

Saudi-US Slaughter in Yemen Shows Truth of Terror War

Sham and Shame

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Global Research, May 04, 2015

[Empire Burlesque](#) 29 April 2015

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [Terrorism, US NATO War Agenda](#)

Last week, the United States sent an armada to Yemen, to help enforce a blockade of the poverty-ridden country as it groans under the mass slaughter of Saudi Arabia's American-backed war of aggression. Now the Saudis, employing the bombs they procured from U.S. war profiteers, have shut down aid shipments by air with a bombing raid on the capital, Sana'a. The result will be more hunger, suffering and death in one of the world's poorest countries. — But hey, wasn't Obama so funny at that media dinner thing!

While aiding the Islamic extremists of Saudi Arabia to help al Qaeda in Yemen — who have made great gains while their mortal enemies, the Houthis, are being pounded by the Saudis — Obama and the American military machine has also been busy joining hands with al Qaeda in Syria, helping them make huge advances and capture key cities. It now looks increasingly likely that the Syrian government will not be able to withstand the onslaught of Islamic extremists (oh, and the “moderate” rebels, which also include al Qaeda elements). The fall of the secular Syrian state will open up an abyss of chaos which will be filled by the extremists armed and bankrolled by the United States and Saudi Arabia — just as the American destruction of the secular government in Iraq has led to murderous nightmare for millions of people.

What's more, Israel has also joined the fight with al Qaeda, launching airstrikes on positions in Syria to clear the way for Islamic extremists to keep up their offensive. [Robert Parry is on the case](#):

The Saudi-Israeli alliance, in league with other hard-line Sunni countries, is helping Al-Qaeda affiliates advance toward gaining either victory or at least safe havens in Syria and Yemen, highlighting unresolved contradictions in President Barack Obama's policies in the Middle East. Fueled by a surge of support from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey – and with Israel striking at Syrian government allies – Al-Qaeda's Nusra Front and Al-Qaeda's hyper-brutal spinoff, the Islamic State, are making major advances in Syria with some analysts now predicting the likely collapse of the relatively secular government of President Bashar al-Assad.

... As this relationship firmed up, Israel even began voicing a preference for Al-Qaeda's militants over the relatively secular Assad government, which was viewed as the protectors of Alawites, Shiites, Christians and other Syrian minorities terrified of the Saudi-backed Sunni extremists. In September 2013, in one of the most explicit expressions of Israel's views, Israeli Ambassador to the United States Michael Oren, then a close adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, told the Jerusalem Post that Israel favored the

Sunni extremists over Assad.

“The greatest danger to Israel is by the strategic arc that extends from Tehran, to Damascus to Beirut. And we saw the Assad regime as the keystone in that arc,” Oren told the Jerusalem Post in an interview. “We always wanted Bashar Assad to go, we always preferred the bad guys who weren’t backed by Iran to the bad guys who were backed by Iran.” He said this was the case even if the “bad guys” were affiliated with Al-Qaeda. Oren expanded on his position in June 2014 at an Aspen Institute conference. Then, speaking as a former ambassador, Oren said Israel would even prefer a victory by the Islamic State, which was massacring captured Iraqi soldiers and beheading Westerners, than the continuation of the Iranian-backed Assad in Syria. “From Israel’s perspective, if there’s got to be an evil that’s got to prevail, let the Sunni evil prevail,” Oren said.

The same game is being played in Yemen, of course, as Obama puts American military and logistic muscle behind a murderous air assault by the fountainhead of Sunni extremism, Saudi Arabia. Here, the Americans — that great defender of democracy everywhere — are helping the hidebound, head-chopping, tyrannical Saudi royal family in its ever-more frantic efforts to stay in power. As Wall Street Journal correspondent Joe Lauria notes, the savaging of Yemen has very little to do with a “proxy war” with Iran, and very much to do with the Saudi royal’s determination to keep anything resembling democracy far from its borders. Lauria was interviewed [by Jessica Desvarieux of The Real News](#) after his WSJ story detailing how the Saudi attack deliberately scotched a peace deal in Yemen. Here are some excerpts:

LAURIA: That’s the main thrust of the story, that [Jamal Benomar, the UN’s Special Representative in Yemen], was saying. They were close to a deal, and then the Saudi intervention, the bombing ended the negotiation and that’s where we are today.

DESVARIEUX: So what essential interest would Saudi Arabia have in terms of increasing force? Why would they even do that?

LAURIA: Well, publicly they’re saying they want to restore Hadi as the president, and that they are trying to curb Iranian influence in Yemen. Now, the Houthis are Zaydi sect of Shiism, but it’s a different sect than the Iranian Shiites. The Houthi movement began in the early ’90s, and they didn’t receive any aid or any connection really with Iran until five years ago, 2010. And even the U.S. government does not believe that Iran has overwhelming influence in Yemen. And diplomats I spoke to are not—I can’t name, also say that Houthis were not agents of the Iranians and that their influence is limited there.

So what is the real motive of the Saudis? Well, these diplomats told me that they believe they didn’t, that they were afraid, the Saudis, of a successful negotiation that would bring about a progressive and democratic government in their backyard. This government—and the deal called for, for example, 30 percent of the cabinet posts, 30 percent of parliament going to women. Now, in Saudi Arabia women can’t even drive. But—and they were of course, the Houthis, who are 30 percent of the country, or the Zaydi Shiites, 30 percent of the country, would necessarily get about 30 percent of power of the government. Not 50 percent, they were not going to rule. They did not expect to be the rulers of Yemen, they know they cannot control the entire country. They are not strong enough. So they were willing to take 30 percent, according to Benomar.

And by the way, he told all of this to the UN Security Council today to confirm everything that was in my story. And Saudi Arabia did not want a

democracy—this is what these diplomats tell me. They don't want a democracy in their backyard. For centuries they've installed their own leaders in Yemen. They want to control the politics there and impose their terms on this country. The last thing they need is anywhere in the region a democracy, and you can see since the so-called Arab Spring of the last four or five years, what have the Saudis done? From Egypt to Bahrain they have undermined any kind of, form of democracy. ...

DESVARIEUX: Let's talk about some of the consequences of this bombing. And specifically, the winners and losers. Because an unexpected winner in all of this is Al-Qaeda, is that right?

LAURIA: That's correct. Al-Qaeda is strong in Yemen. Al-Qaeda has supposedly some of these, the underwear bomber, some of these other things came out of Yemen, and the attack on the magazine in Paris was apparently launched by this branch of Al-Qaeda in Yemen. The United States as your viewers well know has been using drone strikes in Yemen to try to defeat Al-Qaeda. They haven't done that, they've killed a bunch of civilians, unfortunately.

So Al-Qaeda is there. And it's well-known that going back to the 1980s when this was formed in Afghanistan that Saudi Arabia, at least some private money from Saudi Arabia, was backing some of these guys who turned into Al-Qaeda. And others, some governments even say that Qatar and Saudi Arabia are supporting extremist groups in Syria, like al-Nusra Front by Qatar. And maybe some people who are now fighting with Islamic State.

So what do you have here now is the Saudis bombing the Houthi targets only in Yemen, weakening them. The Houthis who are one of the, who are the main fighting force against Al-Qaeda, and they're being bombed by Saudi Arabia. And Al-Qaeda is moving. They're taking over towns. They've taken over airports. They are gaining on the ground. Now, the Saudis have, probably need ground troops to defeat the Houthis. They've asked Pakistan. And Pakistanis did some mysterious procedure that the Saudis don't seem to understand, which is call a parliamentary vote. And the parliament of Pakistan said, no, we're not sending our troops to fight in Yemen.

Can we at last give up the pretense that the "War on Terror" has anything at all to do with "fighting terrorism?" It is solely about power and profit, and has been from the beginning. But now our power-players are not even pretending anymore. Oren's remarks make it plain; Obama's policies — side with Sunni extremists in Syria, fight Sunni extremists in Iraq, side with Sunni extremists in Yemen, side with Sunni extremists in Libya and then oppose Sunni extremists in Libya — make it even plainer

From its very first moments, stretching back to the Reagan years and to the nth degree since 9/11, the "War on Terror" has been a sham. Yes, there are genuine Islamic extremists — and the Terror War produces more of them every day — but from the US-Saudi creation of an international jihadi army to overthrow the secular government of Soviet-backed Afghanistan to today's alliance with al Qaeda in Syria and Yemen, America's imperial militarists have made numerous alliances of convenience with their ostensible enemies as they pursue their agenda of domination. Obama is a willing pawn in their game. Hillary, Jeb, Mario — they will all be the same. The nightmare goes on.

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