

Saudis Face Defeat in Yemen and Instability at Home

Let Yemenis Determine Their Future

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“The interventions of US imperialism, with the direct collaboration of the Saudi monarchy, have plunged the entire Middle East into chaos and bloodshed—from the destruction of Iraq, to the transformation of Libya into a militia-ravaged “failed state,” to the ongoing carnage inflicted upon Syria ... This predatory imperialist offensive threatens to ignite a region-wide conflagration, even as Washington deliberately ratchets up military tensions with both Russia and China. The threat of these separate conflicts coalescing into a third world war grows by the day.”

- Bill Van Auken, [Obama’s criminal war against Yemen](#), World Socialist web Site

“Will the reactionary rulers of Saudi Arabia manage to break the legitimate hopes and enthusiastic dreams burning in the hearts of thousands of young people of the Arabian Peninsula? Never!”

- Gamal Abd al-Nasser, President of Egypt 1956 to 1970

In its ongoing effort to prevent the rise of “any popularly supported government in the region”, the US has joined Saudi Arabia’s savage war of annihilation against Yemen’s northern tribal rebels, the Houthis. The Pentagon has expedited the delivery of bombs, ammunition and guidance systems to assist the Saudi-led campaign and is providing logistical support to maximize the impact of its bombing raids. The US has also set up a “joint fusion center”, provided “aerial re-fueling platforms” and “advanced US-made weaponry” with the explicit intention of suppressing a militant group that overthrew the US-backed puppet government in the capital of Sanaa in the fall of 2014. The level of coordination between the makeshift Arab coalition (The Gulf Cooperation Council or GCC) and the US suggests that Washington is not only fully aware that food depots, water facilities, refugee camps and critical civilian infrastructure are being deliberately targeted and destroyed, but that the White House has given the green light to actions that will inevitably lead to widespread famine and social collapse. Here’s a little background from an article in The National:

“Yemen Economic Corporation, one of Yemen’s largest food storage centres, was destroyed by three coalition missile strikes in Hodeidah last Tuesday, according to the Houthi-controlled defence ministry. The corporation had enough food for the entire country. The government’s military food storage centre in Hodeidah was also targeted and destroyed on Tuesday, according to the defence ministry.

Also in Hodeidah, country's second largest dairy plant was hit by five Saudi missiles on Wednesday, killing at least 29 people, mostly employees, and injuring dozens of others." ([Yemeni civilians struggle to get by amid conflict](#), The National)

This is from Channel News Asia:

DUBAI: Warships from the Saudi-led coalition have blocked a vessel carrying more than 47,000 tonnes of wheat from entering a Yemeni port, demanding United Nations guarantees that the cargo would not go to military personnel, shipping sources said on Thursday." ([Saudi-led coalition bars wheat ship from entering Yemen port - sources](#), Channel News Asia)

This is from WSWS:

"Airstrikes as well as fighting on the ground has knocked out electrical infrastructure, cutting off power in many urban areas and stopping the operation of crucial pumps that supply Yemen's cities with drinking water. "We're worried that this system will break down shortly; Aden is a dry, hot place, and without water people will really suffer," UNICEF representative Harneis told reporters...

The no-fly zone and blockade enforced by Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners has effectively blocked the delivery of medical aid and supplies for the last two weeks, exacerbating the developing crisis." [World Socialist Web Site](#)

Live reports on the ground confirm that food depots have been bombed across the country; " in Asr (west) hit as well as Urdhi complex (center) & Noqum (east).

This is how America fights its wars, by precipitating massive humanitarian crises that help it to achieve its political objectives. If that isn't terrorism, then what is?

Here's more from the Washington Post:

"As tons of desperately needed medical supplies await clearance to be flown into Yemen, aid workers warned Tuesday of an unfolding humanitarian crisis, saying at least 560 people, including dozens of children, have been killed, mostly in a Saudi-led air campaign and battles between Shiite rebels and forces loyal to the embattled president. More than 1,700 people have been wounded and another 100,000 have fled their homes as fighting intensified over the past three weeks, the World Health Organization said." ([560 dead amid fears of humanitarian collapse in Yemen](#), Washington Post)

The Saudis launched this latest aggression invoking the thinnest of pretexts, that it wanted to "restore the legitimate government" and protect the "Yemeni constitution and elections." As CNN's Ali Alahmed sardonically quipped:

"The need to protect constitutions and elections is a rather strange message from the representative of an absolute monarchy ... The kingdom's real motives seem clear if one looks at Saudi monarchy's history of not allowing regional competition of any kind, while consistently combating efforts to build democratic governments that empower the people...

The Saudi goal is simple: Prevent the rise of any popularly supported government in the region that seeks self-determination. And the excuse of “resisting Iran’s influence,” meanwhile, appears to be nothing but sectarian bluster.” ([What Saudi Arabia wants in Yemen](#), CNN)

While we agree with Alahmed’s basic thesis, we think the rule applies more to the United States than Saudi Arabia. After all, it’s the US that has gone from one country to the next, toppling governments, installing puppets, and spreading anarchy wherever it goes. Whatever role the Saudis might have played in Washington’s grand plan to redraw the map of the Middle East and project US tentacles into Eurasia, it is quite small by comparison. It’s the US that refuses to allow an independent government to emerge in a region that it’s committed to control. And it’s the US that is facilitating the attacks on innocent Yemenis by providing the bombs, weaponry and logistical support to the reactionary Saudi leadership. Check this out from Gregory Johnson at BuzzFeed:

“A consensus appears to be building in Riyadh, Cairo, and Islamabad toward inserting ground troops into the conflict in Yemen. One Egyptian military official told BuzzFeed News the decision had already been made. “Ground forces will enter the war,” the official said on condition of anonymity in order to discuss classified military operations.

The timing of such a move, which would be a significant escalation in the Saudi-led air campaign in Yemen, is still being discussed. But the Egyptian military source said it could happen as soon as “two or three days.” ([Ground Forces Seen Joining Bloody War In Yemen](#), BuzzFeed)

So after two weeks of nonstop bombing, the coalition is now planning to intensify the conflict by putting boots on the ground. But that will only prolong the hostilities and plunge the country deeper into crisis. It will also increase the risk of Houthi retaliation, which appears to already be taking place. According to Al Arabiya English, fighting broke out in the Southern Saudi city of Narjan on April 11. (#BREAKING Asiri: Houthi militias are amassing close to the Saudi-Yemeni border... #BREAKING: Asiri: clashes reported near the Saudi city of Najran)

While no one expects the Houthis to invade their northern neighbor, there are some analysts who think the monarchy has taken on more than it can chew and will eventually suffer blowback from its incursion. One such critic is Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of the Lebanese paramilitary organization Hezbollah. In a recent interview, Nasrallah suggested that the Houthis have the means to curtail vital energy supplies, strike a blow against Saudi Arabia, and send financial markets tumbling at the same time. Here’s an excerpt from the interview:

“There is now a demand on the Yemeni leaders... who have not taken the decision to close (the strategic Strait) of Bab al-Mandeb, which they could do at any time. (It is only 20 kilometres-large, they are quite capable of it.) And they could also hit targets inside Saudi Arabia with missiles, or even enter the interior of Saudi Arabia, although they have not yet made this decision, so far ... There is currently a Yemeni popular demand: “Let us go to Saudi Arabia.” Leadership thus far has not taken such a decision. I wanted to indicate this.”...

Nasrallah [again](#): “I am absolutely certain that Saudi Arabia will undergo a major defeat. And its defeat will impact its internal situation, the royal family ...

and the entire region.” (“Hassan Nasrallah: The war in Yemen announces the end of the House of Saud”, The Vineyard of the Saker)

So the Houthis could close the Bab Al Mandeb straits and prevent millions of barrels of oil from getting to market? That changes the calculus entirely. How would that effect Washington’s plan to crash Russia’s economy with plunging oil prices? How would it impact global stock markets which are already jittery over the Fed’s projected rate hikes? What effect would it have on al Nusra, ISIS and other Al Qaeda-linked groups that would then seek to launch similar attacks against critical energy infrastructure as the best way to achieve their aims?

There are things the Houthis can do to discourage Saudi aggression. They can take matters into their own hands and strike where it hurts most. Washington is so convinced of its own invincibility, that no one has even thought of this. Without the slightest hesitation, the Obama troupe has embroiled a key ally in bloody conflagration that could backfire and seriously undermine US interests in the region. Saudi Arabia is the cornerstone of US power in the Middle East, but it is also its Achilles heel. By supporting the attack on the Houthis instead of seeking a political solution, Washington has strengthened Al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) which poses the greatest single threat to the monarchy. As Nasrallah notes: “they (the US and SA) protect Al Qaeda and Daesh in Yemen, and more, they drop them weapons by air. This is an achievement? This goes against the interests of Saudi Arabia.”

Indeed, it does. Al Qaeda has much greater ability to infiltrate Saudi Arabia and either launch terrorist attacks or foment popular revolution. The Houthis present no such security threat, they’re only interest is to maintain their own sovereignty, borders, and independent foreign policy. A 2003 article in the Atlantic by CIA Bureau Chief Robert Baer titled “The Fall of the House of Saud” provides a window into Riyadh’s vulnerabilities and draws the ominous conclusion that the kingdom’s days are numbered. Here’s a clip from the article:

“Saudi oil is controlled by an increasingly bankrupt, criminal, dysfunctional, and out-of-touch royal family that is hated by the people it rules and by the nations that surround its kingdom...

Signs of impending disaster are everywhere, but the House of Saud has chosen to pray that the moment of reckoning will not come soon—and the United States has chosen to look away. So nothing changes: the royal family continues to exhaust the Saudi treasury, buying more and more arms and funneling more and more “charity” money to the jihadists, all in a desperate and self-destructive effort to protect itself.

The most vulnerable point and the most spectacular target in the Saudi oil system is the Abqaiq complex—the world’s largest oil-processing facility, which sits about twenty-four miles inland from the northern end of the Gulf of Bahrain. All petroleum originating in the south is pumped to Abqaiq for processing. For the first two months after a moderate to severe attack on Abqaiq, production there would slow from an average of 6.8 million barrels a day to one million barrels, a loss equivalent to one third of America’s daily consumption of crude oil. For seven months following the attack, daily production would remain as much as four million barrels below normal—a reduction roughly equal to what all of the opec partners were able to effect during their 1973 embargo...

I served for twenty-one years with the CIA’s Directorate of Operations in the Middle East, and during all my years there I accepted on faith my government’s easy assumption that the money the House of Saud was

dumping into weaponry and national security meant that the family's armed forces and bodyguards could keep its members—and their oil—safe ... I no longer believe this ... sometime soon, one way or another, the House of Saud is coming down." ([The Fall of the House of Saud](#), Robert Baer, The Atlantic)

Neither the United States nor Saudi Arabia have any right to interfere in Yemen's internal affairs or to install their own political puppets to head the government. That is the right of the Yemeni people. And while the current process of regime change might be messy and violent, the Houthi rebels better represent the interests of the indigenous population than anyone in Riyadh or Washington. The Saudi-US war is merely aimed at controlling the outcome so Yemen remains within the imperial grip. As Nasrallah says, "The real goal of the war is to retain control and domination of Yemen (but) the Yemeni people will not put up with this aggression and humiliation. They will fight to defend their dignity, their existence, their families, and their territory. And they will be victorious."

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