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Houthi and Resistance against USA Dominance in the Middle East

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ABSTRACT

The crisis in Yemen has transformed into a conflict resulting in numerous casualties, damages, violence, and chaos. According to the Al-Houthi group, this crisis stems from President Ali Abdullah Saleh's corrupt practices, which have inflicted suffering on many citizens. According to a report by the Expert Panel of the World Body, President Ali Abdullah Saleh has been engaged in corruption from 1978 to 2012. Additionally, interventions from the United States have raised suspicions of hidden agendas in this conflict. From a geopolitical standpoint, this conflict holds strategic importance for the interests of the United States, leading to prolonged conflict and hindering the attainment of resolution. This research aims to analyze the conflict and resistance of the Houthi group against the interests of the United States in Yemen using qualitative methods based on secondary data

Keyword: Houthi group, yaman, resistance against USA

ABSTRAK

Krisis di Yaman telah berubah menjadi konflik yang menyebabkan banyak korban, kerusakan, kekerasan, dan kekacauan. Krisis tersebut menurut kelompok Al-Houthi dikarenakan presiden Ali Abdullah Saleh melakukan tindak korupsi yang menyengsarakan banyak rakyat. Menurut laporan Panel Ahli badan Dunia, presiden Ali Abdullah Saleh telah melakukan korupsi sejak tahun 1978 sampai tahun 2012. Selain itu, intervensi dari Amerika Serikat telah menimbulkan kecurigaan tentang adanya agenda tersembunyi dalam konflik ini. Dari sudut pandang geopolitik, konflik ini memiliki strategis bagi kepentingan negara Amerika Serikat, yang menyebabkan konflik berlarut-larut dan menghambat tercapainya resolusi dalam konflik ini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konflik dan perlawanan kelompok Houthi terhadap kepentingan Amerika Serikat di Yama dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif berdasarkan data-data sekunder.

Keyword: kelompok Houthi, yaman, perlawan terhadap dominasi AS

INTRODUCTION

The war in Yemen commenced in 2011 amidst a wave of mass protests by the Yemeni people demanding the resignation of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had been in power for 33 years and was deemed to have held onto power for too long. These protests resulted in numerous casualties among civilians, including children and the elderly. In February 2012, President Ali Abdullah Saleh officially stepped down from his position, and Vice President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi assumed the presidency of Yemen. During the same year, Yemen's Minister of Defense, Muhammad Nassir Ahmad, survived a bombing attack in Sanaa that claimed the lives of 11 individuals, including the leader of Al-Qaeda in the Sanaa region, Said Al-Shihri. In November 2012, a Saudi Arabian diplomat was fatally shot in Sanaa.

From a global perspective, numerous conflicts are ongoing worldwide, spanning from individual to international levels. Certain regions, such as the Middle East, are particularly susceptible to conflict and serve as primary centers for such disputes, involving countries ranging from the wealthiest to the poorest in the world. The extraction of oil plays a crucial role in the economic growth and development of the Middle East. The valuable resources in the region make it a target for exploitation by political actors and international markets. The lack of economic and political progress has led to dissatisfaction and frustration among the populace.

Current conflicts in the Middle East include those in Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey, and Iraq (Cederman and Pengl, ETH Zurich, 2019). One ongoing conflict in the region is in Yemen, where the Saudi-led coalition intervention has resulted in the deaths and injuries of thousands of civilians, violating the laws of war, humanitarian law, and human rights law, with the use of ammunition supplied by international actors, including the United States. Between 2015 and 2019, direct casualties in Yemen have surpassed 17,500, according to the Yemen Data Project (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

The Houthi group, based in Yemen, has long advocated for autonomy and justice for their Shia community. They oppose American dominance in the Middle East, seeing it as detrimental interference to local and regional interests. The Houthi resistance is also fueled by U.S. foreign policies supporting authoritarian regimes in the region, often oppressing minorities and causing instability. Houthi also opposes U.S. military intervention in Yemen, which has led to suffering for the Yemeni people through prolonged armed conflict. Amidst the shifting political dynamics and conflicts plaguing the Middle East, the Houthi resistance in Yemen has emerged as a central force against regional and global domination, particularly represented by the United States and its allies. A profound understanding of the origins, developments, and implications of this Houthi resistance is crucial in unraveling the geopolitical complexities in the region.

Since its inception in the early 1990s by Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, the Houthi movement has emerged as an opposition force to the U.S.-backed Yemeni regime. The group originates from the Zaidi Shia community in northern Yemen, feeling neglected and marginalized by the Sunni-dominated government. The Houthi resistance against American dominance in the Middle East is not a singular issue but part of broader discontent with U.S. foreign policies in the region. Policies of military intervention, support for authoritarian regimes, and overlooking human rights violations have incited anger across the Middle East.

The pinnacle of Houthi resistance against American dominance occurs within the context of the conflict in Yemen. The Saudi military intervention supported by America to uphold the legitimate Yemeni government has sparked a prolonged war. The Houthis, accused of receiving support from Iran, view this intervention as an attempt to crush their resistance and bolster American influence in the region. The Houthi resistance against American dominance also represents an ideological struggle among regional powers in the Middle East. Strong support from Iran, coupled with defense of Shia minority rights, has made Houthi a symbol of resistance against Sunni hegemony in the region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The article authored by Alvis Rahma Basuki (2019) analyzes the civil war in Yemen, a conflict in which other countries exploit the intra-state conflict in Yemen to pursue their respective geopolitical interests through direct or indirect military intervention, ultimately plunging Yemen into a state of proxy war. Subsequent research conducted by Khairunnas (2018) examines the Houthi Movement in Yemen from 1990 to 2017. In this study, Khairunnas endeavors to analyze the Houthi Movement as a socio-political movement that seeks to criticize the Yemeni government, which it perceives as having engaged in corrupt practices.

METHOD

Research on the Houthi Movement in Yemen involves a meticulous and detailed series of methodologies to understand various aspects of the movement. Below is a description of how research on the Houthi Movement in Yemen can be conducted:

1. **Historical Studies:** Research begins with an analysis of the historical background of the Houthi Movement, including its origins, development, and significant changes in ideology and objectives over time. This involves tracing historical documents such as news reports, speeches by Houthi leaders, and other publications.
2. **Socio-Political Analysis:** Involves in-depth study of the social and political dynamics in Yemen, including social structure, political power, and power dynamics influencing the Houthi Movement. This includes interviews with movement members, field observations, and analysis of relevant policies.
3. **Field Research:** Gathering data directly from the field through interviews, surveys, or observations to understand the views, motivations, and goals of Houthi Movement members and their impact on Yemeni society.
4. **Ideological Analysis:** Examining the ideological narratives and rhetoric used by the Houthi Movement to pursue their goals. This involves analyzing key texts such as manifestos, speeches, and official writings of the movement.
5. **Comparative Studies:** Comparing the Houthi Movement with similar movements in Yemen or other countries to evaluate differences and similarities in strategies, tactics, and impacts.
6. **International Relations Analysis:** Examining the relationship of the Houthi Movement with international actors, especially Iran and Saudi Arabia, and its impact on regional geopolitics. This involves analyzing foreign policies, arms trade, and international diplomacy.

7. Humanitarian Impact Evaluation: Studying the humanitarian impact of conflicts related to the Houthi Movement on civilians, including casualties, refugees, and other humanitarian crises. This involves analyzing death data, displacement, and humanitarian needs.

8. Media and Propaganda Analysis: Examining the role of mass media and propaganda in shaping public opinion about the Houthi Movement, both within Yemen and internationally. This involves analyzing media content, news trends, and presented narratives.

By employing this multi-method approach, research on the Houthi Movement in Yemen can provide a deep understanding of the characteristics, dynamics, and impact of the movement on Yemen and its surrounding regions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The history of the Houthi movement in Yemen can be traced back to the early 1990s. The movement originated from the Zaidi Shia community in northern Yemen, which felt marginalized and discriminated against by the Sunni-dominated government. Led by Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, the movement initially emerged as a response to perceived socio-economic and political injustices faced by the Zaidi Shia population.

The grievances of the Houthi movement intensified over the years, particularly in the early 2000s, as they began to demand greater autonomy and representation for their community. The movement criticized the government for neglecting the needs of the northern regions of Yemen and for its close ties to foreign powers, particularly Saudi Arabia and the United States.

In 2004, tensions between the Houthi rebels and the Yemeni government escalated into armed conflict, marking the beginning of a series of intermittent clashes and periods of relative calm. The conflict gained international attention, with neighboring countries and regional powers taking sides and providing support to various factions involved.

Over time, the Houthi movement evolved both ideologically and militarily, expanding its influence and control over territories in northern Yemen. Despite facing military offensives by the Yemeni government and its allies, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the Houthis have managed to maintain their stronghold in parts of the country, including the capital city of Sanaa.

The history of the Houthi movement is complex and intertwined with broader regional dynamics, including sectarian tensions, geopolitical rivalries, and the legacy of colonialism. The movement continues to play a significant role in Yemeni politics and the ongoing conflict in the country.

The origins of this conflict can be traced back to 2003, when the Houthi group began demanding that the Yemeni government address issues of poverty and corruption. The conflict stemmed from the series of events known as the Arab Spring, which started in Tunisia and spread across the Maghreb and the Middle East, highlighting the actors involved in the conflict in Yemen. By 2014, tensions escalated between the Yemeni government and the Houthi Group, leading to heated battles on the outskirts of the capital, Sanaa. Rebel forces bombarded Sanaa with mortar attacks, causing severe damage to several buildings (Laraswati, 2019).

The United States has strategic interests in the Middle East, including Yemen, due to the region's security and stability being crucial for US national interests. The US also has economic and political interests in the Middle East, including Yemen, because of strategic access to oil in the Gulf, supporting and maintaining Israel's sovereignty, protecting US military bases, and countering Islamic movements and terrorist groups. However, US policy towards Yemen has undergone several changes. In 2021, the US withdrew its support for Saudi Arabia in the Yemeni War due to concerns that it was exacerbating the situation and causing the deaths of thousands of civilians. Instead, the US aimed to help resolve the conflict through diplomacy. This policy shift faced some opposition and had negative repercussions, such as the increased aggression of the Houthi movement, evidenced by their attack on Marib City following Biden's decision. The conflict between the Houthis and the United States in the Middle East can be seen as part of a broader conflict in the region, which is related to security and stability, as well as economic and political interests. This conflict is also linked to the differential treatment of the government towards Shia Yemenis and Sunni communities aligned with the Yemeni government, as well as the active presence of the Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) group, which is in conflict with the Yemeni government.

Factors driving the Houthis to resist US dominance include poverty and discrimination, Saudi Arabia's political hegemony and dominance, involvement in the Red Sea conflict with the US and UK, US national interests encompassing defense, economic, global order, and ideological concerns. The support of Iran impacts Houthi resistance against the Hadi government, aiming to bolster Iran's influence in the Middle East. Additionally, US defense interests in the Yemen conflict involve limiting Iran's influence in the region and curbing Iran's ambitions for nuclear military technology and long-range missile capabilities.

Moreover, the US seeks to control Yemen's natural resources for economic gain and aims to demonstrate its global political power, striving to achieve its slogan of "gold, gospel, and glory," symbolizing material pursuit, ideological dissemination, and attaining supremacy. Ideological conflicts are evident in both foreign and domestic spheres, with the Indonesian community viewing all Middle Eastern conflicts as media wars, each representing the ideologies they uphold. Proxy wars, exemplified by the Houthi movement in northern Yemen, reflect a democratization wave in the Middle East, with the Houthi group feeling marginalized and discriminated against in their Zaidi community.

CONCLUSION

This article highlights the significant role of the Houthis in resisting US dominance in the Middle East. By rejecting US and allied intervention, the Houthis have emerged as a significant force challenging global hegemony in the region. While the US maintains control over certain political and military aspects in the Middle East, the Houthi resistance underscores that regional powers are capable of challenging global forces. However, achieving long-term stability requires all parties to engage in inclusive dialogue and seek peaceful solutions that consider the interests of all stakeholders. By understanding the complexity of political, social, and economic dynamics in the Middle East, international actors can play a more effective role in fostering peace and stability in the region.

Researchers outline the vital role of the Houthis in resisting US dominance in the Middle East. By rejecting US and allied intervention, the Houthis have become a key player in regional political dynamics. Although the US remains a dominant player, the Houthi resistance demonstrates that regional powers can confront global forces. However, a long-term solution for stability in the Middle East necessitates inclusive dialogue and peaceful resolutions that account for the interests of all parties. In addressing these challenges, it is crucial for international actors to understand and respond to the political, social, and economic complexities in the region.

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