

Middle East War: Emperors of Silent Wars

Propaganda, destruction and madness

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Ever since the fall of Baghdad, the volatility of virtually the entire Middle East has been 'off the charts'. Principally, this development had to do with the ridiculous, grand-sounding imperial project of heralding in a watershed of democracy through the use of shocking and awful means.

As soon as the greatest military force in history stepped foot on Arabia - adamant to grab the will of Providence by the collar - flashpoints began to spark up left, right and centre. The scars and pains of millions were not to distract the emblem of freedom from its historic mission.

That is one chunk of the story.

The other begins with the view that it would be far too simplistic to presume that the actions of the global superpower triggered no hubris on the part of its regional clients and hirelings. It would be useful to recall after all, that the birth-pangs of a New Middle East were only proclaimed (albeit incredibly prematurely on hindsight) when *the* supreme client rained death over southern Lebanon.

Not only did the regional axis of moderate Arab clients - alternatively referred to as the Arab Center - have a part to play, but an incredibly important one too; especially after the realisation in the first, belated instance of sanity, that one required much more than state-of-the-art weaponry to effect any sort of 'real' change. Thenceforth, the geopolitical struggle for the Middle East has largely been re-packaged into a sectarian one, with regional moderates representing the "Sunni" bastion and the axis of evil led by "Shi'ite" Iran.

For the Arab Center, this constituted a high point as far as its relevance and stature are concerned on the Middle Eastern chessboard. As with all big lies **[1]**, the sectarian deception had its fair share of "success" stories, but the masses were never going to be fooled by it forever. It was only a matter of time before there were cries of, 'enough, no more!'

In Lebanon, Sunnis and Shi'ites converged on downtown Beirut and offered their Friday prayers together in a show of indissoluble unity; an act of faith itself. The pillars of deception began to crumble and with it went the fading chances of "success". But blind, morally corrupt rulers know no markers.

And so we witness the march of the Saudi monarchy into the ravaged Saada province in its attempts to renew once more, the sectarian myth.

Political commentary and media reporting is awash with talks of rebel "Shi'ite" Houthis -

funded by Iran – warring against “Sunni” Yemen and Saudi Arabia. As evidenced by recent experience, very little needs to be done in the way of PR to draw the media to proffer the language of the elite.

An elementary ingredient of any successful war effort has to do with garnering support for your cause at the expense of adversaries. At another level, it is essential to draw a veil of silence on the crimes you commit in war in order to maintain that elusive saintly halo, whilst applying the reverse yardstick for adversaries. One can safely state that at both levels, the western media has been more than happy to oblige to the narrative of the Saudi monarchy.

Keeping aside news rooms, and trailing the buck to the top; the foremost accomplice to America’s imperial project, Britain, has been at the heart of the agenda to reinvent the sectarian card.

Take for instance, the words of the UK Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. David Miliband to the House of Commons on November 26, when he stated: “we have seen no evidence of external interference”**[2]**, and place these against the omniscient declarations of Mr. Ivan Lewis, Minister of State for Middle Eastern Affairs, in an interview to the Al-Arabiya Satellite Channel only two days earlier:

“Of course (sic), there is a proxy war going on there [in Yemen]. There is no doubt (sic) there is Iranian interference, the size of which we are not yet aware of, and we do not know whether it is direct Iranian interference. However, it is clear that Iran nourishes and encourages rebels and terrorists, which is unacceptable.”**[3]**

At a time when the *Iraq Inquiry* is ongoing, you might dare hope it would imprint some humility on a deceptive, mendacious political culture that has, and continues to, cost the lives of thousands. Nay; all vain dreams! Further, the level of disinterest across Western capitals to even consider the possibility of Saudi violations in Saada is truly shocking; less so perhaps, if one takes into account the overall context of a political climate that is geared to criminalize, ipso facto, only one state in the region.

Saudi government- funded media outlets on their part speak of an apocalyptic Iranian, Shi’ite takeover of the Arab heartland in an orchestrated media war which aims to “[paint] Iran as the troublemaker of the Middle East, a major threat to regional stability, and an agent of chaos in many Arab countries, including Iraq and Yemen”.**[4]**

Decades of political and economic marginalization have conveniently travelled down an Orwellian memory hole; instead, the cause of Yemeni Zaydis has been reduced to a ‘Saudi vs. Iran’ proxy war.

Away from the Saudi newspeak, the reality on the ground in Saada is heart-breaking.**[5]** “Of the 3,000 under fives targeted by a recent screening in the camp”, *IRIN* reports “667 cases (22 percent) were severely malnourished”. According to the *UNHCR*, existing shelter and aid resources are being strained after the IDP population in the main Al Mazrak 1 camp more than doubled over the last month.

Meanwhile, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia not only persists with its blind targeting of innocent civilians, but also continues to deport displaced refugees fleeing from the fighting. As of 19 November, the number of deportations was estimated at 1,040.**[6]**

With the emergence of more unified motivations for justice amongst the global masses, and conversely, an intensification of injustice and arrogance amongst power elites, the muted response of 'dissident culture' to the carnage in Saada should evoke great concern. Adopting a paradigm of 'selective solidarity' risks exposing fundamental contradictions within antiwar movements, and inherently diminishes the efficacy of the wider movement on its more vocal and identifiable causes owing to the cross-relatedness of the various flashpoints in the Middle East.

Additionally, as pointed to above, the political elites in Western capitals equally resort to propaganda and untruths in order to re-package happenings on the ground in Saada as elsewhere across the Middle East. Keeping aside notions of selective impunity on usage of propaganda and lies, these propaganda campaigns are employed to fit into grander narratives. In this case, the renewal of the sectarian myth and the demonization of Iran, and all that these entail.

For the above reasons, and for the simple truth of the grave human suffering in Saada, we've got to move.

Notes:

1. 'The Myth of Sectarianism in the New Middle East', Global Research, 27 April 2009 <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=13378>
2. See: House of Commons Daily Debates, 26 November 2009 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm091126/text/91126w0013.htm>
3. 'Demonstrations in Sanaa demand expulsion of Iranian Ambassador', Al Arabiya News Channel, 25 November 2009 <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/11/25/92313.html>
4. 'The hidden war', Al Ahram Weekly, 5-11 November Issue <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/971/re4.htm>
5. 'Saada Under Siege', CounterPunch, 23 October 2009 <http://www.counterpunch.org/amiri10232009.html>
6. See: Yemen Humanitarian Update, OCHA, 19 November 2009 [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2009.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/MYAI-7Y28DQ-full_report.pdf/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2009.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/MYAI-7Y28DQ-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf)

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