
PROSPECTS FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF A PROXY WAR IN YEMEN

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Yemen is one of the poorest Arab countries, and a civil war has been going on here since 2015. In general, a proxy war is a war in which two states do not fight directly, but using as parties to the conflict some third countries: their allies (satellites), providing decisive assistance with finances, equipment, military personnel.

This conflict is relevant in the context of modern international relations, because it has led to a humanitarian catastrophe: millions of people are starving, do not have access to drinking water, medicine and electricity. The head of the UN World Food Program, David Bisley, recently announced a deplorable figure: 12 million people in Yemen suffer from «severe hunger.» Cholera is a rampant disease in the country. The epidemic began in April 2017, and during this time it cannot be extinguished due to the destruction of health infrastructure, water and sewage treatment plants, as well as famine, which reduces the ability of the population to resist infections.

The humanitarian catastrophe caused by the Hussite coup in Yemen is a revolution against the Yemeni government organized by a coalition of Hussites and Ali Abdullah Saleh. The parties to the conflict are Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who control the capital Sana'a and much of the north and west of the country. On the other hand, there is an internationally recognized government backed by Saudi Arabia, as well as supporters of the secession of South Yemen.

The first cause of the civil war in Yemen is the mediation war. The conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran, mediated by Yemen. Saudi Arabia and Iran use Yemen as a battlefield for power. The two most powerful nations in the region have been vying for dominance since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. And in Yemen, they support different parties. Saudi Arabia is leading a coalition that supports the world-renowned government of Yemen. The Saudis believe that the Iranians are arming the rebels - the Houthis. Iran declares moral support for the Houthi movement, but rejects arms supplies.

The second factor in the development of the conflict is religion. Rivalry between countries today is exacerbated by religious differences, as

religion in the region is used by both countries for their own geopolitical purposes. Iran is a Shiite Islamic republic, while Saudi Arabia sees itself as a leading Islamic Sunni state. Yemen became the last battlefield for these two branches of Islam[2].

The devastating civil war began in March 2015, when Saudi Arabia, with US support and the participation of Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Sudan and Senegal, imposed intervention troops on Yemen, imposed a naval blockade and launched air strikes at the houses of civilians, schools and hospitals. For a population of 27 million locked within Yemen, the country has begun to turn into «hell on earth.»

The first scenario for resolving this conflict would be that a prolonged Saudi military presence could prolong the Yemeni civil war indefinitely, involving individual regional and international players. A war like the one raging in Syria since 2011.

Of course, this will lead to even greater losses, deaths and worsening of the humanitarian situation in Yemen. It should also be noted that this would require large material, military and human resources from Saudi Arabia and would undermine the internal goals of this war. Namely: the consolidation of power in the hands of King Salman ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud, the increase of military power and the pacification of jihadists and Islamists. Such a development could lead to the complete loss of Yemen's statehood[1]. But Saudi Arabia's long-standing military presence in Yemen could bring some dividends to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, as they will be able to continue to control parts of Yemen. Because it is not clear how the Saudi leadership will be able to clean up the Yemeni territories controlled by Islamist terrorists [2].

The second scenario, which most likely has a chance to be realized if the war continues, could be the division of Yemeni territory. Worst of all, this division may no longer take place along the north-south demarcation line, as it used to be, but between several players, each of whom controls certain territories.

In that case, Yemeni territory will be divided between forces that support ousted President Ali Abdullah Saleh, President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, Hutu militants, southern separatists, al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. Many of these forces will seek foreign patrons to hold back the territorial gains. And the longer the war in Yemen lasts, the more unpredictable and unpredictable the shift in Yemen's domestic policy alliances will be.

The end result of this war in the short term is unlikely to be a single federal Yemen in which peace is achieved and power is shared.

The complexity of the Yemeni situation is the multiplicity of political actors, the presence of which is associated with polarization and sectarianism in the Arab world, which links the ability of the Saudi leadership to quickly end its campaign in Yemen. And it is unlikely that Ali Abdullah Saleh will be able to organize an agreement similar to Taif in 1989, concluded after many years of civil war in Lebanon. Thanks to her, it was finally possible to reach a political consensus [4].

It is clear that the current situation in Yemen does not allow all parties to the conflict to come to a peaceful denominator. Thus, one should expect the United States and its Western allies to join the Yemeni settlement, because, due to its geographical strategic location, Yemen is an important state in the region.

Washington's involvement in resolving the Yemeni issue seems like a logical step. Although America is tired of «patronage» over the region, if it found the keys to influencing Tehran to at least weaken its intervention in Yemen, it could have positive consequences. The deadly Iran-Hutu combination must be stopped, and only the United States can do it. The Western public raised a wave of outrage at Saudi Arabia's actions, and European politicians began to put pressure on the kingdom and call for a ceasefire in Yemen. Germany has suspended arms supplies to the Saudis, and Denmark and Sweden have followed suit.

Pakistan politely declined when asked to send troops and took a non-intervention position. Turkey, following a visit to Tehran by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has decided that improving relations with Iran is much more important to it. Egypt made several empty promises, but in fact did little, despite strong Saudi support for the government of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

In conclusion, in the proxy war between Tehran and Riyadh, the victory of either side is by no means visible. Therefore, there can be only one way out - to seek a compromise solution through negotiations. At the same time, without a process of dialogue between the main parties to the conflict in Yemen, it will not be possible to return to comprehensive civil reconciliation. This conflict clearly has no military solution and needs a political solution. If it is impossible to find it - start the procedure of dividing the country into North and South Yemen.

References:

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