The Simple Truth About the Yemen Catastrophe

Yemen, Saudi Arabia’s southern neighbor, is a human catastrophe that will go down in history as one of America’s biggest policy mistakes. This poor Middle East country is the perfect reflection of failing U.S. strategies that will only balloon as the years draw on. Here is a candid look at another proxy war to perpetuate a misshapen dream.

Yemen never was a big oil producer. Since the civil unrest began, the country’s relatively small output has been choked down to a dribble. But Yemen is a very young territory for exploration, when compared to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE and others in the region. Two older fields that only came online in the mid-1980s reached peak production in 2001, and most experts say Yemen is one of those “post-peak” countries with no chance of a resurgent economy. I am not one of these analysts. The so-called frontier fields offshore are an energy bonanza I believe is fueling Saudi Arabia’s and America’s war on these people.

Yemen’s offshore frontier basins, and to a lesser extent those onshore, are what the Saudi coalition is after. The idea that the Saudi’s are deathly afraid of Iran is a construct built to separate people in every nation from the truth. Religious differences, Sunni versus Shia, Christian versus Muslim, they’re a convenient excuse as has always been the case. Take a look at this report by Mustafa As-Saruri, Ph.D., and Rasoul Sorkhabi, Ph.D. at GEOExPro. Take note also, of the offshore blocks bid on by western oil giants recently. On offshore and other new discoveries, I quote from another GEOEx report from the mid-2000s:

“Yemen boasts twelve sedimentary basins, but oil production has come from only two of these, both lying in the center of the country, indicating that there is promising potential for further exploration both on and offshore Yemen.”

Take note here, these new reserves would be sweet oil and not the sludge Saudi Arabia is thinning with seawater to get it to pump. I won’t get into technicalities, but much of Yemen’s oil wealth comes in the form of 41°API or above oil, which equates to quality and ease of extraction compared to what is currently coming out of Saudi Arabia.

Cold War II Geostrategy This declassified (sanitized) CIA document tells us the Yemen situation in historical context, and show us U.S. policy toward the country is all about what I’ve suggested. Oil is a key factor, there is more oil than has been projected, and Yemen is part of a New Cold War hegemonic strategy by the U.S. and allies. Ironically, the CIA’s information and recommendations on Yemen in the 1980s proved wrong on many accounts.

The experts creating these strategies were no less Anglo-European in their thinking than today’s analysts. They got the oil part right and missed the Soviet influence and North and South Yemen’s reunion totally. U.S. policy back then, as now, looked like cheerleading for big oil. In the aforementioned report, Hunt Oil, Amoco, and Texaco were the superheroes that would bring both Yemen into the U.S. stable of allied nations. Today, the strategy has only
Almost 17 million people in Yemen are unable sustain themselves, and the western narrative still relies on religious differences to explain the divide between Yemen and its neighbors. U.S. think tanks have Detche Welle convinced the catastrophe is a Sunni-Shiite conflict. Israel’s Tel Aviv University’s Moshe Dayan Center gives the same diagnosis. These vested interests all want you and I to believe that Saudi Arabia is trying to save Yemen from the same fate as Iraq! No, I am not kidding, read the DW story. And the Germans wonder why “peace is still elusive?”

Religion has precious little to do with the conflict in Yemen today. The root causes of this proxy war are as I have stated. Right behind the energy war, the battle for geostrategic posture has put the people of Yemen in extreme peril. To find the proof of this, we have to scan the western mainstream until we reach our old friends Al Jazeera.

“Reminiscent of the “Great Game” played out in Afghanistan between Great Britain and Russia more than a hundred years ago, Saudi Arabia and Iran are engaged in their own decades-long strategic rivalry for power and influence in the Middle East, stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Gulf and Arabian Sea. It is built mostly along sectarian and ideological lines - Saudi Arabia as the leader of the Sunni Muslim world, and Iran as the leader of the Shia Muslim world.”

The other half involves post-colonialist nations that always have a hand in the affairs of nations at cultural and economic crossroads. Insert Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, alongside China and Russia here. Of course, the Al Jazeera piece is slanted toward Saudi Arabia and the Israeli contingent, but the “Great Game” recollection is sound. Yemen controls the entrance to the Red Sea through the Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal. When all is said and done, this is the only story. Cold War II - same as Cold War I.

Political Geo-Dynamics

When we think of places like Iraq, Kuwait, or even Russia, we often think of the energy and natural resources. That is, where economics and geostrategy are concerned. Transit routes are not so often discussed beyond choke points like the Persian Gulf or the Suez Canal etc. How oil or natural gas gets from one place to another is a bit too wide a topic for the average Washington Post reader, let’s just face it. So, imagine how obtuse most Americans or Germans are when we talk about other market factors like OPEC’s competition, and shale helping America reenter the energy game in a big way, most people just don’t have the time to invest. Reading how Royal Dutch Shell, BP, and Exxon Mobil Corp. is doubling down on shale output, it’s just not sexy for most people. On top of this, try to explain the complexities of global competition between Russia and the United States with Europe sitting in between, and you lose almost everyone.

If I may, a bit over oversimplification can help even the busiest reader understand what I mean by Political Geo-Dynamics. Geodynamics is about the processes which have shaped the Earth. So, if we overlay a political map on top of the quantities of natural resources on our planet, we end up with a pretty good idea where conflicts and other synergies will surface. Consumption/demand plays a major roll in how crises flux, as you can imagine. The Middle East had to become a crisis point for a number of reasons, not the least of which being OPEC’s squeezing of America back in the 1970s. But let’s not digress.

America and Europe need more gas, corporations want to maximize profits in fulfilling the demand. Russia and Gazprom making a trillion euro off of the Europeans, for instance, is not something that is going to make Dutch Royal Shell, BP, or Exxon happy. Iran getting rich off the world’s biggest natural gas resources is not going to happen either. I won’t even get into Germany and the world’s most profitable energy company, E.ON. (2015 earnings $126.97bn) This is a topic all its own.

Yemen satisfies three of three qualifying characteristics to be a target for annihilation. If the western alliance cannot have a puppet government in place, and if BP, Total, and Exxon cannot share in the offshore oil riches, then the bombs are going to fall until they can. America is going to have the geostrategic location and the bases, or the blood will flow. Yemen was just unlucky enough to have jutted out of the primordial ooze in the wrong place. It would not matter if Yemenis were Southern Baptists or Episcopalians, Donald Trump or any U.S. president would be backing Saudi Arabia and Israel in destroying the place or controlling it. This is a simple truth. Yemen is about container shiploads of money. The religious aspect is just for headlines people can understand. Christian versus Muslim, Good Old Boys versus Terrorists, you know the game.

What bothers me most, besides the starving or blown to bits children, is that we cannot just come out and admit its
about greed. Hitler was more honest than current leaders, at least. Lebensraum was about killing people in Eastern Europe to get their land. Why can’t our killing Yemenis be about America maintaining power? I bet most Yemenis wish they’d been born in Nova Scotia.

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