
The Iranian Interference and Its Implications on Security of Yemen and Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT *The paper discusses the Iranian interference and its implications on Security of Yemen and Saudi Arabia. This research paper attempts to shed light on the reality of the local and regional conflict in Yemen, and its impact on Yemeni civil peace and regional security such Saudi Arabia. It also reveals the real goals of the regional states participating in this conflict, whether directly or indirectly. In addition, the paper presents the means and methods used by the regional powers to extend their hegemony over Yemen, and among those methods are feeding the conflict between the components of Yemeni society by supporting the parties to the conflict. The study also shows how violence has become the only means for some regional countries to achieve their strategic, economic and ideological goals, and it reveals the negative role of Yemeni elites and forces, and how these elites helped regional powers to control the country's economic imitators and others.*

KEYWORDS: security, conflict, intervention, Iranian interference, Yemen, Saudi Arabia

INTRODUCTION

The many homelands, tribes and clans, are less likely to be established by a state, and the reason for that is the difference of opinions and whims, and behind every opinion and fanatic passion is reluctance. Because every sectarianism under its control thinks of itself as strength and strength[1]. This Khaldunian theory applies to Yemeni society, as it is a conservative, traditional tribal society, and fanaticism spreads in it, which is what made this Arab country live in a conflict that lasted for centuries. Conflicts, whether those that were erupting between the Zayd imams themselves in northern Yemen for power, or between the Imamate and the Ottoman Caliphate - Yemeni civil peace and the societal fabric of destruction. The Houthi rebellion led to the internationalization of the Yemeni issue, and this allowed some international and regional parties to directly interfere in Yemeni affairs. "These countries have interfered in the affairs of Yemen, each according to its approach and objectives, weakening the existing Yemeni unity and creating the appropriate environment for all forces hostile to unity and the republican system [2]. Sociologist Louis Koser asserts that conflict is "a competition for values, power and resources, in which the goal between competitors is to neutralize, liquidate, or harm their opponents [3].

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It has become clear from the battles in Yemen that there are international parties that settle their calculations directly and indirectly. For example, Saudi Arabia wants to settle its calculations with Iran in Yemen, and Iran wants to retaliate against Saudi Arabia by supporting the Houthi insurgency, especially since there are sectarian and ideological relations between the Houthi movement and the Iranian regime, which has put both sides in the same ditch to confront Saudi Arabia ideologically, militarily, and politically. Etcetera. The regional and international conflict has become clear, and the territory of the Republic of Yemen has been clear, but some Arab researchers have stressed that the conflict in Yemen is not only between regional and international powers, but "there are roots of the Yemeni internal conflict, embodied in the structure of the social system based on the tribal dimension, the reflection of this structure in the political and security situation in Yemen, in addition to the problem of unity that was carried out on a forced basis using military force. The tribal conflict is therefore likely to continue, and the roots of the north-south political, economic and social conflict will remain[4]. Thus, when a traditional tribal, conservative and poor country engages in internal conflicts and civil wars, it becomes vulnerable to regional and international interventions, where international powers with colonial ambitions use conflicting internal forces, supporting each other against each other, to pass their own projects, as is now the case in Yemen. Some parties to the armed conflict in Yemen have become mere tools in the hands of the countries of the region, although the Houthi coup group is the cause of what the Yemeni people have reached today, but no one denies that Iran fighting in Yemen with Yemeni tools[4].

Iran has played and still plays a pivotal and influential role in the regional balance of power in the Middle East and the Arab region. Iran is one of the main regional actors and drivers of political and security interactions in the Arab region and the Middle East; Given its military and political capabilities that enable it to interfere and influence the paths, contexts and developments of the main pivotal issues in the region, this study aims to analyse and study Iran's regional policies in the Middle East and the Arab region, and the implications of Iranian foreign policy on The security of the Middle East region, and the Arab regional order, especially with regard to the pivotal issues that affect the balances of regional powers in the region, including the crises in Syria, Yemen and Iraq[5].

The external parties to the conflict Yemeni war

Persian State of Iran: This country has sectarian and economic ambitions in Yemen, and the Arabian Peninsula in general since ancient times, not because it is the product of the moment as some analysts promote, where Iran wants to control international shipping lines, and stifle Saudi Arabia on its southern border, by supporting the Houthi coup group. This regional party is clearly the true supporter of the Houthi militias and is their partner in the crimes committed by the Houthi group against the Yemenis. Iran also has strategic ambitions and objectives in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea[6]. Iran wants to implement its expansionist plan in the region, even at the expense of the innocent, and it wants to control Mecca and Medina, and currently encircles the Arabian Peninsula on three sides, on the east side Oman and Bahrain; The majority of

Bahrain's population is Shiite, and they not only pose a threat to the Bahraini regime, but also pose a serious threat to the Saudi regime, and Saudi Arabia understands this. When demonstrations against the Al Khalifa regime took place in Bahrain, "the Saudis sent military forces to Bahrain. The number of Saudi troops coming to the island is said to be 1,000, in addition to about 150 vehicles, including light armoured vehicles (rolled) with heavy machine guns loaded on their roofs.

There are also Shiite organizations in the oil-rich eastern regions of Saudi Arabia that owe allegiance to Iran, but do not owe allegiance to the Saudi regime. Iran is exploiting the sectarian dispute in the region in order to expand and extend its influence through these proxies. As for the Iraqi militias, they are stationed on the borders of the northern Arabian Peninsula, and are waiting for the signal to invade Saudi Arabia, and the Houthi militias in the south of the Arabian Peninsula are waging a fierce war with the Saudi regime until the time of writing this research. So, Iran's goals in Yemen are clear and do not need explanations from here and there, and it is working to implement these goals regardless of the results, and it will continue if it is not deterred by various legal and defensive means at the same time[7].

The impact of the regional conflict in Yemen on the Yemeni civil peace

The Houthi project seeks to consolidate its rule in the northern highlands of northern Yemen, as these areas were a historical stronghold of the Imami movement and some Zaidi Imami families claiming their historical right to rule in some of these rugged heights continued to rule for intermittent periods over the past centuries. It is clear that the ongoing conflict has torn Yemen's national cohesion, spread abhorrent racism, fuelled sectarian conflict, and sectarian conflict alarmingly, and it is difficult to overcome these dilemmas over the next few years. This conflict has also helped to bring about sectarian armed and (moderate) violence groups, and several groups have surfaced after the Iranian-backed Houthi coup [6]. These armed groups will not yield to any peaceful dialogue, nor will they accept coexistence, because violence is part of their ideology, as well as driven by radical traditional leaders who do not know modern values, such as the right of others to expression, freedom of worship, belonging, etc. The ongoing conflict has also shown new traditional entities operating outside the collective will of the Yemeni people, seeking to divide Yemen into small and rival cantons. These entities believe it is in their interest for Yemen to remain divided along regional, regional, and sectarian lines.

The leading role of Saudi Arabia in achieving peace in Yemen and confronting the Iranian project

The Middle East is at a very critical stage, with multiple regional issues in crisis. Yemen is the most present and crisis in most stages, interactions and complexities of the world and the region, as Yemen has been transformed into an area of Iranian interventions as a result of many geopolitical factors, foremost among them its strategic position on the international navigation route in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait, as well as the fragility of the political situation and the conflict that has been going on for at least a decade. All this has opened Yemen's door wide to various agendas and projects, in the absence of a growing state following the Houthi coup in September 2014, which was the result of a long history of hidden Iranian support for the rebel group's project[6]. Regional and

international concerns in Yemen highlight wide differences in the positions and way states that have expressed interest in the course of the Yemeni scene and its interactions are treated, either from trying to exploit the country's situation, contradictions and crises, or out of concern for the security and stability of the country. While Iran is destabilizing and dominating the security and stability of Yemen and the Arab region and turning Yemen into a link in its series of hardliner conflicts with the international community against the backdrop of the conflict over its nuclear program, Iran has become, since the Khomeini regime came to power, a state hostile to almost all Arab countries, in addition to the threat it poses to international peace and security, by relying on a range of extremist slogans and ideas, supporting groups and terrorist acts, and causing wars with some neighbouring countries. And ignite sectarian strife in other countries [8].

Unlike Iran, Saudi Arabia plays a pivotal role in preventing deterioration and crisis in the Arab region and achieving international security and stability, by putting forward initiatives or participating in relevant international conferences and investing its strong political and economic relations with major powers, and its impact on the regional and international system, to push for solutions to outstanding crises and issues in the Arab region and beyond, which It has become the scene of extremism and terrorism, fuelled by external interventions in Arab affairs. Saudi leadership's role in resolving regional and international conflicts continues at all Arab, Islamic and international levels. This role comes from the need to achieve security and stability in the Middle East, as clearly demonstrated by Vision 2030, which included in part strengthening the Kingdom's regional and global position, and advancing the process of cooperation between the GCC countries by launching a range of strategic partnerships and achieving Saudi interests [8] at the regional and international levels. This article highlights Saudi Arabia's political, diplomatic and humanitarian efforts to achieve Yemen's peace, the security of the Arab region, the elimination of the Iranian terrorist project and its destructive Houthi performance, and answers the following question: Where does the Yemeni scene go under the intransigence of the Houthis and its supporters in Iran on the one hand and on the other hand, the peace efforts made by Saudi Arabia during more than seven years of war? Open since March 2015, which has ravaged happy Yemen and left destruction and suffering as it struggles for survival and life? [9].

There is no doubt that Yemen and Saudi Arabia are countries with fraternal relations in religion, Arabism, geography, strategy and common interests. The kingdom's leading role in supporting Yemen in the face of the Iranian-backed Houthi militia is to maintain security, peace and regional stability, and to protect global interests in this vital strategic region. In this context, Saudi Arabia's tools varied in dealing with the Yemeni crisis according to the existing data, where the Saudi role was characterized by flexibility and comprehensiveness, as Saudi Arabia in 2015 led the Arab alliance in Yemen with some Arab countries in response to the call of the Yemeni people and the legitimate president in military intervention through the conduct of the coalition states operation "Storm of Firmness", as soon as the Saudi leadership realized the seriousness of this brain. The Yemeni people and neighbouring countries were quick to take the historic decision to stand firm against the Iranian project in Yemen, defeat the aggressors and those who are greedy to reach the Arabian Peninsula through their Houthi agents and endanger their political and regional security. Hence the statesmanship and insightful view of the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, his Crown Prince Al-Amin and his good government in dealing with this growing threat, which is required by

the position to defend the Yemeni people, ensure the security of the Saudi border and distance the security of the Gulf from what looks like the images of Iran's military and political presence and expansion in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, and the resulting political crises, sectarian civil wars and humanitarian disasters that have tarnished the body of the Arab nation and distracted its attention from its Arab issues and scientific and economic renaissance[11].

The kingdom has played a leading role in the military, humanitarian and development aspects of Yemen, and on the military side the kingdom took responsibility for leading ground and air military operations against the coup militia, and simultaneously the army and security establishment destroyed by the coup was rebuilt, and the coalition was able to liberate about 90% of Yemen. The kingdom is also countering ballistic missiles and repeated attacks by the Iranian Houthi militia towards Saudi cities. On the humanitarian front, the Kingdom affirms its leading role in the humanitarian field in all its forms to cover humanitarian needs, support the Yemeni economy and mitigate the effects of the war, where it participated and invited donor conferences for Yemen, and the Kingdom is the first donor country to Yemen historically and even in the exceptional circumstances facing the world due to the Corona pandemic, the Kingdom has initiated \$500 million to support the Humanitarian response to Yemen in 2020, and the plan to confront the Coronavirus, and even aid since the beginning of the crisis exceeded US\$18 billion, including the implementation of more than 453 projects by the King Salman Centre for Relief and Humanitarian Work, as well as reconstruction assistance and assistance to Yemenis inside the Kingdom, bilateral government assistance, a US\$3 billion deposit to support the local currency and the Yemeni economy, the provision of \$60 million a month in oil derivatives to operate power plants, and the Masam project to clear Yemeni territory of Houthi landmines and live ammunition[11].

Saudi Arabia, along with most of the Arab Gulf states, has been working to push the country out of the circle of internal conflict through mediation initiatives that began with the 2011 Gulf Initiative, the 2019 Riyadh Agreement, then the Saudi Initiative 2021, and the most recent of which was the 2022 Yemeni consultations that were held in Riyadh from March 29 to April 7 2022 under the auspices of the United Nations and with the support of the Gulf Cooperation Council, in a discussion of the current conditions and challenges in Yemen and proposing solutions and implementation mechanisms in six axes, including politics, economy, security and combating terrorism [24], in addition to social and media axes. It should be noted that the announcement of the consultations was accompanied by bombing and Houthi attacks that reached southern Saudi Arabia and reached Jeddah, targeting oil installations, energy sources, water desalination plants, electricity and gas stations, in the extremely sensitive circumstances witnessed by the world and witnessed by global energy markets and in flagrant violation of international norms and laws and Security Council resolutions 2216 and 2624. Which for the first time classified the Houthi militia as a "terrorist group" and included it as an entity on Yemen's sanctions list under the arms embargo [12].

Regional security consequences of the Iranian interference in Yemen

Iran views national security as a zero-sum game, believing that it must undermine the security of some regional neighbors or the regional security system as a whole in order to protect its own national security, thereby circumventing legitimate and institutionalized means of collaboration and regular political relationships between nations. Iran's reliance on non-state actors to advance its

objectives by helping organizations like as Ansarullah and the Houthis exacerbated tensions and widened differences. Thus, it is not surprising that the Iranian position affects regional security by upsetting the balance of power, eroding the social and political systems of surrounding nations, endangering international sea lanes, and leading to the emergence of terrorism [14].

Influence on the Regional Power Balance

The notion of balance of power refers to a condition of security or parity in terms of the total military, political, and economic capabilities of a group of nations unified under a common framework. To keep an equilibrium of power, a state must limit its autonomous or unilateral pursuit of greater power at the cost of other states; such a pursuit will inevitably cause tensions and disturb the equilibrium. From this perspective, it is conceivable to foresee the detrimental impact of Iran's direct or indirect involvement in Yemen on the regional balance of power. Iran aspires to extend its strength and influence at the expense of other countries in the region through its aggressive agenda in Yemen to the degree that it can coerce these nations into accepting its control. This is accomplished by deepening its relationship with the Houthis and militarily backing them, so enhancing Iran's and its allies' capacity to undertake asymmetric conflicts, terrorist actions against neighbouring nations, and endanger navigation through the Strait of Bab Mandab. Instead of a balance of power, a balance of fear will arise, which is damaging to the security of the region [16].

In addition to that, Iranian approaches and activities in Yemen are intended to destabilise the balance of power in the region in two ways: first, by colonising Yemen, with its essential strategic position and relatively large population, to Iran, if these interventions and activities succeed in empowering the Houthis and bringing them to power, as in Iraq, where forces close to Iran hijacked the political process; and second, by annexing Yemen, with its important strategic location and relatively large population, to Saudi Arabia. Iran's influence extends not only to the crucial region of the Gulf States, but also to other geographical and strategic neighbours of the Horn of Africa, since Yemen serves as a gateway to this region via the Arabian Peninsula. Removing Yemen from the regional balance of power would be detrimental (as in the case of Syria)[15]. This might occur in the event of continuing Iranian meddling, which could extend the crisis in Yemen by intensifying the Houthis' military backing, causing the Gulf Arab States to lose their vital strategic depth and turning it into a source of risk and threat to these nations. This is in Iran's best interest, as any losses imposed on the Gulf Arab states represent gains for the Iranian side in the regional balance of power [23]. Furthermore, the resumption of Iranian interventions in Yemen would indirectly harm the regional balance of power. This would occur because it would increase and consolidate the reliance of the countries in the region on international and regional external parties in order to establish a of power. These parties include the United States of America, Britain, France, and Turkey in particular. This has a negative impact on the efforts that the countries in the region are making toward regional integration, or it causes these efforts to be postponed, and it also contributes to maintaining a balance in the region that is dependent on the calculations and agreements that these external parties make with Iran [16].

The Effect on the Continuity of Social and Political Institutions in Yemen's Neighbouring Countries

The role that Iran plays in the Yemeni arena may have an indirect impact on the security of the social and political systems in the countries that are near Yemen. It is possible that this may occur as a

result of the so-called phenomena of proliferation or simulation (domino), in which the internal conflict in Yemen would spread to other nations, either within the same geographical area or outside of it. If Iran's interventions and activities empower the Houthis, a relatively limited minority, to consolidate their dominance or to strengthen their position in the political process in Yemen beyond their size as a minority, then the impact may extend to countries in which Shiite factions are large, such as Bahrain and Kuwait. For example, if the Houthis are able to consolidate their dominance or strengthen their position in the political process in Yemen beyond their size as a minority, then Iran will have succeeded in achieving its goal. The instigation of certain Shiite players to sow discord and discord, with the intention of reshaping the social and political balances in their favour, may be one way in which this outcome may be achieved[17]. Iran, in its quest to expand its sphere of influence, unsurprisingly promotes and supports activities along these lines. One of the most crucial signs is the sporadic demonstrations and tensions in Bahrain, which Iran's political and media supporters are helping to stoke. Along with this, what are occasionally shown to be terrorist groups linked to Iran in various nations of the region, such as the "Abdali cell," which was detained in Kuwait in August of 2015, are also a part of the problem. It was found guilty of conspiring to commit actions against the unity and territorial integrity of Kuwait, as well as communicating with Iran and Hezbollah, both of which are terrorist organisations[18].

The Effect on the Security of International Maritime Routes

Interference by Iran in Yemen presents a significant risk to the safety of shipping waterways that connect countries across the world. The Houthi and Saleh militias have been able to target several vessels that are operating in the Strait of Bab Mandab and the Gulf of Aden because of the Iranian military backing that has been provided to these militants. Iran has dispatched warships to the Gulf of Aden on the pretext of combating piracy, and some Iranian officials have stated that Iran intends to create a marine base in Yemen. This declaration was made in light of the fact that Iran has sent warships to the Gulf of Aden[21]. All of these factors point to the possibility that the conflict in Yemen might escalate into a full-scale war across the area, which would make it difficult to travel via the Bab Mandab Strait, the Gulf of Aden, and the Red Sea. Because of this, oil and commercial markets all over the world might be harmed, which would have a domino effect on the interests of Gulf states.

At October 2016, Houthi-Saleh missile assaults on one of the UAE's supply ships and on the Mason US destroyer in the Straits of Bab Mandab constituted a severe threat to foreign fleets operating in the Gulf of Aden and Bab Mandab. This threat was posed by Iran and its allies [19]. The capacity of the United States Navy to operate freely at one of the most critical maritime crossing points in the world is being put to the test as a result of this situation. The United States has retaliated by launching some air strikes on Houthi military positions on the Yemeni coast. This is an evidence that the conflict in the region due to the growing military activities of Iran and its allies in the shipping lanes could warp into a comprehensive and complex regional war, which could threaten safe navigation in the Strait of Bab Mandab and the Gulf of Aden. The conflict in the region is due to the growing military efforts of Iran and its allied forces in the shipping lanes [20].

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