use them in internal war. (AL-Rammah, 2014)

The third political force represented by the Houthi Movement (Ansar Allah). It became a main actor on the political side especially after the alliance between it and former president, who helped it to control the military and government institutions. Beside its military expansion, which increased its influence on a regional level, the Houthi Movement benefited from the popular discontent because the bad performance of the transitional government marketing itself as a guarantor of the Yemeni people rights. At international level, the Houthi Movement became as recognized political power because its control of the various state institutions and expansion in the various governorates of Yemen.

However, the weakness of the political process is not just linked to the role of the Houthi Movement, but also the transitional phase in Yemen because Yemen is facing many challenges. The most notably one is the end of its legitimacy because that legitimacy is derived from the Gulf Initiative that took place in Riyadh on 23 November 2011. Also it is aimed to help the country's transition to the establishment of a new consensual political system.

But because of the bad performance of the reconciliation government, the transitional government and Houthi movement have been declared new agreement, the peace and partnership agreement, which formed a new technocrat government led by Khaled Bahah. Then the legitimacy of the Gulf Initiative ended, but the legitimacy of peace and partnership agreement is illegal because of the interim president rejected it after drop the state.

Despite the political parties barely managed to forming a new government, the crisis in the political situation may be continue because the major parties objected on the way of forming the government, such as the General People's Congress party led by former president. Which threatened to pull out of the government and switch to the opposition, and possibly turn into an armed opposition because they have weapons. Some analysts

point out that even if the state could get out of this impasse, the government will face deteriorating in economic and security situations, such as the spread of extremist groups. (Eden post, 2015)

In addition, there are serious issues appeared after the fall of the state, also there are some old issues that had been settled without the participation of the different parties. So it will be re-considered, such as confederal system issue and the way of distribution of regions and the new constitution. But it will be difficult to settle those issues because there is no reference or institutional mechanism to resolve expected differences as was the situation with the dialogue conference.

The resolution of UN called rebels to withdraw their forces from all territories seized including the capital Sanaa and abandon all weapons seized from the military and security institutions. The resolution of UN also called rebels to refrain from any provocations or threats to neighboring countries. In addition to release the defense minister Mahmoud Subaihi, all political prisoners and all persons under house arrest. The decision also called the rebels of the Houthi Movement to stop the recruitment of child soldiers, and demobilize all child soldiers from its ranks.

Due to non-compliance to those decisions by the Houthi Movement increasing the conflict and violence in Yemen, The UN called to Yemeni parties to contribute in the Geneva consultations, on 15 June 2015, to reach a peace agreement. But this consultation was over before it began warring parties exchanged accusations of responsibility for failure. On 10 September 2015, the UN Security Council called Yemeni political parties again returning to negotiating table to stop the internal war. But the interim president Hadi and the transitional government declined to participate in these negotiations because the Houthi Movement did not implement the previous resolutions. (Alansy,2015)

Despite the attempt of internal and external parties to stop the war in Yemen and return to the political process, they failed due to non-compliance of international decisions by the Houthi Movement and its insistence to continue the armed conflict. During 2014 and 2015, Yemen saw worse political stage in its recent history due to the failure of solutions and political processes that led to start the internal war and caused the exclusion of political solutions.



### **3. THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOUTHI MOVEMENT ON REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

After the World War II, significant changes in the political and economic level have occurred. The world has become as a small village not only because the new economic and political system, but also because of the effects on the international relations. So, if any small defect happened in some states, it will effect on the rest of the states, the size and the level of influence varies from one country to another.

According to the Balance of Power theory which belong to realism theory, threats links to the state which owns the biggest weapon and military capability that represent a strength threat to other countries. Hence the realism theory called to create alliances between different states to stop the threats of strong state which represents danger.

According to the Balance of Threat theory, the danger is not necessarily linked to the most powerful states on the military side or the state which has the largest weapons or nuclear weapons, but the danger on the contrary may be linked to states that do not have a basis arms, but imported from abroad. The threat consists on the possibility that those states become hotbeds of conflict, over time those hotbeds transformed into a major source of threat to international security.

In the late twentieth century, particularly since the September 11 bombings, the biggest threat to international security is linked to terrorism. Despite the terrorism did not specify a source yet, however, the largest threat sources of international security linked to al-Qaeda and other extremist groups, which pursues bombing policy against the interests of the great powers, especially the USA. The chaotic environment is a greater opportunity for growth and proliferation of these groups.

The Middle East is a suitable place for the growth and proliferation of these groups, because of politically, militarily and economically troubled. Also because of the absence of the state and the law, these groups spread more and they take advantages of the chaos to strengthen its presence.

Yemen is the appropriate places to spread those groups due to the nature of mountainous geography, which enables the members of extremist groups to hide themselves easily. Furthermore, Yemen has a narrow Bab al-Mandab, which is located in the south of Yemen that is part of global straits, so any turmoil will effect negatively on the security and the economy side on an international level.

The rules of international relations aim to regulate the relationship between the different countries, so it tries to resolve any conflicts diplomatically especially in places that may represent a risk to the international security. Hence the international community and the Gulf Countries attempts to stop the conflict in Yemen, and retake the political process which can stop the threats those come from Yemen.

Also, the unrest in Yemen is a real threat to international security for several reasons:

The first reason is the geographical environment and strategic location. This reason is one of the biggest reasons that make Yemen as a suitable place for the proliferation of the extremist groups, Yemen's strategic location. Due to the spread of the mountains and deserts, it makes it difficult to prosecute the leaders of terrorist groups or stop them.

The second reason is the absence of the state that played great role to offer the opportunity to extremist groups. As the political and military conflicts weakened Yemeni governments, so the state was not able to impose the law to build a strong state. Also, the former president Ali Saleh played great role to weaken the Yemeni state by supporting some extremist groups to weaken his political opponents in order to blackmail international society and obtain financial aid for the fight against terrorism.

The third reason is the existence of precedents to threaten regional and international security. As it was mentioned, Yemen consider as a candidate environment for the spread of terrorism. The extremist groups confirmed that they are able to use Yemen as a platform

for terrorist operations in different areas, such as the USS Cole bombing, which was the first works that confirmed the presence of al-Qaeda in Yemen.

Currently, the problem of piracy comes as main reasons that make Yemen a real source of threat. Before the Yemeni revolution, Yemen has suffered from spread of pirates near the Strait of Bab el Mandeb.

In 2010, Yemen almost losses \$ 150 million after that risk becomes less because of international cooperation to fight the piracy. But nowadays the piracy starts again to threaten the security and stability of Yemen and region. (Noon Post, 2015)

In fact, the threat that came from Yemen has increased after the political conflict, which happened after the revolution of 2011 that led to the fall of the former regime, which was considered for a long time as a strategic ally of America and the Gulf States in the fight against terrorism in Yemen.

After that, the Gulf States directly intervened to resolve the political dispute in Yemen, through the Gulf Initiative. The possibility of a cessation of violence and military conflicts was impossible because of the disagreement between the Yemeni political parties. Also because of the expansion was carried out by the Houthis against the tribes, those conflicts threatened the political process in Yemen.

Despite the fact that the Houthi Movement caused the weakening of the political process in Yemen and dropped the state, however, the international and regional parties dealt with it as a powerful party in Yemen. While most of the political parties were not able to impose themselves even the reform Party, which classifies as a strong party in Yemen.

The Reform Party was not able to impose itself on the ground as a fundamental power, because of the great political struggle between it and the rest of the parties. On other hand, the fear of the Gulf States from an extension of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is classified as a major source of threat to Gulf security after the Arab spring, that weaken the position of Reform Party, which is belonging to Muslim Brotherhood.

All that reasons made the Houthi Movement as a new actor in Yemen's arena, but in fact the Houthi Movement created negative impact on the stability of Yemen and the stability of the region. Because the coup carried out by the Houthi Movement, it works on the

abolition the political process that lead to transform to the military side. All that led to the internal war in late 2014 and made the security situation in Yemen too fragile that will support the extremist groups to spread in Yemen.

### **3.1 Iran VS Saudi Arabia**

The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran has passed through several stages and circumstances before it reaches the current dispute. The main reason for the enmity between the two countries is a regional competition that plays a pivotal role in affairs of the Middle East.

In fact, there are many reasons rooted enmity between the two countries in particular and between Iran and the Gulf States in general. During 2014 and 2015, the situation in Yemen affected badly on Saudi-Iranian relations due to the conflict in Yemen. Also the Houthi Movement became able to control the reins of power, which was considered as an additional point to the Iranian presence in the region that threatens the security of Gulf States dramatically.

This dispute between the two countries linked to historical, religious and ideological dimensions. Historically, the Shiite sect suffered from exclusion of power because of the Sunni community was controlled on the succession for a long time. Although the Shiite movement managed to reach the verdict, the historical injustice stayed as the primary engine of policy Shiite until now. Hence Iran considers itself as responsible directly and mainly to Shiite communities in the entire world to defend them, even if it is necessary to intervene in the affairs of other countries, as what happened in some Gulf countries.

In fact, the current dispute is not associated with only religious doctrine side, but it became mainly associated with a cultural, ideological clash between Sunni and Shiite communities in the Middle East. The different culture and language are caused of the continuation of the ideological and cultural conflict between the two countries by tracking the changing political relations between Shiite Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia. It shows that the Sunni-Shiite conflict is a political struggle to get more influence in the region. (Al-Nafisi ,1999)

The relationships between the two countries have passed through several stages. The first stage was during the reign of the Shah Pahlavi, in this stage Iranian-Saudi relations characterized by the complete reconciliation. Also the two countries agreed to roll back the Nazarene presence in Yemen after the 1962 revolution that overthrew the Imamate regime in Yemen. But this relationship has changed completely since the Islamic revolution in 1979, because the Gulf States considered the Islamic Revolution as a direct threat to its security and stability. So she Gulf States supported Iraq in its eight-year war, which was between Iraq and Iran. That impacted badly on the relationship between Iran and Gulf States, but that hostility eased slightly after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1991, because the two parties looked upon this invasion as a threat to their security in the region. The current phase is the phase of regional competition which took the form of the cold war between Iran and Saudi Arabia, especially after that Saudi Arabia involved directly in the current conflict in Yemen. (Al-Nafisi, 1999).

The relationship between the two countries did not improve until the reign of President Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989- 1997). During this stage, Iran has adopted the problems solution with neighbor's policy and worked to resolve the dilemmas between them with the other GCC states. All that impacted positively on the relationship between Iran and the Gulf States. Also during the reign of President Mohammad Khatami (1997 - 2005), who continued the policy initiated by Rafsanjani, the Iranian position improved in the region by the improvement of its relations with Arab countries. Despite its dispute with the UAE over the three islands which were taken from UAE by Iran earlier, Iran had got positive results in the Organization of Islamic cooperation and in OPEC. (Al-Nafisi, 1999)

Despite Iranian efforts to bridge the gap between its interests and the interests of the Gulf countries, it did not work for two reasons. The first reason is the security changes in region that happened after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Due to the USA forces became part of the gulf security, Iran considered that as a real threat to its security.

The second reason is the USA adopted the dual containment policy toward Iraq and Iran that affect badly on the relations between Iran and Gulf States. Iran has suffered greatly from that policy, which has affected its nuclear program. Iran is considered that the Gulf

States played great rule to impact on the USA policy in the Middle East, that supported the old hostility between the two parties. (Al-Nafisi, 1999).

Iranian-Saudi relations have entered a critical stage after Iraq's 2003 war. Also it became more complicated after the arrival of Mohammad Khatami to power in 2005 because in that period Iran benefited from the political vacuum in Iraq.

After the USA invasion, Iran was able to impose itself easily in the Iraqi political scene through a Shiite sectarian. Political analysts see that the war in Iraq created big change in region because Iran was able to strengthen its presence in the Middle East. The Gulf states criticized the United States for abandoning its policy of containment dual toward Iran, also they criticized the USA for allow Iran to establish a Shiite community in Iraq, but the criticism did not change the USA attitude toward Iran. So Iran imposed itself as a mainly actor in the Iraqi scene, having been able to impose itself in the Afghan landscape. (Clarion Project, 2015).

In addition, there are multiple reasons of dispute between the two countries that reasons linked to the political and regional changes in the region. The tensions began after the high price of oil in 1970, but the relationship did not become a complete break, until the advent of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, (Hagood, 2010).

The ideological religious reasons also deepened that dispute because the Gulf States considered the Islamic Revolution as a real threat to its identity and security. Particularly, after Iran announced its goal, it aims to spread the Islamic Revolution in all countries of the Islamic world. Hence the Gulf States began to concern of spread Shiism which threatens its security, especially that the thorny issues relating to ideological differences between Iran and the Gulf countries. (Al-Nafisi, 1999)

Adding to those threats that coming from Iran, the Gulf States began to search for ways to support its security against any external threat especially, after Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1991.

The Gulf States allied with the United States to defend its security. They demanded the presence of USA bases in the Gulf area that caused progress of the political conflict between two parties. While the Gulf States see that the presence of USA forces is

necessary because they are not able to defend of their security individually, Iran wants a separate policy altogether for outside intervention to increase its regional influence. Hence it is considered that the alliance between the United States and the Gulf States is the largest source of threat to its interests in the Middle East. (Al-Nafisi,1999)

The current conflict is linked to regional changes that accompanied the Arab Spring since 2011. This included three fundamental issues that have impacted heavily on the nature of the conflict between the Gulf States and Iran.

One of them is Bahrain's case which increased strain of the relationship between the Gulf States and Iran. Iranian statements considered as interference in Gulf affairs as the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council side. Also assassination attempt of the Saudi ambassador to the United States Adel al-Jubeir on 24 Oct. 2011 increased the intensity of the conflict between the Gulf States and Iran, (Cordesman, 2011).

The second issue that contributed to the increased tension in relations between Iran and Gulf States is the Syrian revolution which is considered as the most important point in conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran at the current stage. The Saudi Arabia is justifying current hostility to Iran because of its support for President Bashar despite his humanitarian crimes in Syria. Iran slams the blatant intervention by Saudi Arabia in Syrian affairs, and its support for terrorist groups in Syria, which was considered as a source of threat to the security of Syria, and the source of threat to Iranian strategic presence in the region because Syria is Iran's strategic depth in the Middle East. (Al-Nafisi,1999)

The conflict in Yemen increased tension intensity after (rebels) Shiite minority managed to control of the reins of power in Yemen in late 2014 after it flipped on the transitional government. Then it expanded its geopolitical influence in various regions of Yemen through its alliance with the former president forces. It also depended on outside support from Iran as Yemeni and Saudi political parties were indicated. In spite of the absence of any evidence of Iran's involvement in supporting the Houthi Movement, the experts and political analysts confirm that it is impossible to Houthi Movement to control power in Yemen through its weak military capabilities and modest political experience. (Neubauer, 2015)

Analysts also confirm that Iran considered Yemen just as a paper to press for other important files as Syrian file and Bahrain issue. So it does not interfere directly in the Yemeni conflict, but it relies on its agents in the north that represented by the Houthi Movement and in the South represented by the Southern Movement, which calls for secession. Despite of Saudi Arabia's involvement in Yemen conflict directly, Iran is committed to its political stance not to intervene directly, but to acerbic criticism of the Gulf to intervene in Yemen conflict. (Adelkah,2016, p:29)

On the other side, political analysts confirm that Iran is considered Yemen as a strategic alternative to Syria in the case has been dropped Bashar al-Assad in Syria. The geographic location of Yemen will be able to strengthen its strategic depth in the Middle East, as it will be able to implement the policy of containment and pressure to minimize the impact of the Salafist threat in the Middle East. (Neubauer, 2015)

In late 2015, the conflict between the Gulf States and Iran has evolved after the Iranian-American rapprochement. Especially after Lausanne agreement happened on 2 Abril 2015, which was between Iran and the group (5 +1) in preparation for the final signing on 15 July 2015. This was considered by the Gulf States as a real threat to its security because that agreement will lead to lifting sanctions against Iran that would strengthen the Iranian presence and influence in Middle East. (Al-Nafisi,1999)

In spite of the multiple causes of conflict and disagreement between the Gulf States and Iran, some political analysts indicate to set of points of agreement that might work to improve the relationship between Iran and the Gulf states or at least it will alleviate the existing conflict.

One of those points is the arrival of President Hassan Rowhani to power, which is belonging to the reformist movement in Iran. That will increase the chance of improved relations between the Gulf States and Iran. (Al-Nafisi,1999).

The political experts also refer to that the new nuclear agreement will change Iran's attitude toward countries in the region to maintain its gains and its ability to pursue its nuclear program. Moreover, the political analysts confirm that the continued protests and

instability in the region threatens the security of all states in the Middle East including the Gulf States and Iran.

All that fears come from possibility of the arrival of militant groups to power that will increase the political tension in the region and instability. So it is imperative for Iran and the Gulf States to cooperate with each other, so as not to repeat a scene that currently exists in the Afghanistan conflict. In addition, the Gulf States should improve relations with Iran to keep its stability especially after growing protests in the Gulf countries by the Shiite minority, which will impact heavily on the stability of the Gulf States. (Al-Nafisi,1999)

### **3.2 Iran and Yemeni Shiites**

Historically, Yemen is one of the Arab countries where the Shiites are stationed, especially the Zaidi Sect, who worked on the convergence between the interests of Iran and the Houthi movement in Yemen.

The current relationship between the two parties did not appear suddenly, but went through several stages which paved political and religious rapprochement between Iran and the Houthi Movement. In fact, the Zaidi Sect saw the Islamic Revolution as inspiration to regain its rule in Yemen. Also because of that unfairness Iran has access easily to Yemen.

On the other side, there are other reasons stemming from the Yemeni environment which played great role to the Houthi Movement to win popular support that facilitated to expand in the various governorates of Yemen. one of the reasons is Yemen is a poor country which suffers from economic, political and security challenges, due to lower oil revenues, unemployment and high population growth. (Al-Nafisi,1999)

Yemen tried more than one time to join the (GCC) to help it to overcome of that challenges, but the (GCC) rejected that. Despite Yemen is trying implement the conditions required to join the Gulf States, however, it was not able to join because of the fear of asylum and immigration by Yemenis. Also some of the Gulf States are still furious about the former Yemen's attitude toward Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. (Burke, 2012)

The relationship between (GCC) and Yemen associated mainly with the security aspect because of the border and terrorism. In fact, Yemen is a suitable incubator for extremist groups because of the political and security turmoil. So the Gulf countries seriously did not seek to join Yemen to the (GCC), but they worked to avoid the threats that might come from Yemen. (Burke, 2012)

Through these challenges of political vacuum and bad relationships between Yemen and the Gulf States, Iran managed to build a bridge of communication between it and the Shiite community (Zaidi sect) in Yemen. Iran's attempts to enter Yemen is not new, but it has historically tried to publish Shiism on days of Imam al-Mansur al-Hasan ibn al-Qasim (1669- 1720). However, these attempts have not succeeded because of ideological differences between the Jaafarism and Zaydism doctrines. But those attempts have succeeded after the Islamic Revolution because Iran proceeded to spread its revolution, and exported abroad as the most important goals of revolution as said former Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani.

At the beginning, Iran used direct strategy to export the thoughts of Jaafari doctrine, which was rejected, but they succeeded in its impact on the Zaidi leaders which came from the Houthi Movement. It also benefited greatly from political openness that has occurred in Yemen after unification in 1990, which allowed it to continue its various activities among Yemenis. (Aldagshi, 2010)

Iran aspires to be a regional actor in the region, so it is seeking to extend its influence in the various countries of the Arab and Islamic world. In order to achieve this goal, Iran adopts several strategic steps. The most important strategy is the intervention in various issues through its local allies thus seeks to be a part of the solution of any problem in the region. By those steps Iran tries to make itself as a key presence in the political scene in the Middle East. (Chubin,2012)

Iran relies on the support of minorities and armed groups to earn their loyalty; also it strengthens its influence working on the supply of those groups' military training and logistical support. Through the loyalty of these groups, Iran seeks to achieve its goals in Middle East. Hence, Iran has long been focused on the Hashemite Movement in Yemen

which became a minority with no political influence after being sidelined altogether after the 1962 revolution that toppled the Imamate rule in Yemen.

Through communication with this sect, Iran managed with the Hashemite leaders to build some continues Bridges. It worked to achieve the common interests between the two parties, which are represented by the return of the Imamate regime to power. In spite of the big differences between the two Zaidi and Jaafari doctrines, the Houthi Movement would not mind to take advantage of Iran's support that will enable it to control the government in Yemen. (Aldagshi.2010)

Although there was no clear evidence of Iranian support for the Houthi Movement, the evolution of the events in Yemen confirms that there is cooperation between Iran and the Houthi Movement. In addition, there are some of the statements by the Iranian leaders which confirm the existence of the organization and cooperation between them.

Also some Yemeni parties indicated that the Iran's support for the Houthi Movement was not linked to the coup that happened in 2014 only, but it began earlier. According to a confidential report to the sanctions committee on the crisis of Yemen, it revealed a direct Iranian involvement in arming the Houthi Movement in 2009. Also according to report in 2011 there was an Iranian fishing boat which adjust by the Yemeni authorities for transfer of 900 anti-tank missile and aircraft that manufactured in Iran which were destined for the Houthi Movement. That reports also indicates that Iran helped the Houthi Movement to form Hussein army, which is the nucleus of the Houthi militia. And they have been trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and its experts. Gen. Mohammed Alqshosh confirms that, in a statement to the magazine of London, the exercises were in different places, in Yemen, Lebanon, and Eritrea was one of those training places. (Fikir center for Studies, 2015)

The Iranian ships Ceyhan 1 and Ceyhan 2 are considered as evidence that emphasize Iranian support for the Houthi Movement in Yemen. Ceyhan 1 was arrested on 23 January 2013. This ship was loaded with various types of weapons, and it was gone to a Midi port which is controlled by Houthis, (Aljazeera,2013). Yemen submitted a request to the Security Council to investigate the case of Cihan (Aljazeera,2013), but Iranian Foreign Ministry denied its relationship to Cihan 1. (Al-Ahmad ,2015).

On 7 March 2013, the ship Ceyhan 2 was arrested before the first case was closed. Yemeni government was considered that step as a threat to the security of Yemen. ICRC, which was tasked with investigating the cause of Ceyhan 1, indicated to Iran's involvement. Because that ship was flying the flag of Iran, it called Iran to stop the supply, sale or transfer of any arms or related materiel directly or indirectly from its territory by their nationals, or using their flag vessels or aircraft. Also all that States shall prohibit the procurement of such items from Iran by their nationals or using ships flying flags or aircraft, whether originating in the territory of Iran or not. (Neshwan newz,2013)

### **3.3 The Houthi Movement and Proxy War**

Historically, Yemen has suffered from many of the proxy war, also in the modern history Yemen witnessed a fierce war between royalists and republicans after the 1962 revolution. Saudi Arabia helped Imam Muhammad Al-Bader during 1960 to excel on the Egyptian intervention in Yemen. That war continued from 1962 to 1967. Iran's position was close to the position of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States in that period. (Burke,2012, P:8)

After the war ended, Yemen managed to build fragile Republic which was formed under the leadership of the first Yemeni president Abd al-Rahman al-Iryani. This fragile Republic did not work because of Saudi support for the tribes. Since reign of president Ali Saleh Saudi Arabia has worked to weaken Yemen economically, and continued its former policy toward Yemen. (Burke,2012, P:8)

The political analysts point to that the conflict in Saada since 2004 until 2010 was a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran in Yemen. Because of that the war was not directly between the two parties, but Saudi Arabia has worked to support its interior allies, likewise Iran worked on supporting Houthi Movement through those conflicts. Therefore, Yemen witnessed a cold war between the two parties, the former president benefited from it to weaken his political opponents and taking military aid from various warring parties.

There are several reasons show that the Houthi Movement fought a proxy war through six rounds in Saada. The most important one is that the Houthi Movement is not an organized movement, which is name linked to its founder directly, its new name (Ansar Allah) has been imposed by force of arms at a later. In spite the fact that the support provided by

Hezbollah, the Houthi Movement is still disorganized. In addition, the movement suffers from several weaknesses such as the lack of popular acceptance and political isolation. But it benefited from the political circumstances to win the support of some of the conflict parties to make its position stronger than it was. (Fikir center for Studies, 2015)

To understand the evolution of the Houthi Movement, political analysts point that it is important to look at the organizational structure, the sources of support, the size of its military power, and the armament sources which increased its strength. Before 2011, there is no clear information about the sources of support, but during the current internal conflict it was clear that the Houthi Movement depend on two types of sources, unofficial sources and the semi-official sources.

An Unofficial Sources, Iranian support comes on top which has not been proven yet beside self-support through (fifth) links to religion rules. Also there are other sources that come from the war circumstances, which include the arms trade, smuggling and drugs. The semi-official sources take a two levels, logistical support such as training of political and media staff through coordination with Hezbollah. The second level is through religious seminaries and Shiite institutes in the Gulf States, especially in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. (Fikir center for Studies, 2015)

Until now the size of the Houthi military force is unknown, but some studies suppose that the number of the Houthi fighters ranging from 10 to 15 thousand, and the rest of the armies consist of loyal tribes or loyal military forces of former president Ali Saleh.

The organizational structure of the Houthi Movement illustrates that the Houthi Movement is an ideological fighting group, which associated mainly with the Houthi family. Despite the appointment of a new leadership from various provinces such as Hodeidah and Hajjah, the final decision remains with Abdul-Malik Al-houthi alone.

The military wing of the movement or the so-called Hussein Army is the nucleus basic the Houthi militia has been trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in two phases. The first phase of training was with the leaders during 2011 and 2012 in Lebanon, Damascus and Tehran. The second phase has happened in the Saada camps, cadres of

Hezbollah and Iran's Revolutionary Guard participated in that training. (Fikir center for Studies, 2015)

The Houthi Movement relies on three sources to get weapons, the first source is the weapon that got during the long conflicts with the state since 2004. They also managed to get the quality weapons during clashed with Saudi Arabia in 2009. (Fikir center for Studies, 2015)

The second source to get weapons is linked to arms market which is widespread in Yemen. It has increased dramatically because of the war circumstances, also the absence of control contributed to support arms market beside the Iranian support by the two ships Ceyhan 1 Ceyhan 2. (Fikir center for Studies, 2015)

In spite of the denial of Iran's relationship with those ships, the International Commission of Inquiry confirmed the involvement of Iran with those ships. Add to that the secret report of the Criminal Code relating to the Yemeni crisis which revealed a direct Iranian involvement in arming the Houthi movement in 2009. (Fikir center for Studies, 2015)

The recent alliance that brought together the Houthi Movement and former president Ali Saleh give the movement a large source of support in the military side and arms, so the movement managed to drop the 310 camp in Omran. Also it managed to break into the capital in 2014 and control of the main camps in the capital. According to the former minister, Abdul-Karim al-Iryani permit after dropping states the Houthi Movement possessed weapons more than the state. (Fikir center for Studies, 2015)

Yemen's geographical location makes it vulnerable to invasion from neighboring countries, which aspire to increase its regional influence. However, the goals between Saudi Arabia and Iran are different in Yemen. While Saudi Arabia targets linked to the security side, Iran goals mainly linked to the regional influence.

Since the emergence of the Islamic Revolution, Iran has not stopped its attempts to extend its influence in neighboring countries and the Islamic world to make itself as a main regional actor in region. Hence, Iran refuses the American presence in the Gulf States. Iran benefited of Israel's presence in the region to put pressure on the rejection of the USA presence and to earn the loyalties of others Muslim peoples, who unsatisfied with the

political and economic conditions in their countries. Iran is seeking to win the minority to support its position as it works to strengthen itself militarily by developing its military system.

Iran tries to improve its relationship with the West to complete the development of its nuclear program. Add to that its presence currently in Iraq, Lebanon and Syrian, all that makes its position in Yemen stronger than Saudi and the Gulf states. (Cordesman.,2011). As mentioned before Iran seeks to support its position in Yemen by using its agents in Yemen, the Houthis in the north and the southern separatist movement in the south. But it is focused more on the Houthi Movement because they are belonging to Shiite doctrine. (Salisbury, 2015). Moreover, the Houthi Movement has got combat experience, all that make the Houthi Movement as a suited ally to Iran in Yemen, to gain more influence in the Middle East.

The Gulf States do not have specific allies in Yemen, but they considered the Yemeni legitimate government as an ally currently to justify its military campaign in Yemen. Previously, Saudi Arabia has worked to win the loyalties of the tribes, the Red tribes was considered as suited allies in Yemen, but Saudi Arabia lost its allies when Amran was fallen. So in the current cold war Saudi Arabia focus on the security side, Yemen represents the last column, which protects the Gulf from the Iranian threat. That explain why Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States are engaged directly in the internal conflict in Yemen while Iran is still fight by its allies in Yemen without involving in the internal conflict directly.

### **3.4 Yemeni-US relations**

The history of relationship between Yemen and USA started in the late fifties, where the first American diplomatic mission began its work in Taiz on 16 September 1959. In fact, North Yemen had tried to establish diplomatic relations with various countries since 1945, the United States was one of those countries that recognized in Yemen as a kingdom independent in 1946. After the 1962 revolution and the independence of the south Yemen from the British occupation in 1967, the good relations between the two countries continued. (CNN,2003)

But it deteriorated after the proclamation of the People's Republic of Yemen its independence because south of Yemen announced its entry in the socialist camp which prompted Washington to put a Marxist regime in Aden as a terrorist state.

After that, USA frozen its relationship with Yemen until the socialist regime fell when Yemen united in 1990. During the meantime, the USA relations also strained with northern Yemen because of its position and support for Israel in the June 1967 war. The estrangement continued for five years, but it returned again in 1972 since the former president Ali Saleh came to power in Yemen.

Positive relations continued until the Gulf war occurred because Yemen has rejected UN resolution 678 regarding to the use of force against Iraq, which is considered as a support of the continued presence of the Iraqi army in Kuwait and it was against to USA interests in the region. But after the unification of Yemen in 1990, relations between the two countries improved. Then for the first time, president Ali Saleh visited USA on the 26th of Jan, 1990, which inaugurated a new phase of the Yemeni-American relations in the period from 1990 to 2000.

Due to the positive relations between two countries, America supported Yemen in many diplomatic and security issues. For example, in 1994 the war of secession occurred in Yemen that war was not continued for long time because the USA prevent any external intervention and considering the trying separatism as an internal affair. Also it pressured to settle that issue peacefully, the Washington's position contributed in laying the foundations of a strong relationship between Sanaa and Washington.

Also Washington's position played great role in ending the Yemeni conflict with Eritrea, which broke out on 18 December 1995. That step contributed to re-strengthening of relations between the two countries, bilateral relations remained growing between Yemen and the United States. But the bombing of the USS Cole in Aden harbor on 12 October 2000 deteriorated the bilateral relations again. After that, the United States activities in Yemen associated with the security aspect. (CNN, 2003)

The geographical location of Yemen and its proximity to the Gulf States is considered as a center of the USA interests in region effects on the USA position toward Yemen. So the

USA tried to seek in earnest to prevent the spread of any terrorist groups that threaten its interests in the region, especially in Yemen.

After the United States declared war on terrorism policy, it has worked to build security ties with various countries in the region. It also focused on its strategy on Yemen being a convenient place to spread terrorist groups because Yemen has tribal regime which has a significant impact on the ineffectiveness of the central system that caused the weakness of the political system. Also it caused a lot of problems such as the weakness of the economic system, and instability. (Terrill,2011, p:61)

The Instability in Yemen is considered as an attracted factor to extremist groups from various neighboring countries. According to a poll, many of Yemenis see that Al-Qaeda spread is normal as a result of unfair policies that the United States practiced in the Middle East. Hence, the United States fears from the spread of a popular discontent sense of its performance in Yemen (Terrill,2011, p:8). So the USA tried to work with the government secretly, but since it begun to cooperate with the former regime, it has been unable to achieve any result in the side of the fight against terrorism.

In addition, there were some events raised Washington doubts towards the cooperation of Yemen to fight against terrorism. One of those events is the refusal of delivering one of the terrorism Jamal al-Badawi because that violates the Yemeni constitution, Article four, which criminalizes the delivery of any Yemeni citizen to foreign authorities.

Yemen justified that al-Badawi became an active member of the state apparatus to combat terrorism and that the State can benefit from his experience in this area (Sharp, 2015).

The USA criticized Yemeni performance more than once, also it tried to increase its activity in Yemen. But because the development of events in Yemen and the fall of the system, it was not able to do that. Moreover, it tried to find an alternative actor to continue its efforts in the fight against terrorism in Yemen in order to preserve its security and interests. So the United States pressured by its gulf allies to stop the internal conflict in Yemen by political settlement, which enable them to continue the previous agreements with Yemen. So when the transitional government came led by Abdu Rabbuh Hadi, the United States became able to continue its operations in Yemen. Despite of the criticism

against drones in Yemen, which killed hundreds of innocent Yemenis, the USA did not stop its operations.

Due to the deteriorating political and security situation in Yemen, transitional government does not take any step or direct any criticism of random strikes carried out by the United States in Yemen.

The bad political conditions increased in the Middle East because of the armed conflict and the security vacuum that created big security challenges such as the threat of extremist groups. In fact, the threat of extremist groups in Yemen did not appear due to current events. It appeared since the nineties when some fighters returned who participated in the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Some of them merged into society while others are not integrated for several reasons.

One of these reasons is the disagreements between them and the state. One example of those returned fighters is Osama bin Laden who is one of the leaders that organized to recruit fighters against the Soviets during the nineties.

In 1980, there was a good relationship between Osama bin Laden, the Yemeni government and with the Saudi government, so Yemeni government cooperated with him to recruit youth to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. He was able to attract large number of Yemenis from the south because of the discontent on the government and the system communism, which saw religion antithesis of modernity, so it worked on the displacement of the Islamists and pursue them. (Terrill, 2011)

After the fall of the Soviet Union, fighters returned from Afghanistan, so Bin Laden offered his willingness to cooperate with Saudi government to fight the communist regime in South Yemen. But the Saudi government refused because it feared from the fighters may represent a danger to its security and it will not be able to control it later. (Terrill, 2011)

In 1990, the relationship between Osama bin Laden and the Saudi government severed after the American troops stationed in Saudi Arabia as a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Bin Laden criticized the Saudi government strongly then went to optional exile in Sudan.

After that, Saudi Arabia pulled his nationality because his activities of sabotage in Bahrain, Egypt and Yemen. (Terrill, 2011)

After that, bin Laden and some of the returning leaders from Afghanistan began to search for a suited place to establish an armed resistance movement, which is applied the philosophy and believes of returning fighters from Afghanistan.

Yemen had chosen as the best suitable place to accommodate the spread of the idea and to provide defenders who ensure continuity Al-Qaeda activity. As the theorist of Al-Qaeda, Abu Musab al-Suri, said in his book (the responsibility of Yemenis and their duty towards the sanctity of Muslims and their wealth).

Abu Musab al-Suri confirms that Yemen is the most suitable place for the deployment of call to Allah and Jihad, also it is a suitable place for the fight against injustice because they blessed place according to many religious texts. In addition, geographically place and the younger age person are the best supporter of the spread of the movement. (Albakari, 2014)

In 1997, Abu al-Hasan Zine Elabdine al-Mihdhar formed Islamic Army worked on the recruitment of 200 young people in that army, which carried out the first kidnapping of foreigners in Abyan. He was captured in the process of free the hostages which was a known as Jabal Hataf process in Abyan where he killed four British tourists. Later, he was charged and sentenced to death then they executed him in 1999. Al-Qaeda revenge to his death by destructed the USS Cole off the coast of Aden in October 2000. (Albakari, 2014)

That operation was the first suicide attack which carried out by Al-Qaeda in Yemen. Later, they carried out the bombing of the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001. After that, Al-Qaeda has become the biggest threats to international security. So the USA signed a number of international agreements that work on organizing efforts in the fight against terrorism and the convention has been signed in Yemen in 2002. (Albakari, 2014).

Despite the signing of the convention on the fight against terrorism between Yemen and the USA, Al-Qaeda's activities continued to grow. It was able to attract a large number of young people from different countries of the world not just from Yemen. According to analysts, the complex political situation in Yemen played a big role in creating a security

vacuum which is considered as the most important factor for the spread of these extremist groups. Add to that the role played by Ali Saleh create political and security unrest to strengthen his rule. (Terrill, 2011)

From another side, the tribe played a major role in supporting these groups because of its internal procedure which prevents rejects any asking help. In addition, tribes work to protect anyone who belonging to them regardless of their political affiliation or if they are dangerous. The spread of powerful tribes contributed to spread arms that caused to weaken the central authority of the state. But some political analysts indicate that the state did not take firm steps to prevent arms, also they indicate that as a result of the absence of central authority, the tribal authority rely on weapons mainly to defend itself against any threat.

The United States has worked to cooperate with Yemen in training to hunt down members of Al-Qaeda by military expertise. It also worked to strengthen the security aspect by providing Yemen with sophisticated espionage tools, but the Yemeni-American relations soured after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 because Yemen did not work to prevent Yemenis to fighting in Iraq. (Terrill, 2011)

The American doubts began to grow when 23 members of Al-Qaeda managed to escape from the central security prison in February 2006, (Terrill, 2011). On 16 September 2008 six gunmen who belonging to Al-Qaeda attacked the USA embassy and they killed one person. Also in April 2010 there was attempted assassination of the British ambassador by Al-Qaeda. (Terrill, 2011) Because of the spread of Al-Qaeda's activities in Yemen, it becomes a haven for the rest of extremist groups in the region.

Also with cracking down on Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, it moved to Yemen and joined Al-Qaeda there. After that, the two organizations announced that Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula led by Nasser al-Wahishi and his deputy Said Ali al-Shihri in 2009. (Terrill, 2011)

Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia was considered as a strong group because it was able to penetrate the rows Saudi security by trying to assassinate prince Mohammed bin Nayef, director of counterterrorism at the Ministry of the Interior. (Alarabiya,2009). Al-Qaeda in

Yemen also is considered as a strong group because it benefited long experience of conflicts with the state.

Also it was able to win new supporters because of the discontent of the bad political situation in Yemen, and because of popular discontent of the American intervention, indiscriminate killing, which affects the Yemenis because of the drones. Then as the two groups merged, Al-Qaeda in Yemen became a real threat to the stability of Yemen and neighboring countries.

Many observers warn that the continuation of the bad security situation in Yemen will make dealing with the fight against terrorism in Yemen file very complicated as the political and security vacuum is working to attract more extremist groups in Yemen. Also it makes it easier to win new supporters as well the fear from the shift of Al-Qaeda to become a part of the Yemeni tribe because it will complicate the fight against terrorism. Then instead of being targeted Al-Qaeda, it will be targeted Yemeni tribe which is part of the Yemeni community. Thus the USA will enter in direct war with the Yemenis themselves, not with members of Al-Qaeda.

According to political analysts, the United States is trying to avoid falling into this scenario that leads them to engage in direct war with Yemen not with terrorism by adopting new strategies, such as targeting Al-Qaeda leaders. Through the operations carried out by drones, regardless of the success of this strategy, the drones made many mistakes; it targeted more than once innocent citizens including women and children.

Arab Spring came unexpectedly, it affected greatly on the political map in the Middle East because it was able to topple the dictatorial regimes that led to appear Arab populations as a main actor in political changes. At the first, the US adopted the position which supported the peoples, but some changes did not fit with interests of the great powers in the region. Hence the USA adopted containment diplomacy toward those revolutions.

The Yemeni revolution accompanied the rest of the Arab revolutions and it came to achieve the same demands to reject the dictatorship system, which marginalized the development in Yemen and contributed to the spread of corruption. Also it caused a lot of problems in the security, social and infrastructure in Yemen.

The USA was not convinced in collaboration with Ali Saleh system, which is classified as a family system, because he brought members of his family and his tribe and put them in several security positions in order to protect the system. This caused to build fragile family system which entered Yemen into a spiral of corruption and economic challenges. (Terrill, 2011).

The USA found itself obliged to cooperate with the Saleh system because he was the main actor in Yemen. So it signed agreement of cooperation to combat terrorism in the 2002. But as a result of the continuation of Al-Qaeda activity in Yemen, it caused to increase of the USA doubts toward Yemen. After repetition of some strange events such as escape of some prisoners who's belonging to Al-Qaeda, the USA tried to find other actor to continue its operation in Yemen. But when the Arab spring came, everything changed.

Despite it announced that the USA will support the will of the people in Yemen, it continued pressure on the various parties to find a political diplomat solution in Yemen to ensure the arrival of the parties. Also the USA agree to continue the cooperation in the field of the fight against terrorism through the Gulf efforts, which is a strategic ally of the USA in the region. The USA sought to prevent opportunity of internal conflicts in Yemen because if that happened, the threats of extremist groups will increase.

In spite of the seriousness of the Yemeni scene, the USA did not intervene directly because in last decade the US reduced its interests in the Middle East. According to Susan Rice, advisor of National Security Affairs, the USA reduced its interests in the Middle East for several reasons. one of those reasons is the USA suffers from a growing deficit budget and massive inflation in the public debt to the federal government, which is exceeded the inflation of \$18 trillion, equivalent to 103% of GDP. (Abdul Wahab, 2015)

Furthermore, president Obama adopted new policy during his period, also he depends on focusing inside problems not outside. In addition, United States do not want to enter into another war in the Middle East after Afghanistan and Iraq war. (Abdul Wahab,2015, p:3)

According to Some Political analysts, the USA position towards the Yemeni revolution and the fears the Gulf States towards Islamic movements in Yemen contributed significantly to support the Houthi Movement. Despite the slogan of the Houthi

Movement (Death to America, Death to Israel), the USA did not consider the Houthi Movement as a terrorist group.

Also in spite of crimes against humanity that committed by the Houthi Movement in previous conflicts, there were not any international punishment or attended against the Houthi Movement. The political analysts refer to a political and security vacuum that occurred after the fall of the former regime. Also the transitional government has been unable to maintain the security situation due to the political deficit. All that affected on the position of the USA toward the Houthi Movement.

The intersection of international interests played a major role in the deterioration of the political situation in Yemen. While the USA is looking for a strong alternative to continue the convention on the fight against terrorism, Regardless of its legitimacy and eligibility, the Gulf States focused on preventing any party that could threaten its interests or maybe threaten its internal security. Especially Muslim Brotherhood, which classified as a source of real threat to the internal security of the Gulf. Because some of Islamic parties could reach the power in some Arab spring countries, the Gulf States afraid from the Reform Party in Yemen which belongs to Muslim Brotherhood Movement.

The Reform Party also is considered one of the biggest political parties in Yemen, so the step of Gulf States weakened the political situation in Yemen. On other word, the external parties dealt with the Houthi Movement as an active internal actor, which can weaken the fighting for power between different parties, and then it will become weak during the fighting. After that, the state can control all of the parties whether political parties or armed militia.

In fact, the Houthi Movement weakened the political situation in Yemen and political parties. During previous conflicts, the Houthi Movement appeared as a strong influential actor in the Yemeni scene. So the USA dealt with the movement to continue of cooperation in the anti-terrorism file.

At the beginning, the Gulf States dealt with the Houthi Movement as a main Yemeni component, which can cooperate in the protection of borders and common interests. But after the coup against the peace and partnership agreement by the Houthi Movement and

declare the war by stretched in various Yemeni provinces, it turned out for the Gulf States that the Houthi Movement can not be a strategic ally in Yemen, but a real threat from Iran.

The Houthi Movement influenced significantly on the relations between the US and Gulf States. The USA did not take a specific and direct attitude toward the conflict in Yemen despite its threat to the security of the Gulf States. That was Prompting Gulf States to study the idea of defending itself directly and taking the implied approval from the USA to start military campaign in Yemen in March 2015 (Abdul Wahab, 2015)

Despite of the cooperation between the USA and Yemen to fight against terrorism in Yemen, they could not achieve significant progress on the ground. Some political experts indicate to that the geographical and tribal side play a significant role in making the fight against terrorism very difficult. At the same time, they indicate to that the main reason for the lack of progress of operations in Yemen is that of former Yemeni president Ali Saleh was one of the parties that support terrorism, because he was the biggest beneficiary of the arrival of international aid to combat terrorism. (Oborne, 2015)

Also some reports indicate that Ali Saleh used a terrorism scarecrow mainly to justify his staying in power and to escape from the international community, which will ask him about violations of human rights that were occurring during his period.

The way of dealing with political problems by Ali Saleh confirms that he played a role in supporting terrorism through support different religion parties and armed groups. Also he worked on condone of activities that were carried out by the sect Zaidi virtue that belong to it. In addition, he allowed Saudi Arabia to support the Salafis and their activities in Saada. Then when Al-Qaeda activity grew, the state has not taken a critical stance to stop it, but the former president used it later to get international aid (Al-Ahmad, 2015)

On other hand, in his reign Ali Saleh deliberately seek to strengthen the influence of the tribe and the weakening of state institutions, through distributed the state posts among the members of his family and his tribe. Because of that the corruption has spread dramatically, that created bad effects on Yemen.

Despite the international criticism of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, Ali Saleh has not changed the system. After the signing of the anti-terrorism agreement, international

community mainly focused on the combating terrorism issue, but this was ignored many of the humanitarian and human rights issues that have been plaguing Yemen.

During the period of cooperation in anti-terror file, there were several incidents which have raised USA doubts towards the Yemeni party as we pointed out. Those doubts associated with the failure of the Yemeni side of the delivery some of the suspects to the USA. One of those issues that created problems between the two countries is Yemen refused to deliver Jamal al-Badawi one of the accused in the bombing of USS Cole because it violates the Yemeni Constitution Article (4) These states is not permissible to hand over any Yemeni citizen to foreign powers. Despite of the pressures of the USA, Yemen has not been handed over Jamal al-Badawi to the USA authorities. (Sharp, 2015)

In late 2015, Hani Mohammed Mujahid testified about the role of previous government in support the terrorism. He was a double agent and his testimony made clear that the Yemeni security authorities ignored his contact, trying him to save foreign tourists. Also he stressed that the Yemeni security authorities ignored repeated warnings before the bombing of the USA embassy that occurred in 2008 killing 19 people .(Oborne, 2015)

There are other events which confirm that the role of the former president to support terrorism, for example, after the revolution in 2011 Ali Saleh ordered the army to withdraw from the camps in Abyan. Then Al-Qaeda seized the camps and weapons that effect on the security side. Some analysts point out that Ali Saleh through this step tried to weaken the transitional government to allow himself to return to the power. However, the severe conflicts between the Popular Resistance and Al-Qaeda weakened the Salih trick, so he worked to build an alliance with the Houthi Movement to hit his political and military opponents indirectly. Then maybe he has chance to return to power again because he is the most efficient and has the ability to restore the rule of Yemen to organize the political and security side as it was in the past.

In fact, the alliance between Ali Saleh and the Houthi Movement burned the political process in Yemen altogether that alliance impacted negatively on the security side, also it caused the disappearance of the state. Because of the absence of the state, the extremist groups become stronger that effect on the region security.

It was not expected that the USA-Iranian rapprochement occurs during this period of conflict in the Middle East, because of the nuclear issue which has remained for more than 12 years without being acted upon, which strained the political relations between Iran and the West.

But after the announcement of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the situation of the Middle East scene became more difficult because of the organization represent as a big threat to the various regional and international powers in the region. Because of the complexity of the situation, the USA could not manage the conflict effectively with its old allies, so it began to search for a new ally in the Middle East. Despite the presence of several alternatives of allies, in this time the USA chose to deal directly with Iran as an active part in the political scene of the Middle East.

In the previous period, the USA has dealt differently with the Middle East countries while it has a good relationship with the Gulf States because of the economic and security relations based on protection of oil, it has dealt differently with Iraq and Iran. In fact, it has adopted a policy of dual containment toward them. So when Iran began its nuclear program, the economic sanctions tried to halt its nuclear work because the nuclear program was considered as a threat to the stability of countries in the region.

There were two reasons for that fear, the first is the Gulf States concern from Iran's policy in the region, and its interference in the internal affairs of the Gulf States. Also they feared of Iran's ability to acquire nuclear weapons, because its threats will be greater if it possessed nuclear weapons.

The second reason is related to Israel which sees Iran as one of countries that threaten the stability of the region and the interests of western states in the Middle East because it supported extremist groups hostile to Israel. Also because of the strong relations between the USA and Israel and the alliance with the Gulf Countries, The USA adopted the containment policy toward Iran. According to that policy which formed a lot of challenges to Iran and prevent it from being a regional power in the region, all that impacted on relations between Iran and the Gulf states as mentioned before. (Abdul Wahab, 2015)

The Iran's nuclear program is considered the most complex issue in the Middle East during the last decade, because it impacted badly on the USA-Iranian relations. That impacted on the Iran's policy towards the region, which mainly associated with achieving political gains help it pass its nuclear program. That policy created many of the problems in region, due to its dependence on stirring up sectarian and social problems, and its support for militant groups. So that activities have caused increasing conflicts in the region, and affected badly on the stability of the Middle East.

The Iran's nuclear activity began since the fifties through the collaboration between the US and the regime of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. But after the Islamic Revolution, Khomeini stopped such activities because they are contrary to morality and Islamic jurisprudence. (Roe, 2007)

The Iran's nuclear program resumed in 1989 and Iran opened Iran's Bushehr plant on 12 September 2011, which is the first nuclear power plant in Iran. Also, it announced that it would use its nuclear program to peaceful side to generate energy. But earlier in 2003, the IAEA mentioned on its report that Iran did not declare its nuclear contributions and sensitive activities in enrichment, and reprocessing that can be used to enrich uranium to produce fuel for reactors (in the higher levels of enrichment) for the manufacture of weapons. (Abdul Wahab, 2015)

Since that time the Iranian nuclear program considered as an international issue through international negotiations. The international community trying to pressure Iran to abandon its nuclear program, but Iran does not halt its activities despite international sanctions. In 2003, the international efforts began and took several stages, the most important stage was the Tehran Agreement on 7 of Nov, 2004. Then followed by Paris agreement on 21 of Oct, 2003 until the end of the 2005, then followed by several rounds. (Abdul Wahab, 2015)

But Iran rejected the majority of the European proposals because it demanded from Iran fully abstain from exercising this right. So those proposals have no value for Iran because it is considered its nuclear program as a main issue, which can not be abandoned. (Abdul Wahab, 2015, p:6). As a result, the negotiations stalled in 2005, then Iran called to expand the scope of negotiation which happened later with a group (5 +1), the P5 namely China,

France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States; plus Germany. The P5+1 is a group of six world powers which, in 2006, joined together in diplomatic efforts with Iran with regard to its nuclear program.

As a result of the political and security changes in the Middle East, the changes in the USA policy toward the Middle East and the decision on nuclear issue became a priority especially after the political changes that occurred in Iran after the arrival of president Rouhani to power. The USA felt that the changes that have occurred in Iran will be the catalyst to decide on the Iranian nuclear project. Hence the Treaty of Lausanne came to solve that problem which took place on 30 June 2015. It led to stop the international economic sanctions on Iran, also it has been allowed to continue its nuclear work provided that abide by the terms of agreement. (Abdul Wahab, 2015)

After the signing of the nuclear agreement, the US- Iranian relations improved. Also the lifting of economic sanctions will improve Iranian's economic and diplomatic situation in the region. According to Political analysts, the rapprochement between US and Iran considered as a historical position because that rapprochement can create many changes in region.

In fact, the Iranian nuclear issue took a long time without solution because there was no solution that satisfies all parties. But the nuclear agreement came as a result of critical stage that occurred in the Middle East. In last decade, the USA cooperated with Iran in Afghanistan and the Iraq war that made it as a suited ally in the region.

Iran relies on strengthening its influence in various Middle East states to achieve greater influence than other rival states, such as Saudi Arabia and turkey. In Lebanon, Iran impact on the political situation through Hezbollah, also in Iraq through the Shiite community and in Syria by its strong presence through its support for Assad regime. The Houthi Movement came to support Iranian position more, which considered as an extension of Iranian influence in the region.

The Houthi Movement support the USA- Iranian rapprochement through the coup carried out by the Houthis, who was able to control Yemen, and is considered as a fourth state that controlled by Iran. Those political changes strengthened Iran's position in the region

and Conversely Sudia's position became weak, so its political impact on the Syrian issue will not be very strong because of its preoccupation with the war in Yemen.

The Middle East now faced many changes, such as the new policy that adopted by the USA towards the region and requires no direct intervention in the Middle East conflicts. As a result of high human and economic cost that is still plaguing the United States of America out of Iraq and Afghanistan war.

As a result of the Iranian presence in various hot-button issues in the Middle East, its former collaboration with the USA in the war in Iraq, military capability, and its critical position of extremism and terrorism, which is belong to the Sunni sects, all that make it qualified to be the new USA ally in the region.

In spite of strong criticism issued by the Gulf States, the USA did not change its new policy toward the Middle East. Many political analyzes indicate that the USA position on the latter sends an indirect message to the Gulf Countries that it is not possible. The USA forces defend the Gulf indefinitely and they must defend for themselves. (Fadlalah, 2015)

### **3.5 The Formation of the Military Coalition**

For decades, the conflicts in the Middle East increased, but the form of international alliances has not changed much. At the current stage, as a result of political and security changes that accompanied the Arab Spring, new actors have emerged on the political scene such as the Houthi Movement. This movement is lack of political organization and lack of popular support. However, it was able to impose itself on the regional and international level because it was able to bring down the state in Yemen, and it imposed itself as an important factor in the region. It has become a real threat to Gulf security due to its geographical proximity because it is considered an extension of the Iranian threat.

Moreover, The Houthi Movement was not the only reason which prompted the Gulf States to reconsider its strategy in the region. But there are several reasons prompted the Gulf States to rebuild the security of its strategy that led by Saudi Arabia and focus more on the risks that come from inside.

In fact, the Gulf countries suffer from several challenges internally such as the scarcity of population and the existence of different racial and sectarian in the society which hinders institution-building. Also they suffer from popular discontent especially among the middle class that have not been integrated it into the political system beside the corruption of the influential circles and the abyss between the social and economic development and political side. (Al-Nafisi,1999)

The Gulf States also faced external challenges at the regional and international level. At the regional level, Iranian threat comes on top of the challenges that faced the Gulf States because of the past problems which had no solution between Iran and the Gulf States. Especially after the arrival of USA forces after the Iraq war (Abdul Wahab, 2015)

The Gulf-Iranian relations had a positive character, but after the advent of the Islamic Revolution that relationship changed especially after Iran announced its willingness to export the Islamic Revolution to all the Arab countries and Muslim world. In front of this danger, the Gulf States worked to organize themselves to establish the (GCC) in 1981 to unite their efforts against the threat of the Islamic Revolution and to organize their efforts to finance Iraq during its war with Iran in the eighties.

Through this entity, the Gulf States organize their economic, political and security ties, but they are mainly dependent on the presence of USA troops in the region. (Abdul Wahab, 2015). Hence the change in the USA position toward Iran came as a source of a new challenge at the international level.

The Gulf States considered the signing of the nuclear deal as a change on the USA policy toward Gulf States. Some Political analysts refer to that the reason for change in the USA position is the decline in interest in the Middle East, especially after the end of the cold war. Also because it does not want to engage directly in new conflicts in the Middle East, it prompted to look for a strategic ally, which contributes to the stability of the region.

The conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran mainly linked to gain more influence in the region. The Gulf States fear from the nuclear deal because maybe there are other files are included within that deal that maybe allow Iran to decide on the hot issues in the region, especially in Syria. (Cordesman, 2011)

In front of the big challenges facing the Gulf States, especially after the fall of state in Yemen which shares with Saudi Arabia and Oman border lines, the Gulf States decide to form the security coordination to stop the Iranian threat that come from Yemen. So they formed the coalition, which included all the Gulf States except Oman, also Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Senegal, and Sudan. (Albayan, 2015)

This coalition is the first of its kind in the Middle East since the end of the colonial period. The colonial impact continued on the independent States in the security side, while the states relied on itself in the security side did not interfere in the affairs of any other country. Especially, after what happened in Iraq after its intervention in Kuwait, because the US did not allow any political problems to threaten its interests in the region. So the formation of a military alliance is considered as big changes in the Middle East since the conflicts started in decades ago. The Gulf States through storm packets was trying to stop the Iranian threat in Yemen, so they can consider other issues in the region.

In spite of widespread international criticism of the storm packages in Yemen, because it caused a lot of losses human among Yemenis, the military alliance continued its operations in Yemen to halt extended of Houthis to other provinces. Earlier, the campaign leadership announced that the military operations in Yemen will take six months to achieve its initial goals through help the legitimate government to return to power. But after the end of the period which was announced previously, the campaign not been able to achieve its objectives effectively because of the conflict of decisions between the leaders of the alliance.

The Gulf States faced many challenges because of the conflict of decisions and that reflected on the battle on Yemen. Also the American-Iranian rapprochement comes to increasing the complexity of the scene in the Middle East.

Despite the reservations of some Gulf States toward nuclear deal, Iran took the initiative and called on Gulf States to strategic dialogue to decide on the hot issues. In front of the Iran's invitation varied positions of the Gulf States. While approved by Qatar, Kuwait, Oman. Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain expressed its reservations toward Iran's invitation due to fears from that invite dialogue will only be a new game by Iran to maintain its gains that achieved through the nuclear deal.

Currently, the Gulf States rely on the results that will achieve by the military campaign in Yemen because of that force may be the initial nucleus of the Arab army. Despite of that idea, it seems impossible to continue the military coalition due to the difference of strategic goals and alliances that combine the Gulf States themselves, the military coalition is considered as a good experience. However, it needs to develop its strategic plans to ensure that it will be effective to security entity in the region, especially after the change of the USA position toward the Middle East that shows, to the Gulf States that relaying on external forces is always useless.

The USA changed its position because of political needs as required, so the Gulf States understood that they should rely on their self-defense in the next period to protect themselves from any danger, including the danger of the strategic allies.

### **3.6 The New Middle East**

The Middle East is considered as the hottest region in the world as a result of armed conflicts since the end of the Ottoman Empire and the division of the Arab states in accordance with the Sykes-Picot agreement.

The conflicts in the region linked to foreign interventions that conflicts increased after the emergence of oil, so the balance of power and the balance of threat depend on the international relations in the region.

After the Cold War the Western camp was represented by the American and European relations, it controlled the region through keep their interests in the Gulf region that intervention affected significantly the relations between the Middle East states. Some of these states felt that the USA presence threatens its security while Gulf States considered that the USA presence is important to protect its security.

Since the end of colonialist period in the Middle East, there were several wars including the Gulf War. It was caused by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the Iraq war in 2003 after the USA invasion, Also the currently war in Syria and Yemen.

For decades, international relations in the region marked stability despite the presence of the dictatorship systems which created a lot of economic and political problems in the

Middle East states that allied with the USA. However, the USA did not interfere in these problems because they do not affect its interests directly. But after the political and security changes brought by the Arab Spring, the USA and other great powers like France, Russia, the United Kingdom and Germany are considered that it must interfere to stop those conflicts because it will be affect dramatically on their interests in the region. Especially, after form ISIS, it has become a danger not only to the Arab countries, but to international security. So the international relations try to solve those problems through several levels such as negotiations or support of the popular resistance or direct intervention in the war, as Russia did in Syria.

Internal conflict in Yemen is an integral part of the conflict scene in the Middle East. The political changes have occurred impacted heavily on the international relations in the region. because after the arrival of the Houthi Movement to power, it impacted on different levels.

At the local level, it caused the overthrow the state making the political situation in Yemen is very fragile, also it encouraged the territorial sectarian conflicts. The conflicts contributed to threaten the social peace in Yemen that created a negative impact on the stability of Yemen. Especially, after the rise of voices which is demanding the secession of south Yemen from the north. In addition, the destruction of the infrastructure after the campaign of coalition to stop the threats of the Houthi Movement.

Historically, one of the biggest problems facing Yemen is outside interference. The Houthi Movement caused the aggravation of this problem because it is considered as an extension of the Iranian project in the region. In spite of there was no evidence of the cooperation relations between Iran and the Houthi Movement, the results of conflict events indicate that there is coordination and advance cooperation which enabled the Houthi Movement to impose itself on the political scene in Yemen. From another side, the conflict in Yemen linked with many external parties that mean it will be so difficult to find a solution or stop the conflict because there is no proposed solution should be linked to the interests of the conflicting parties.

The influence of the Houthi Movement at the regional level linked to the political changes that followed the arrival of the Houthi Movement to power of late 2014, the Gulf States

is considered that as a direct threatened by Iran. Despite the GCC enables to stop the popular protests in Bahrain, it can not stop the effects of popular protests in Yemen because of the complexity of the Yemeni scene. (Chubin, 2012)

Also Iran benefited from political and security vacuum in Yemen to achieve new political gains in the region. Especially, after it turns out that the Iran's support of southern movement in Yemen. (Chubin, 2012)

One of the biggest influences caused by the Houthi Movement on the regional level is that formed the first Arab military alliance because the threat of the Houthi Movement increased after it seized the capital and went to Aden to the prosecution of the transitional president. So the transitional president asking for help and Saudi Arabia announced the start of a storm packets operation in cooperation with other Arab countries.

This step was considered as sudden and unexpected step because it is the first time for the Gulf States to interfere directly in the region conflicts especially after it did not interfere in Syria. This is the real point of contention between the Gulf States and Iran. While Iran accuse Gulf States to support extremist parties in Syria, Gulf States hostile Iran because its support for Bashar al-Assad. However, the situation in Yemen is different because Yemeni conflicts associated with the Gulf's security directly. Some political observers believe that the Arab coalition is worthwhile and its successful will not associated with the results that would accrue in the coalition operations in Yemen, but the extent of its ability to continue to form the nucleus of the first in a unified Arab army.

Many political reports indicate that Iran is the largest beneficiary of the conflicts in the Middle East. It was able to strengthen its international influence through its presence in the Iraqi, Afghan and Lebanese scene. It is trying to resolve the Syrian issue to its advantage, also through the changes that have occurred in Yemen. It was able to change the west position toward its interests too.

In addition, it was able to sign the nuclear agreement on 14 July 2015, so it was able to break its political isolation and international sanctions that were imposed on it. Perhaps the Houthi Movement did not affect directly on evolution of Iranian position, but the changes happened in Yemen played a big role to weaken the Saudi Arabia and the Gulf

States position. Also those changes played a big role to strengthen Iranian position in the region especially since the USA was looking for an effective alternative to contribute in the war of terrorism in Yemen.

At an international level, the Houthi Movement contributed to increase the risk of terrorist threat. They have contributed to the weakening of the security aspect in Yemen which allowed extremist groups to spread further, especially in the South.

Also as mentioned earlier, because of the many changes happened currently, such as a USA-Iranian rapprochement, the Middle East region will see major changes in the coming period, especially in the international relations side. But even if current international relations have changed, we will not witness the Middle East as relatively stable for several reasons. The most important reason is the external interference and the absence of the democratic state beside the absence of human rights in many Middle Eastern countries.



## **4. CONCLUSION**

In 2014 and 2015, there were many political and security changes that increased the challenges, that were facing the stability of the Middle East. Yemen that tried for three years not to fall into the internal conflict ended up falling into the sub-regional war over the control of the Houthi Movement, that was a direct threat to the Gulf by Iran after that it has increased its influence through its presence in Iraq, and through the great cooperation with Bashar in Syria. Also, the spreading of extremist groups in Yemen, and the emergence of ISIS contributed to increase security tensions in the region, as it has also increased the pressures that faces the international security in the Middle East.

In spite of international efforts to resolve existing conflicts by political solutions, however, the parties of conflict abroad support direct and indirect parties of conflict inside, whether in Syria or in Yemen, it played a great role in the failure of these political solutions.

This research is primarily focused on the changes that have occurred because of the Houthi Movement on three levels, local, regional and international level. These changes have been discussed with details in the previous chapters of the research. Also, through the next lines, the researcher is trying to explain the results of those changes during 2014 and 2015, and the extent of their impact on security and the stability of the Middle East.

### **4.1 The Future of the Houthi Movement in Yemen**

During the participation of the Houthi Movement in Yemeni revolution in 2011, this movement focused on the historical and political injustice. It also primarily adopted on public discontent from the political and economic situation in Yemen to fall down the transitional government, and because of that the Houthi Movement gained great popularity by various popular parties and some political parties. But because of its capsizing of the

political system and prevented the implementation of the outcomes of the National dialogue, the movement has become not trustworthy by various parties in Yemen.

Moreover, the Houthi Movement proceeded to drop out the transitional government by utilize the weakness of transitional government and the transitional president's performance. Then when it capsized on the peace and partnership agreement, which was co-developed, the Houthi Movement completely lost the trust of Yemeni community. As a result, when they stormed various prefectures, the Yemeni tribes felt the danger, then the internal conflict started in Yemen immediately.

In addition, the absence of the national army contributed on formation of the popular resistance, which consists members of citizens. Because the national army was loyal to former president, who used it in his alliance with the Houthi Movement; Yemen fell on a security and a political gap at the same time. (Fikir center for Studies, 2015)

According to the researches, the Houthi Movement mainly relied on external support, and the internal differences to impose itself on the Yemeni scene. It was not expected that the Houthi Movement can topple the Yemeni state because they did not possess weapons except the ones that were owned by Yemeni tribes. Also, the political analysts confirmed that Saudi Arabia earlier supported the Houthi Movement to hit the political Islam in Yemen. Moreover, the Houthi Movement got regional support from Iran, which is seeking to expand its influence, and they got the international support from the United States, which is trying to wipe out terrorism in Yemen. (Fikir center for Studies, 2015)

As a result of those political changes and security conditions, the Houthi Movement has been unexpectedly able to reach the power. In consequence of that the emergence of many economic, political and security challenges in Yemen. From the political aspect, the absence of Yemeni state causes a big security challenges, not only in expansion of extremist groups, but also in the disappearance of State causes the absence of the system that regulates the social, economic and other important areas that created stability.

After the Houthi Movement overturned the political system in Yemen, it lost its credibility as a movement that want to be involved in the construction of Yemen's political. So as to that, it should be noted that the Houthi Movement, through its participation in the national

dialogue, has been calling for the adoption of a new constitution that guarantees the participation of all the society to contribute in judgment, only that over the years, it became clear that their claims were only a way to gain the attention, and to earn the trust of Yemeni people. However, the Houthi Movement can not rely on the political side because they are not popular and they do not have a political experience.

Yemeni researcher Mohammad Aldagshi confirms that Abdul-Malik refused from the beginning to convert Believing youth into a political party. As well, the founder of the Houthi Movement, Hussein al-Huthi, was a member in the Right party, but he early withdrew from the political side. (Aldagshi, 2010)

The Houthi movement has created a negative impact on the economic, humanitarian and social aspect, but the worse impact is in the security aspect. As a result of the absence of the state, the provinces fell in the hands of al-Qaeda such as Abian and Hadramoot. In addition, the Separatist Movement has been active in southern Yemen, which truly threatens Yemen's security on the geopolitical level, and this may cause a real secession of South Yemen.

Currently, the southern regions face a real fight between the leaders of political parties in the south and the conflicts that occur among extremist groups. In this case, the separation will involve Yemen into a huge violence and political gap.

Politics and security are facing changes in Yemen, because of the Houthi Movement controls more provinces of Yemen, all of these events makes the Houthis as an essential part of political scene in Yemen forever.

Roman Blake believes that the current conflict in Yemen resemble to the previous conflict that happened after a revolution in 1962. In that revolution, a proxy war appeared between royalists, with the support of Saudi Arabia, and Republicans, with the support of Egypt, this war lasted for years and ended without any victory for both sides, then republican system appeared without stability due to foreign intervention. (Blecua,2015).

Due to these facts, the negative effects that are caused by the Houthi Movement will be significantly affected by its political presence in Yemen during the coming period. Around half of the century, Yemeni people have forgotten the negative effects of the Imami

system. After that, the Houthi Movement came to remind them the disadvantages of that system. There is no difference between Imami system in the past and the political system of the Houthi Movement now, thus even the republican system in Yemen did not show enough democracy, but it allowed Yemeni people to compare between the Republic system and the Imami system. This would be considered as a real challenge to the Zaidi community in Yemen, which tried to get rid of political isolation by its participation in the revolution, but it will return again to isolate after the effect of the Houthi Movement in credibility and confidence of the Zaidi sect in Yemen.

#### **4.2 International Relations in the Middle East after the Houthi Movement**

International relations are associated with several economic and security aspects, so it is difficult to change because of an internal struggle for Middle East countries. But over the last five years the Middle East has witnessed many political events that probably will affect the path of international relations in the coming decades. Furthermore, the Arab Spring overthrew political governments and helped new parties to access to the power, the Houthi Movement was one of those new parties that have gained access to power although it is not a political party.

In fact, the Houthi movement is more likely to be an extreme armed group because it is bearing the logo that is against the United States as Al-Qaeda in Yemen. In addition, they have weapons that threaten the stability and security of Yemen. However, the political and security conditions in Yemen played a major role in the creation of a regional and international consensus on dealing with Houthi Movement as an active political party in Yemen even after the state fall.

Since the end of the cold war, the regional conflict between the great powers did not stop, but it took other forms including conglomerates and international alliances. For decades, the United States took the lead and it was able to configure positive relations with most Middle Eastern countries. But, Russia's old rival did not stop its struggle for influence, it worked to form other alliances with other countries in the Middle East such as Iran, Syria, and South Yemen previously.

Currently, only Iran appears in the Yemeni scene which is trying to take advantage of the political weakness in most of the Arab countries to strengthen its influence in the region, and when the Houthi Movement came, it supported Iran's stance over.

Despite the fact that the influence of Iran in Yemen means that the absence influence of USA in Yemen, the history of USA -Iranian cooperation in the last few decades justify the reason why USA did not respond effectively to the political changes that are brought by the Houthi Movement in Yemen.

During 2014 and 2015, international relations have entered in Yemen a new stage that happened after admitting of the Convention on Peace and Partnership by various states, which paved the way for the Houthi Movement to overthrow the state. Then the Yemeni parties started political negotiations under the auspices of UN.

The internal conflict in Yemen continued and did not reach to any results for several reasons. The main reason is the lack of seriousness of the international parties to make a decision in Yemen as a result of the fear of the terrorism threat. Another reason is the regional intersection of interests in Yemen.

The Houthi movement also affected on international relations in the Middle East through the rapprochement between USA and Iran. The Houthi Movement is with no doubt the one who benefited from the presence and control of Iran in the conflict at the Middle East.

The coup of the Houthi movement in Yemen represented a direct threat to the Gulf States which suffer from internal and external threats. These threats lead them to establish the first military alliance that combines various Arab and Islamic countries, which is the first one of its kind since the end of colonialism period in the Middle East.

This military alliance might create many political and security changes in the region, especially after the coalition announced its intention to continue its military operations against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. It is worth to mention that the Arab League has not been enabled to create a genuine partnership among Arab countries because of the lack of consent among them in security cooperation, which could threaten their internal affairs. But the challenges that affect the region have prompted the various Arab countries and the

bloc's security militarily to defend themselves against foreign intervention, and against the threat of extremist groups.

Moreover, the international relations will differ in the Middle East after the emergence of the Houthi Movement for political changes, especially if the military alliance is enable to continue its operations and organize it to perform a security military. This is what will make it able to create stability in the region. The continuation of this coalition is linked to the agreement of the states to continue that after the war because stability might return political conflict to the surface again due to the differences in targets that will prevent the continuation of this coalition.

On the other hand, the USA-Iranian rapprochement would strengthen Iran's influence, especially after Iran was able to recover its money that had been taken as a punishment because of its nuclear program. If Iran was able to resolve the political situation in Syria or in Yemen, it would be the most influential force in the region, which will affect the international relations in the coming decades.

### **4.3 Conclusion and Recommendations**

According to the principles pf the realism theory the survival is the main object of all states in this chaotic system. To achieve this goal states should depend on power, so the power is the main principle to protect the state. Through this theory the scene of the international relation in the Middle East become clear.

In Yemeni scene the international community can reject the role of the Houthi movement and stop it, but the Houthi movement get power in Yemen so the international community deal with it as legal party in Yemen. Although the Houthi movement is not a legal party but the different international parties deal with it because its ideology and strategy goals are not presence as a real threat as some Sunni extreme groups such al-Qaida and ISIS.

The principles of realism theory also explain the position of regional and international parties toward Yemen. Realists assume that the state takes defensive or offensive position toward any threats. According to Mearsheimer the states are both defensive and

offensive oriented, so through these two principles the researcher can explain the position of regional parties toward Yemen.

There are two regional actors effect directly on Yemen scene, Saudi Arabia and Iran. the position of Saudi Arabia toward Yemen linked to defensive side, it took defensive step through the Storm packets process. By this step gulf states try to protect themselves from Iran. While the position of Iran toward Yemen linked to offensive side. Through this position Iran try to get more power to become strong actor in Middle East. Also it tries to reach hegemony which is the main reason that can maintain the security of the state according to the Mearsheimer.

The political situation fell out from the Middle East since the Arab Spring, and the security challenges has increased since the Syrian Revolution turned into a regional war against ISIS. In 2015, the Houthi Movement imposed the political and security challenges in the Middle East since it took the power in Yemen. In less than a year. Despite of the lack of political experience,

Houthi Movement was able to topple the state, also it was able to control the political side in Yemen.

From the other side, the Houthi Movement has withstood in front of the war waged by the coalition forces led by Saudi Arabia, and imposed itself on the regional and international scene by entering the political negotiations, even though it was an illegal party. All these political changes that have occurred because of the Houthi Movement confirm that the international relations in the coming period will face many changes imposed by the security conditions at the region.

The first chapter in this research includes theoretical background about the causes and the consequences of the emergence of the Houthi Movement, also it included theoretical background about international relations in the global system.

The second chapter discusses all matters related to that movement and the early conflicts with the state, as it also discusses the steps that have been taken by the Houthi Movement to bring down the state and to impose itself as a main actor in the political scene in Yemen.

The third chapter also discusses the causes of conflicts in the Middle East, the impact of the Houthi Movement on the Middle East, and the consequences of the political changes in the Middle East at the local, regional and international level.

Finally, the research included the conclusion and recommendations, which the researcher reached through her various studying sources that were discussing the issue of Yemen and the Houthi Movement from various angles.

Through the research's chapters, it is clear that the problem of the Houthi Movement is linked to three aspects. The social injustice worked to isolate the Houthi Movement politically and push it for cooperation with external parties to restore its rights in the government. To solve this problem, it should be an alert to this issue during the coming period which has been discussed in details through the Committees of the National Dialogue, which the Houthi Movement participated in, and proposed solutions that not to exclude any group or doctrine during the coming period.

In addition, the political vacuum has occurred because of poor previous administration system that worked to weaken the security and the political side. This caused the instability in Yemen during the previous period. Also, it created the internal conflict and this has been proved by actual results during the internal conflict in 2014 and 2015. Therefore, it should focus on security and political side, especially in the construction of the state during the coming period. To stop these problems, the transitional government should apply the new constitution that prevents the power to stick in one hands or one political party. Also, the constitution should promote the adoption of the principle of transparency and accountability that will undermine the spread of corruption, and work to solve the problems in Yemen.

The third aspect that has been blended with the Houthi problem is a foreign intervention. Despite the lack of the Houthi Movement legitimacy, the external intervention works on supporting it. Also, the foreign intervention supports the conflicts of interest at the regional and international level in Yemen.

In fact, the internal conflict returns to sub-regional conflicts due to enter the Gulf States in the Yemeni conflict. In spite of the adoption of the GCC specific targets to help the

legitimate government to restore its position in Yemen, the time of the period that announced by the coalition was expired. As it was determined six months for recover the legitimacy in Yemen and stop the expansion of the Houthi threat. Then nine months from 2015 passed without achieving those targets, even if it was managed to defeat the rebels from southern cities, it would not make a lot of progress in the central and northern regions because of the conflicting goals of the leaders of the same coalition as it fears from the Islamic Movement in Yemen.

During military operations that applied by coalition, it ignored the internal parties in Yemen and this delays the decisive stage. Thereby the Gulf States should adopt a clear strategy toward Yemen, so that it could cross the stage of internal conflicts and to be unable to return to the political stage.

Furthermore, External intervention is linked to the international side, which plays a big role in the continuation of the internal conflict in Yemen. Although a UN Security Council issued several resolutions on Yemen, but it did not impose a punishment for non-application. Also, it did not make a true effort on the Houthi Movement and Saleh by imposing compulsory international punishments.

This decision deals with the Yemeni file on a security aspect and that affects its dealings with the Houthi Movement, which is illegitimate. From here, international parties should reconsider its dealings towards Yemen to condemn the Houthi Movement as an armed militia that fell down the state by the force of the arms, not as a political party.

Finally, this study concludes recommendation to the various local, regional and international parties that should cooperate in order to force the Houthi Movement for the implementation of resolution 2216, which is obliged to hand over weapons, and withdraw the land that taken from the state by force. So that the transitional government will be able to return to Yemen and resume political action to apply National Dialogue output, which is a perfect solution to the problem of political weakness and instability in Yemen.

The National Dialogue took a long period; extended from 18 March 2013, to 25 January 2014, which was supervised by the international and regional parties. Also, different

sectarian communities, different groups in society represented women and young people and political parties participated on it.

The number of its recommendations is 1800 in the various political, social and economic fields. As it was used to rewrite the Yemeni constitution which was on the way to implement, but it stopped for the coup by the Houthi Movement. Therefore, it should adopt real strategies to adhere the Houthi Movement and Saleh to stop the war, so that Yemen will be able to apply the output of the National Dialogue and the resumption of construction a new state.





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## **RESUME**

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## **EDUCATION**

2010/2011      Bachelor degree of Media and Communication Faculty, Sanaa University, Yemen.

2015/2016      Master in International Relations and Political Science Program,  
Social Department of International Relations and Political Science,  
Institute of Social Science, Aydin University, Turkey.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

2013 – 2015      *Coordinator*, Training Unit, **Women Journalists Without Chains (WJWC)**

2015 – Now      *Manager*, Research Unit, **Gulf Woman Forum (GWF)**

2014 – Now      *Researcher*, publish different Policy Memos and Research Papers in Various Arabic Journals and Websites, which shown as below;  
- “*The International Parties in Yemen*”, (2014).

- **Hour News (2015).** Title: “*Does the Yemen Transitional Government is Part from Solution or Part from the Problem?*”, viewed in: [02<sup>nd</sup> of April, 2016], available in: [<http://m.hour-news.co/news-56442.htm>]
- **EIPSS (2016).** Title: “*Why the Coup Failure in Turkey and Succeeded in Yemen?*”, Egyptian Institute for Political and Strategic Studies, viewed in: [22<sup>nd</sup> of August, 2016], available in: [[www.eipss-eg.org/البيـن/2ـ018/0ـ2ـلـمـاـذاـفـشـلـفـيـتـركـياـوـنـجـحـفـيـالـانـقلـابـ/](http://www.eipss-eg.org/البيـن/2ـ018/0ـ2ـلـمـاـذاـفـشـلـفـيـتـركـياـوـنـجـحـفـيـالـانـقلـابـ/)]

## TRAINING PROGRAMS

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| March, 2010   | Writing report, <b>Women Journalists Without Chains (WJWC)</b> .        |
| April, 2012   | The concepts of transitional justice, <b>WJWC</b> .                     |
| January, 2013 | Make documentary Film, <b>WJWC</b> .                                    |
| May, 2015     | The research methods, Yemeni Students Union, <b>Sana'a University</b> . |

## SKILLS

### **Languages:**

- Written: Arabic and English.
- Spoken: Arabic, English, French, and Turkish