US-Saudi Arabia Standoff Destroys Yemen As First Stage of Blame Game

Many thing are now happening which cannot be explained by conventional wisdom and the knowledge we have from conventional sources. One is what is happening between the US and Saudi Arabia. There is now a serious face off between these two countries, but its cause has little to do with the Kingdom’s sordid human rights record and endemic corruption, things the US is supposed to oppose. It has more to do with what is happening in the US presidential election, and the outcome may be of global importance, a real game changer.

Who’s clean enough to dump?

The US election may boil down to who did what concerning 9/11. In the Republican race Donald Trump is gaining votes and delegates by continuing to express a willingness to expose the dark secrets of the Bush and Obama administrations’ foreign dealings. Meanwhile, Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton is mired in scandal on scandal, many involving the same players.

The darkest foreign dealings of the US are outlined in the missing 28 pages of the official 9/11 report, which will undoubtedly also compromise Saudi Arabia, America’s best friend in the Middle East. At present, this report is being kept secret. In a country where you can access people’s bank records by a few clicks of the mouse, as former Vice-President Dan Quayle discovered to his cost, this is a scandal in itself.

This report is the really hot issue in the US right now, and may turn the presidential elections one way or the other. If Trump plays his hand right, it will fly back in the faces of Hillary and her erstwhile supporters. Mrs. Clinton is already embarrassed by allegations that Saudi Arabia’s King Salman has been funding the Clinton Foundation, which is in effect a slush fund for distributing all kinds of political patronage under the counter. If these allegations are true, it can fairly be said that Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign is being funded by Saudi Arabia, and there will be considerable fallout from this in a Western world which equates “Muslim autocracy” with “terrorism” and is allowed to get away with it, quite apart from what the 9/11 report says.

9/11 shouldn’t stay secret

The much-touted 28 pages of the 9/11 report could not only potentially collapse the House of Cards (as well as that of Saud) but see US politicians facing criminal charges as collaborators in international terrorism. Foreign government support of the 9/11 hijackers is being hidden from the American people and the international community by a country which thinks it is the best and has no need to bow to anyone. It is therefore, by extension, hiding its own culpability by not taking this opportunity to put the boot into these deviant foreigners once again.

As has been pointed out, the refusal to make this report public shields state sponsors of extremism from accountability—which encourages their continued sponsorship and endangers countless lives around the world. It also prevents the American people from making informed judgments about the nation’s counter-terror strategy and foreign policy—past, present and future. Furthermore, it undermines 9/11 family members working to achieve
courtroom justice against those who aided and abetted the deaths of their loved ones. That’s quite a rap sheet for the administration which won’t release them to be facing – in a country which is still filled with horror by the notorious Warren Harding administration of the early 1920s, let alone Watergate.

Former Senator Bob Graham (D-FL) and other informed sources have stated publicly that the 28 pages show that the alleged 9/11 hijackers were funded by the Saudi government through its US embassy - which was headed by a Bush Crime Family “made man,” Prince Bandar, affectionately known as “Bandar Bush.” The Sunni Kingdom has since acted as paymaster for much of what has transpired in Syria, turning local and regional problems into a time-honoured conflict between the two branches of Islam for geopolitical and economic gain. Naturally this involved the never-ending power struggle with with Iran and the ensuring that clouds of smoke were sent into the wider region.

**Fighting paper with bombs**

It is the controversy surrounding this report which must be kept in mind when assessing the most recent events in Yemen. As previously stated, the sudden US pullout from there was not driven by military factors but the theft of documents which show the illegal transactions the US has been involved in there. These pieces of paper are so damaging that the US is getting out as fast as it can, while bombs and casualties have done nothing to persuade it to leave before.

In the light of this pullout, Saudi Arabia has moved in to bomb the Yemeni capital to smithereens. The cat is away so the mouse will play, just as the Taliban did in Afghanistan when US troops pulled out. But this bombing has nothing to do with the Yemeni conflict itself. It is all about who is going to take the fall for 9/11 – and who will go down fighting the hardest if they do.

The US has run from Yemen because the documents seized there most probably reveal that it took over the country simply to illegally sell arms to terrorists. Given their longstanding intelligence collaboration, it is inconceivable that the Saudis do not know this. It is also inconceivable that the Saudis were not involved in these operations themselves, either by shipping the weapons or paying for them, directly or indirectly.

This bombing positions Saudi Arabia as the true master of the region. It can walk (or in this case fly) in without bothering what anyone else thinks, in typical US fashion. It is also a signal that Saudi Arabia is too powerful to be brought down by what is in the 9/11 report, because it can unleash a whirlwind of its own if the US tries to blame Saudi Arabia for its contents.

This process has already begun. Details of the 9/11 report have been leaked, not to harm the US per se but to suggest that rogue elements in its government led the country astray, into the arms of a Saudi Arabia which is uniformly corrupt and criminal. That has been the level of public discourse so far, preparing the way for a cleansing operation which will protect the guiltiest Americans, only finding enough sacrificial lambs to satisfy the thirst for blood these insinuations will have created, while condemning with international sanctions every Saudi who is implicated.

Congress is now considering a bill which will suspend Sovereign Immunity for members of the Saudi royal family accused of involvement, through the Saudi state, in terrorist attacks on US soil. The Saudi government is reacting to this the same way it has in Yemen, but using different weapons: it is threatening to punitively dump $750 billion in US Treasury Bonds if this bill is passed. If you make us pay for our joint crimes, we will show you who is really boss, the Saudi rulers are saying in the best way they know how. The US knows that if it wants a fight, things will not stop there.

**No way out but going further in**

The threat of exposure of what is in the official 9/11 report has many in the Republican Party establishment, who are trying to stop Trump, shaking in their boots. People linked to the Bush family, Prince Bandar and a pack of other royals are closing ranks. Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party don’t want any more embarrassment either, when they have promoted her to their primary voters as their best candidate despite all the well-known scandals she and her husband have been involved in.

This is one of these situations where the only damage limitation option is not to deny the offences took place but to claim that everyone is guilty and some more guilty than others. This was the tactic former Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi notoriously tried, when he himself provoked the Tangentopoli scandal by letting one of his party members take the fall when he was caught taking a bribe.
When the offended member went public with how widespread this practice was Craxi defended his own revealed involvement by saying that everyone else did the same, and most were dirtier than him. It did him no good because he had set himself up as being above such things, while they were widely expected of some other politicians. But he had no other option – and neither do the parties implicated in the 9/11 report, as most are very much ready to believe the worst about them from the beginning.

The Saudis have much they can remind the US of if they are attacked in order to paint them as worse than the US members of this operation. They might, for example, point out that the US ostensibly entered Yemen to back the president who controlled the oil flow which was bankrolling several operations and had formed the basis of several slush funds. They know who they dealt with; they know whose hands were in the barrel. They know who they can bring down with them if they themselves are indicted for any crime.

After Watergate destroyed the whole US political class, not just the Republican Party or Nixon administration, by showing how dirty politicians could be US voters elected Jimmy Carter as president, because he was considered a good, honest man who was the antidote to politicians. Donald Trump could never be called a good, honest man, but he is a similar antidote to politicians. He is playing this for all it is worth, particularly as he is losing ground in other ways,

the hillbillies having had their fun by shouting for Trump, not necessarily being prepared to vote for him.

But even a Trump administration would only have a brief honeymoon period in which it would be considered “outsider,” just as Carter’s had. The only way the US political class as a whole will emerge unscathed from the 9/11 report will be to pretend that the Saudis took things much further than the poor US intended. We will hear a lot about the value of the US-Saudi strategic partnership, and the things the US was prepared to overlook to keep this going. But no matter how many US politicians are implicated, the subtext will always be that the Saudis are the inherently corrupt partner, and no country with any resources is going to accept being treated like that.

**Blinking obvious**

This standoff does give the US and its allies the opportunity to do the right thing and abandon the Saudi regime, as this will make any subsequent actions it takes seem like sour grapes. Westerners have an ingrained notion that everyone wants to come to the West, or be a friend of the West, because it is the best place on earth. This is the assumption behind debates about migrants, for example. From this standpoint, Saudi Arabia is likely to say or do anything simply because it has been jilted by the West.

This has not happened in the past because Saudi Arabia has led the branch of the Muslim world most ready to deal with the infidel, and the inherent incompatibility of Islamic and Western value systems has made the West scared of leaving the Muslim world to its own devices. It has to be influenced somehow, and a common interest in energy and covering each other’s crimes because of who they are has maintained that relationship so far.

But now the Saudis have told the US, by taking its own actions in Yemen and reminding it what it knows about US actions there, that if the US goes for broke to get itself off the hook so will Saudi Arabia. They have said that, unlike the US, they are not going to run away because of a piece of paper but challenge any attempt to incriminate them by it. The US knows they aren’t joking, and can cut off most of the oil tomorrow, and that is why this conflict is ramping up by the day.

Who blinks first, and how, will define what happens far beyond the Middle East. The only possible victor however may be Yemen, which will at least be left alone, having served its purpose.

*Seth Ferris, investigative journalist and political scientist, expert on Middle Eastern affairs, exclusively for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook”.*