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Jemen – the Proxy War

Introduction

At the military operation in Yemen is significant departure from Saudi Arabia's foreign policy tradition and customs. Riyadh has always relied on three strategies to pursue its interests abroad: wealth, establish a global network and muslim education and diplomacy and meadiation.

First of all it used its wealth to support allied governments or groups. Second, it established a global network of clerics and Koran schools to spread the puritanical interpretation of the Koran known as Wahhabism. Third, it practiced classic diplomacy and mediation, such as leading the peace talks that ended the 15-year civil war in Lebanon in the late 1980s.

The term "proxy war" has experienced a new popularity in stories on the Middle East. A proxy war is two opposing countries avoiding direct war, and instead supporting combatants that serve their interests. In some occasions, one country is a direct combatant whilst the other supporting its enemy. Various news sources began using the term to describe the conflict in Yemen immediately, as if on cue, after Saudi Arabia launched its bombing campaign against Houthi targets in Yemen on 25 March 2015 (Clark 2010, p. 27).

This is the reason, why author try to answer for following questions: Is the Yemen Conflict Devolves into Proxy War? and Who's fighting whom in Yemen's proxy war? Research area includes the problem of proxy war in the Middle East.

For sure, the real problem of proxy war must begin with the fact that the United States and its NATO allies opened the floodgates for regional proxy wars by the two major wars for regime change: in Iraq and Libya. Those two destabilising wars provided opportunities and motives for Sunni states across the Middle East to pursue their own sectarian and political power objectives through proxy war (Parry 2015, pp. 2-18).

What exactly is going on in Yemen right now?

Crisis in Yemen is an extension of international politics in the Arab Middle East

The 2015 strategic crisis in Yemen is an extension of international politics in the Arab Middle East. In fact, this crisis is the outcome of the efforts made to change the direction of a regional balance, which has been already changing, through aggressive measures as well as actions taken by Western and Arab countries in the face of national interests of other model regional actors who play their independent roles. In this effort, Saudi Arabia is serving as a proxy for those Western and Arab powers (Khoshandam 2015a, p. 4).

There has been a new survey conducted about the people's opinion on the war in Yemen, for instance: "The conflict with the Houthi movement and community has been going on for many years. It is one of the most disadvantaged and neglected communities in Yemen. What is ironic is that it is thought the former president of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was deposed in the Arab spring, is basically collaborating with the Houthis against the existing order. Yemeni state is very fragile, very vulnerable. The next few months will show whether the Houthis are intelligent enough to really cash in their cheques or if they over-extend themselves" – said Professor Fawaz A. Gerges (2015, p. 13).

A lot of opinion can speak on domestic issues, public opinion about the war, political impact "Yemen used to be held forward by the Americans as a model of a state which had emerged from the upheaval of the Arab Spring with a degree of stability. But the success of the Houthi insurgency there will have huge impact on the region's internecine conflict between Sunnis and Shias and beyond" – said Kim Sengupta, defence correspondent for the Independent (Khoshandam 2015b, p. 4).

When analysing trends, driving forces and effective actors in the evolutionary course of this crisis, one can enumerate such instances as Arabism, Houthism, Wahhabism, and independence seeking. Religious and ethnic tendencies, economic impoverishment of the Yemeni people. Also fundamental difference between approaches taken to Yemen's developments by Iran and Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, as well as geopolitical and geo-strategic importance of Bab-el-Mandeb Strait for the United States, Europe and China. Other variables that have paved the way for interaction among international institutions, the United Nations, the European Union and such actors as the United States and Russia in Yemen's developments.

From another standpoint, the strategic crisis in Yemen is the extension of other global crisis, both at regional and international levels, and in the Middle East such as the ongoing crises in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Bahrain and Ukraine. Some countries located around the Arabian Peninsula, including Yemen and Oman, have been trying to follow more independent policies compared to the littoral states of the Persian Gulf, which are under theoretical and military influence of Saudi Arabia. Iran is one of the actors that both affects and is affected by the above crises and whose actions and viewpoints with respect to the aforesaid crises have been mostly uniform and following the same theoretical and strategic framework (Khoshandam 2015b, p. 5).

After a sharp political crisis in Yemen last year 2015, the manifestations were bloodily suppressed by the security forces mass anti-government demonstrations and clashes between the Presidential Guard and rebel against the government army units, the situation in this country is still far from stability. Although not proven catastrophic scenarios, assuming an explosion in Yemen open civil war, it has not disappeared at the same time the basic background of the political conflict between supporters of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the opposition, firmly embedded in addition to the complicated structure of the clan and tribal country.

For many months, the something like “local version” of the “Arab Spring” that makes Yemen is still torn by tensions and armed clashes. The situation in many of its regions actually slipped out of control authorities. The principal cause of progressive destabilization of Yemen. On the one hand, quickly fiercer rebellion Shiites Huti in the north of the country, on the other hand equally rapid activation of Yemeni structures of Al-Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) to the south, where in addition exuberant renaissance experiencing the idea from the North.

The development of the situation in Yemen is almost a model example of the principle that the collapse of the power structures and state administration usually raises security vacuum and reinforces centrifugal tendencies. When spring and summer of 2011, the country stood on the brink of civil war, and many local clans were occupied mainly making complex political calculations, which side of the conflict support, Shiites and Islamists AQAP perfectly used this moment to strengthen their positions and a significant expansion of their territorial gains (Khoshandam 2015a, p. 6).

When at the beginning of last year, Yemen reached the first drafts of “Arab Spring”, Huti immediately broke a fragile truce with the government of President Ali Abdullah Saleh and resumed military action, declaring their support for the pro-democratic opposition. This clever makeover propaganda does not, however, has much in common

with reality – zaidiyyah are not in the least interested in the replacement of the current regime in Sana'a democracy – their main political aim is the restoration of the former zaidiyyah monarchy, overthrown in 1962, and an intermediate stage may be a Shiite, zaidiyyah – “state” in the north of the former Yemen.

And again, just as eight years ago, and now also in the sudden activation Huties can be traced to the direct inspiration of Iran. Tehran wanted not only to take advantage of the weakening of the authorities in Sana'a to strengthen its Yemeni allies, but probably also going to create a reality in Yemen, which the Saudis turn out of events in other parts of the Middle East. This is especially exacerbating the situation in Syria, an important ally of Iran in the region, which is increasingly becoming the next front “proxy war” between the Iranians and their strategic rivals in the Middle East (Carapico 2009, p. 62).

The resumption of the rebellion in extremely difficult for the government of Yemen when it turned out to Huti right decision – throughout the last (Al-Amri 2005, p. 25). Year without special military effort, almost three times increased, they controlled their part of the country. Currently in the hands of the Shiites is not only their native province of Saada, but also the neighbouring province of al-Jawf, and a large part of Yemen province of Hajjah. That success Hut'ies in the latter province caused alarm not only in Sana'a, but above all in Riyadh. Hajjah is located in fact directly on the Red Sea, and the Shiites is clearly seeking to take a few small port towns on the coast (including Midi and Salif). Their mastery and maintenance would give the opportunity to Hut' almost unrestricted use of the benefits of direct access to the sea, especially in the transport of weapons, supplies and people of Iran. So far, all Iranian shipments for Yemeni Shiites have in fact to be smuggled to the coast road, which increased the risk of detection by Yemeni security forces (Khoshandam 2015b, p. 8).

There is no doubt that a further weakening of the central government in Yemen and the prolongation of the state of anarchy in much of the area will adversely affect the cohesion of the country. Today the authority of the government of Sana'a does not reach many areas that are important from an economic point of view for the functioning of the state – like a significant part of the coast on the Gulf of Aden. The situation in this area seems to deteriorate rapidly (Al-Amri 2005, p. 26). One likely scenario is therefore a redistribution of the country, although it certainly would not be a simple process, as it were automatically leading to the restoration of two state formations known before the unification of Yemen in 1990. This time, Yemen could be several,

among them possibly Islamist emirate in the south and a Shiite, pro-Iranian para-state domain in the north (Burrowes 2008, p. 42).

Equally realistic scenario development of the situation in Yemen, however, is his “somalization”. Thus they can probably best be characterized by a process of gradual, though relatively fast (as calculated in months rather than years), the entropy of existing state structures (administration, political system, security camera) connected with the division of its territory between the couple – a dozen combat each other, of which at least is subordinated to radical Islamic movements.

Joseph Willits, Research for Caabu from Council for Arab British Understanding, emphasized: “There has long been a historic neglect of Yemen, in both humanitarian and political terms, and this has always been ill-advised given its strategic position, with piracy in the Red Sea, threats to shipping, and al-Qaeda to name but a few threats. The Arab world’s poorest country, where a third of the people (over 5 million) go to bed hungry each evening, has become another regional battleground alongside Syria and Iraq where the rivalries between Saudi Arabia and Iran are being played out with devastating consequences”(Khoshandam 2015a, p. 2).

Regardless of this, what actually the situation develops in Yemen, one of the few winners – if not the only – will Islamic radicalism and terrorism, organizationally and ideologically linked to Al-Qaeda and its local annex in the form AQAP. In each of the present unpredictable scenarios for the future of Yemen (including those of positive, assuming the survival of the country as consistent and effective as the state), the strong position of AQAP seems to be irrefutable and permanent feature. This means that the organization – now recognized as the best organized and most effective of all the branches of Al-Qaeda – has the potential to further strengthen its leading role in the global jihadist movement. This in turn would also mean an increase in immediate danger of terrorist attacks in the West.

Al-Qaeda’s strongest regional franchise, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), has officially declared an “Islamic State” (IS) in Yemen’s southern Zinjibar region, according to local sources. The militant group, known locally as Ansar al-Sharia, was forced out of neighbouring Jaar by police on Wednesday after blowing up the residence of the head of a tribal militia. The group withdrew and headed back to Zinjibar in the province of Abyan – a renowned stronghold of AQAP since the 2011 uprising – where they declared their latest state following the establishment of “the Islamic State of Hadramut” in 2014 (Khoshandam 2015a, p. 11).

A list of campus sources who can provide expert commentary on war in Yemen show us a broad perspective of this conflict. The crisis in Yemen can be also assessed from the viewpoint of the conflict between the interests of Iran and Saudi Arabia as a result of efforts made to expand the influence of Middle East's resistance groups toward the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Therefore, this crisis is the result of efforts made to prevent the rise of an order in the Persian Gulf and Bab-el-Mandeb regions, and a result of a more serious campaign by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and the Saudi-led coalition against Iran (Leverett, Makintosh 2015, p. 31).

Therefore, the rise and fall of the "Operation Decisive Storm" in Yemen was a major manifestation of Saudi Arabia's effort to seriously counter Iran's foreign policy goals for the expansion of the resistance axis in the Middle East. Various dimensions and critical consequences of the expansion of that axis for the United States' relations with Arab countries have been even reflected in such important international papers as the "New York Times" (ibidem, p. 27).

Robert Fisk, The Independent's Middle East correspondent said: "It's all about the Saudis. No matter how complex the new Yemeni civil war may appear – nor how powerful the Houthi rebels have become in the capital of Sanaa – it's the Zaidi sect of Shiism which the Houthis represent that frightens the Sunni Wahabi monarchy of Saudi Arabia, and not without reason" (Dresch 2000, p. 41).

Yemen – strategic location means this crisis cannot be ignored

Geo strategic importance of Yemen

This is not a peace to end all peace but potentially a Middle East conflict to end all conflict, to borrow from the title of David Fromkin's excellent account of the aftermath of the fall of the Ottoman Empire – *A Peace To End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the Modern Middle East*. While the House of Saud has long considered Yemen a subordinate province of some sorts and as a part of Riyadh's sphere of influence, the US wants to make sure that it could control the Bab Al-Mandeb, the Gulf of Aden, and the Socotra Islands. The Bab Al-Mandeb is an important strategic chokepoint for international maritime trade and energy shipments that connects the Persian Gulf via the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean Sea via the Red Sea. It is just as important as the Suez Canal for the maritime shipping lanes and trade between Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Added to the geopolitical importance of Yemen in overseeing strategic maritime corridors is its military's missile arsenal. Yemen's missiles could hit any ships in the Gulf of Aden or Bab Al-Mandeb. In this regard, the Saudi attack on Yemen's strategic missile depots serves both US and Israeli interests. The aim is not only to prevent them from being used to retaliate against exertions of Saudi military force, but to also prevent them from being available to a Yemeni government aligned to either Iran, Russia, or China.

In a public position that totally contradicts Riyadh's Syria policy, the Saudis threatened to take military action if the Houthis and their political allies did not negotiate with Al-Hadi. As a result of the Saudi threats, protests erupted across Yemen against the House of Saud on March 25. Thus, the wheels were set in motion for another Middle Eastern war as the US, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait began to prepare to reinstall Al-Hadi. In my opinion Yemen is the region in a mess is an understatement. Leaving tensions elsewhere, Iraq, Syria and Libya are in the throes of civil war, and now Yemen.

Little notice might have been taken of developments in Yemen, but the unravelling of a Yemeni government under siege from Iranian-backed tribes is a bad outcome with much wider implications. Given Yemen's strategic importance at the entrance to the Red Sea and thus the Suez Canal, and its proximity to the Gulf States, notably Saudi Arabia with which it shares an 1800 kilometre porous boundary, the Yemeni crisis can't be ignored. Unsteadiness in the oil markets is partly attributable to these concerning events in the Arabian peninsula. The no-win news for the energy sector is that oil prices will drift lower if sanctions on Iran are lifted, and may well drift lower anyway given a slowing global economy and chronic oversupply of about 1.5 million \$ (Leverett, Makintosh 2015, p. 52).

What all this demonstrates is that, like it or not, Middle East tensions can't be pushed aside. A deal with Iran may forestall the possibility of further sanctions, or in the worst case a pre-emptive strike against its nuclear facilities, but such a breakthrough will not necessarily change the dynamics on the ground. Like it or not, Iran is on the march.

In 2006, then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice justified Israel's drive into Lebanon as representing the "birth pangs of a new Middle East". This was three years into America's invasion of Iraq with the aim of implanting a democratic state on the banks of the Tigris. A decade later those admirable intentions are stillborn, and, worse, may be said to have contributed to a destabilisation of the entire Middle East. Rice would be most unlikely to repeat her fateful statement in current circumstances. Rather than "birth pangs of a new Middle East" the world is witnessing the unleashing of

forces that are proving impossible to constrain, and may well take a generation or more to play themselves out. Islamic State is one bastard child of many.

Yemen is far from the sole example of a Middle East unravelling, or as an Arab foreign minister put it the other day: “This is an existential crisis for the whole region” (Khoshandam 2015b, p. 13).

What is undeniable is that among the more serious unintended consequences of the US-led invasion is the continuing spread of Iranian power and influence. Among American realpolitik impulses over the years was that however undesirable Saddam Hussein may have been – he was plenty undesirable –he represented a buffer to Iranian ambitions. That buffer was removed with the American invasion, leaving a vacuum in its place. Just as nature abhors a vacuum so does a Middle East environment in which any semblance of central authority has broken down (Dresch 1989, p. 26).

Across the Middle East a centralised government has ceased to exist in Libya where the leadership has taken refuge in the east of the country; in Syria where Bashar al-Assad’s writ is under constant challenge in a civil war now in its fifth year, and now in Yemen.

Arab leaders meeting in the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula tourist retreat of Sharm el-Sheikh at the weekend resolved to establish a unified military force to counter, as Reuters newsagency put it, “growing security threats from Yemen to Libya, and as regional heavyweights Saudi Arabia and Iran engage in proxy wars” (Leverett, Makintosh 2015, p. 62).

This conflict-by-proxy between Saudi Arabia and Iran is not least of worrying developments in this latest phase in the turbulent history of the Middle East, and at a time when American leadership has appeared most exposed. Remember the words of Clausewitz – the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

The Israeli Roles

Israel was also concerned, because control of Yemen could cut off Israel’s access to the Indian Ocean via the Red Sea and prevent its submarines from easily deploying to the Persian Gulf to threaten Iran. This is why control of Yemen was actually one of Netanyahu’s talking points on Capitol Hill when he spoke to the US Congress about Iran on March 3 in what the “New York Times” of all publications billed as “Mr. Netanyahu’s Unconvincing Speech to Congress” on March 4 (Khoshandam 2015b, p. 13).

On March 27, it was announced in Yemen that Israel was helping Saudi Arabia attack the Arab country. That was the first time that the Zionists [Israelis] are conducting a joint operation in collaborations with Arabs, Hassan Zayd, the head of

Yemen's Al-Haq Party, wrote on the internet to point out the convergence of interests between Saudi Arabia and Israel. The Israeli-Saudi alliance over Yemen, however, is not new. The Israelis helped the House of Saud during the North Yemen Civil War that started in 1962 by providing Saudi Arabia with weapons to help the royalists against the republicans in North Yemen.

US role in Yemen war

“The United States has already said it would give logistical and intelligence support [to Saudi Arabia], but the situation in Yemen may well come to require more than that, and some kind of US combat support as well as US diplomatic pressure on Iran” (Bidwell 1983, p. 17). The US is also involved and leading from behind or a distance. While it works to strike a deal with Iran, it also wants to maintain an alliance against Tehran using the Saudis. The Pentagon would provide what it called «intelligence and logistical support» to the House of Saud. Make no mistakes about it: the war on Yemen is also Washington's war. The GCC has been unleashed on Yemen by the US. President Barack Obama's foreign policy inclinations to step back from conflict may have been driven by the best of intentions – and reality of American battle fatigue after Iran and Afghanistan drained energy and resources – but US ability to influence events in the wider Middle East has scarcely been less since the Suez Crisis of 1956 (Parry 2015, pp. 23-51).

Then US President Dwight Eisenhower helped put an end to the tripartite aggression against Egypt and served to demonstrate an American honest-broker role in the process. That era has well and truly passed, and may well have passed anyway given the impossible challenges that would be faced by any great power in efforts to stabilise a region that is literally falling apart.

Critics of Obama's tortured decision not to become involved in the Syrian conflict say the situation may have been stabilised if America had inserted itself into the civil war early, but Libya in its present chaotic state is hardly a comforting template for collective international engagement (Parry 2015, p. 52).

Britain and France with US support led the aerial bombardment that brought about the end of the Muammar Gaddafi regime.

Egypt. The Sharm el-Sheikh agreement has been hailed in some quarters as an important step by Arab states to combat “existential threats”, but in reality such a “unified Arab force” is a long way from fruition, and may never become a reality given difficulties that would be involved in knitting together disparate military capabilities.

Egypt, which is heavily dependent on Saudi subventions to stay afloat economically, yielded to pressure from Riyadh to lend its considerable weight in Arab counsels to a unified force, at least in theory. But Egyptian military leaders would not need reminding of the terrible cost paid by Egypt in Yemen in the 1960s when then President Gamal Abdel Nasser committed troops to support military officers seeking to overthrow the monarchy. As it happened, Saudi Arabia was on the other side in its efforts to return the Yemeni ruler to power. Egypt lost 10,000 soldiers in this ill-fated enterprise, described as the country's like Vietnam.

Fifty years later Egypt and the Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia find themselves on the same side in their efforts to stop Yemen falling to Iranian-backed militias like those that are fighting alongside regular troops in Iraq.

Iran. Iran's spreading influence is exemplified by Shia aggression against an established Sunni order. The Yemeni president has fled the capital, Sanaa, and is variously reported to be in Riyadh or in Aden.

Saudi Arabia. "To put Yemen in a broader strategic context, the crisis in Yemen is only part of the US-Saudi strategic equation. US-Saudi co-operation is critical in building some form of deterrence and strategic stability to contain Iran in the Gulf" (Enders 2002, p. 26). Was visibly afraid that Yemen could become formally aligned to Iran and that the events there could result in new rebellions in the Arabian Peninsula against the House of Saud. The US was just as much concerned about this too, but was also thinking in terms of global rivalries. Preventing Iran, Russia, or China from having a strategic foothold in Yemen, as a means of preventing other powers from overlooking the Gulf of Aden and positioning themselves at the Bab Al-Mandeb, was a major US concern (Khoshandam 2015a, p. 5).

"In a strategic context, the crisis in Yemen is only part of the US-Saudi strategic equation. US-Saudi co-operation is critical in building some form of deterrence and strategic stability to contain Iran in the Gulf" (Clark 2010, p. 41). That's way I must make a the point that assumptions about a lessening of American dependence on imported crude due to its shale oil revolution, should not disguise the importance to the global economy of Middle East oil. This accounts for something like one-third of the world total. The Strait of Hormuz "chokepoint" in the Persian Gulf provides passage for 30 percent of the world's seaborne traded oil (Leverett, Makintosh 2015, p. 42).

For sure, in Washington, strategic planners will be factoring all this into their calculations when it comes to decisions that will need to be made about the degree to which America renders assistance to Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States in a proxy fight

against Iran's restless efforts to spread its power and influence across the region, including notably in Yemen.

Is Yemen really a “proxy war” or “regional proxy war”?

Attempt to identification

Political scientist Karl Deutsch defined “proxy war” as an international conflict between two foreign powers, fought out on the soil of a third country, disguised as a conflict over an internal issue of the country and using some of that country's manpower, resources and territory as a means of achieving preponderantly foreign goals and foreign strategies (Enders 2002, p. 5).

Deutsch's definition makes it clear that proxy war involves the use of another country's fighters rather than the direct use of force by the foreign power or powers. So it is obvious that the Saudi bombing in Yemen, which has killed mostly civilians and used cluster bombs that have been outlawed by much of the world, is no proxy war but a straightforward external military aggression (Leverett, Makintosh 2015, p. 42).

The fact that the news media began labelling Yemen a proxy war in response to the Saudi bombing strongly suggests that the term was a way of softening the harsh reality of Saudi aggression.

The assumption underlying that application of “proxy war” is, of course, that Iran had already turned Yemen into such a war by its support for the Houthis. But it ignores the crucial question of whether the Houthis had been carrying out “preponderantly foreign goals and foreign strategies” (Ingrams 2009, p. 17). Although Iran has certainly had ties with the Houthis, the Saudi propaganda line that the Houthis have long been Iranian proxies is not supported by the evidence.

Far from proving the Iranian proxy argument, the Houthi takeover of Sanaa last year has actually provided definitive evidence to the contrary. US intelligence sources recently told the Huffington Post that before the Houthis entered the capital, the Iranians had advised against such a move, but that the Houthis ignored that advice. Gabriele vom Bruck, a leading academic specialist on Yemen at the School of Oriental and African Studies, said in an e-mail to this writer that senior Yemeni officials with links to intelligence had told her the same thing weeks before the story was leaked.

The Houthis rejected the Iranian caution, vom Bruck believes, because former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his son Ahmed Ali Saleh, who is the former commander of the Republican Guard and had indicated to them that troops that were still loyal to

them would not resist the Houthi units advancing on the capital unless the Houthis attacked them (Leverett, Makintosh 2015, p. 26).

So the Houthis clearly don't intend to serve an Iranian strategy for Yemen. "Certainly the Houthis do not want to replace the Saudis with the Iranians," says vom Bruck, even though they still employ slogans borrowed from Iran (Dresch 2000, p. 36).

On the other hand, the conception of "regional proxy war" completely misses the seriousness of the problem. It turns its proxy war concept into an abstract and virtually antiseptic problem of limiting Iranian influence in the region through the US bombing Iraq. It ignores the fact that the regional actors behind the wars in Syria, Iraq and Libya are pulling the region into a new era of unbridled sectarian violence and instability.

Such an unbridled competition in the creation of armies for regime change was by its very essence a reckless and cynical use of power that carried the obvious risk of even worse chaos and violence of the war in Syria. But they have made the costs of proxy war far greater by targeting the most aggressive armed groups they could find as their clients, and their weapons soon "made their way to the terrorist groups" wrote Ignatius, to which the Turks and Qataris "turned a blind eye" (Burrowes 2008, p. 37).

Conclusions

Once it became clear that Sunni states were creating a proxy war in Syria that could tip the balance against the Syrian regime, Iran and Hezbollah intervened in support of the regime. But what the conventional view of the Syrian proxy war leaves out is the linkage between Syria in Iran's deterrence strategy. Iran is militarily weak in relation with Israel and US military power in the Middle East, and has been the target of US and Israeli military threats going back to the 1990s.

The NATO war for regime change Yemen, like the US occupation of Iraq, opened a path for the regional proxy war that followed. That war took the form of competitive intervention by regional actors leading to worsening violence. This time Qatar and the UAE were competing for power through their support for Libyan expatriates in their own countries.

The media stories have offered only anodyne references to the problem of proxy war. What is needed in media coverage is a focus on realities of proxy war and their origins.

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Key words – *Yemen Crisis, Global Proxy Wars, International Politics, Arab Middle East, Persian Gulf, Disintegration, Arabism, Houthism, Wabbabism*

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