The war in Yemen, now in its sixth year, remains an important element of the broader Middle East conflict, in particular the confrontation between Iran with the Shiite “Axis of Resistance” and the Saudi coalition, which is indirectly supported by the United States and Israel. This conflict has already created the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. According to the UN, more than 24 million Yemenis – about 80 percent of the country’s population – are in need of humanitarian aid, and the number of internally displaced persons exceeds 3 million.

According to the press service of the governmental forces, in the last six months alone the Hussite movement Ansar Allah has lost over 25,000 of its supporters and about 4,000 fighting vehicles in the fighting in the central part of the country, in particular, as a result of the fighting in Marib which took place from February to May this year. Although the Hussites have occupied various settlements and substantial areas in Marib and al-Jawf, they have not been able to take the administrative center of the province, control the two main roads, or advance toward the oil fields in Marib, which largely support the Hadi government’s budget. As a result, the Ansar Allah offensive operation has already turned into a positional war of attrition in the mountains and hills in March-April, and attempts to bypass the main group of Hadith through the desert in Al-Jawf province using light infantry were cut short by the reserves brought in from Saudi Arabia and central Yemen. As a result, the front stretched in a huge arc north of Marib far to the east, but the Hussites could not find any weakness in it, break through to the key supply route of the Maribbean group and gain operational superiority.

The relative failure of the Hussites has been to some extent due to the lack of heavy weapons, the enemy’s total domination of the air and the presence of reserves brought in from other provinces of Yemen. The Hussites’ resources are quite limited, and the local Hadith counterstrike, which caused an operational crisis, has forced the Ansar Allah command to reduce the workload of the offensive in Marib.
The government army links the Ansar Allah movement’s renewed vigor directly to an order from the Iranian military leadership, and they link the deterioration of the situation to the election of a new president in Iran.

The situation in the country has also been exacerbated by the fact that government forces, backed by Saudi Arabia, have renewed their clashes with another force, the separatists from the Southern Transitional Council (STC), supported by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), who some time ago had signed a peace treaty with each other. However, it should be noted that the UAE has recently reduced the degree of its involvement in the war, focusing on the annexation of Sokotra, the sharing of power with the Hadists and support for separatist tendencies in South Yemen.

Recently, the UN and the US have tried to bolster their efforts at achieving a truce between the warring parties of the Yemeni conflict. UN Secretary-General António Guterres appointed the Swedish diplomat Hans Grundberg as his special envoy for Yemen. Hans Grundberg had already held the position since 2018, having been appointed UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in May. The Yemeni government welcomed the appointment, expressing the hope that Grundberg’s experience “will help achieve a comprehensive ceasefire in the country based on an international consensus on the need to halt hostilities as soon as possible and achieve a political settlement.”

As for the Shiite insurgency movement Ansar Allah (the Hussites), the head of its delegation to the negotiations, Mohamed Abdel Salam, said on August 8 that Grundberg’s appointment makes no sense, nor does any other peaceful dialogue; not until the aggression is stopped and the blockade is lifted. In general, however, the Hussites’ attitude toward the UN mediation role is very restrained, reflecting long-standing trends related to the weakening influence of this organization on key world events. In the case of the war in Yemen, the only real agreement brokered by the UN in Stockholm that obliges the parties to the conflict to observe a ceasefire near the port of Al Hudaydah (which supplies a significant portion of international humanitarian aid to Yemen) is regularly violated by both sides amid UN efforts to call for an end to these violations.

In June, US Special Envoy to Yemen Tim Lenderking said that his country recognized the legitimacy of the Hussite movement Ansar Allah in the Republic, as reported by Al-Mayadeen. The American special envoy also noted the successes achieved by the rebels during the armed conflict and stressed that it is impossible to resolve the crisis in the country without dialogue with them. Nevertheless, he called on the international community to put pressure on the Hussite movement to stop attacks on the city of Marib, one of the last strongholds of the legitimate government in Yemen. The US special envoy also expressed satisfaction with the agreement between the legitimate Yemeni leadership and the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) to return the former government to the interim capital, Aden.

As the Turkish edition Anadolu notes, the US administration’s recognition of the Hussites as a “legitimate player” is nothing less than recognition of the Hussites as the victor in the Yemen war, as well as a moderate signal to Iran in the run-up to the nuclear deal. The publication also emphasizes that, in fact, the Yemeni war was a “PR attempt” in which the Saudi Crown Prince was soon to enter the Yemeni capital as a “conqueror” and through this success would gain the Saudi throne. Over the years, however, the Saudis, despite their military, economic, and diplomatic efforts, still have not achieved their goals. Today, the Iranian-backed Hussites control a large part of the country and are expanding their zone of domination.

As for the prospects for resolving the Yemeni conflict, the dependence of Saudi Arabia on the position of the United States and the Ansar Allah movement on Iranian military and political aid is clearly visible, which puts the conflict in Yemen under the influence of the level of escalation of US-Iranian relations. It is governed both by the progress made in negotiations and by the acts of ongoing hybrid warfare, when the parties strike opposing forces on the territory of third countries or in international territorial waters, particularly in the form of “tanker warfare”.

Nowadays, it has become apparent to the conflicting sides that there is no military solution to the conflict due to insufficient forces to achieve a complete military victory over their opponents. The conflict has largely returned to a positional phase. At the same time, the confrontation remains internationalized, and the goals of its participants may diverge even when they are in the same coalition. To a large extent, this is still a hybrid war between Saudi Arabia and Iran for control of Yemen, although other countries are directly or indirectly involved.

The lack of diplomatic results is largely due to the different aspirations of the parties and their low propensity to compromise. International institutions are adrift and passive as far it goes, so we can hardly expect the Yemen war to end anytime soon.
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