

Obama's War Crimes in Yemen Saved Al-Qaeda

by Ulf Sandmark, *EIR* correspondent, Stockholm

March 15—The Yemen war is one of the worst of Obama's crimes. Millions of Yemenis, the majority of the population, have been blocked from food deliveries for two years by Obama and the Saudis, causing the biggest current starvation crisis in the world. Fourteen million Yemenis are starving, according to the UN, and children are dying at an accelerated pace, as *EIR* reported on Mar. 3 of this year.

Just as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS were about to be wiped out of Yemen by the regular army with its allied Houthi forces almost exactly two years ago, on March 26, 2015, the nation was attacked by a Saudi-led alliance in what has become a genocidal bombing campaign and war on Yemen. Obama joined the military aggression of the Saudi-led coalition, supplying intelligence, target lists and refueling for bomber jets. Saudi Arabia and its allies brought together troops and mercenaries from different parts of the world. What was not mentioned in Western media were the open statements by Al-Qaeda leaders pledging to join the Saudis in attacking the new Yemeni political leadership and especially the Houthi movement (Ansarullah). Al-Qaeda became part of the foot soldiers of the Saudi-led alliance, and was never attacked by the Saudi air force. It restored its presence in Yemen with the help of the war.

On Oct. 27, 2015, the spokesman for the Syrian Arab Army reported that "four planes arrived in Aden



Xinhua Photo

People search for victims inside a funeral hall after it was targeted by airstrikes in Sana'a, Yemen, on Oct. 8, 2016.

Airport in Yemen, Oct. 16, carrying terrorists from ISIS. The spokesman said that the planes, which consisted of two Turkish Airlines planes, one Qatar Airways plane, and one Emirates Airlines plane, were carrying more than 500 ISIS members who had fled Syria following the Russian airstrikes." He went on to say that "upon arrival in Aden, the Saudi alliance officers divided them into three groups ... to join the alliance's forces which had sustained great losses during their battles there."¹ Even though this report was a single shot without confirmation elsewhere, the fact is that not only AQAP, but also ISIS terrorists gained influence in Yemen at the time.

Without mentioning any airlift from Turkey, Re-

1. <http://sana.sy/en/?p=59341>



voa

Sana'a, Yemen, Oct. 9, 2015, months after an airstrike destroyed more than 100 buildings.

uters reported on June 30, 2015, that ISIS was growing to rival AQAP in Yemen. The article straightforwardly admitted the role of the terrorists in the Saudi-led alliance: “AQAP still participates in almost daily battles with the [Shi’a] Houthis alongside tribal fighters, Southern Resistance forces and supporters of exiled President Abd-Rabbu Mansour al-Hadi.”²

The U.S. forces deployed for the Yemen war have stayed far away from the ground forces of the Saudi-led coalition, but maintain a total overview of the brutal Saudi campaign, most notably through U.S. special forces deployed in the Saudi command center to provide intelligence and target lists for the brutal bombing campaign by the Saudi air force. The U.S. Air Force aided the Saudi airplanes with airborne refueling to considerably extend their bombing capabilities, and also supplied guided bombs and cluster bombs that have been used against Yemen. The Obama Administration was forced to cut back the number of U.S. troops aiding the Saudi targeting operations, when a funeral reception was hit in Sana’a on Oct. 8, 2016, killing more than 150 and wounding more than 600 people with a “double tap” bombing, a war crime targeting the first responders. The United States was also forced to halt the deliveries of guided bombs.

The British Neocolonial Suffocation of Yemen

The British, who control both Obama and the Saudi

monarchy, have themselves kept a lower profile and never officially joined the Saudi-led alliance. However, they post soldiers in the Saudi command center for “targeting assistance” to the Saudis to control the slaughter. Further, the Saudi air force would not be able to fly without the extensive ground services of the British arms supplier BAE. After the Yemenis achieved independence from the British colonial system in the course of the 1960s, the British have overseen six wars there to keep Yemen down. The main instrument of the British

in doing that, has been the Saudis, who fear a strong Republican Yemen that would set an example for the all the dissidents within the Gulf monarchies.

Saudi influence in Yemen has sustained dissent and discord there. Saudi Arabia has kept contact with, and financed some of the most influential tribes in Yemen. The Saudis also funded the rise of the extremist variety of Saudi Islam, Wahhabism, in Yemen, which did not exist before in this nation, which has a very tolerant tradition of different religions and sects living side by side. Yemen therefore witnessed many internal conflicts. In 2004, the Houthi movement was in an armed conflict with the national army and the President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was supported by the Saudis at the time.

After the “Arab Spring” began in 2011, President Saleh was forced to resign in 2012 and a general dialogue and reconciliation process started. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) kept meddling in this process with their “GCC Initiative” that was meant to keep the old structures and give more influence to tribal forces rather than a strong and centralized national government. In that prolonged process, no presidential elections were possible, and instead the Yemeni parliament was obliged in February 2012 to “appoint” Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi as acting president for a limited two-year period, which was renewed until February 2015. Continued corruption, political oppression of the youth of the revolution, and the expanding influence of AQAP and ISIS, forced some national forces to act.

2. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-islamicstate-insight-idUSKCN0PA1T920150630>

National Alliance for the Salvation of Yemen

The main formerly warring forces in Yemen, the Houthi forces on the one hand, and on the other the regular army of Yemen, which is largely very much under the influence of former president Saleh and his party, the National People's Congress, started to reconcile and cooperate. In this process of national reorganization, appointed President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi was put under house arrest on Jan. 20, 2015, just before his term was to expire. Instead of resigning when his term expired, Hadi fled on March 21 to the major harbor town and old center for British control, Aden. Although he had lost power and the control over the ministries, the capital, and the majority of the population, he called for armed "resistance" against the Sana'a government. From his home town, he claimed he still was the president and denounced the takeover as illegitimate.

The national alliance of the Houthis and the regular army of Yemen pursued the very limited forces of Hadi. In this process, in cleaning out the Saudi control of Yemen, AQAP was also pushed back to very limited areas in southeast Yemen. Just as the national alliance was about to seize Aden, the Saudi-led alliance launched the current war on Yemen on March 26, 2015. Former president Hadi, in whose name the attack was done, was not even informed of the launching of the war until three days afterwards.

Pakistani scholar Sikander Ahmed Shah, in successfully advising his government not to join the war against Yemen, pointed to the fact that former president Hadi had lost control over its capital and its territory, when, from Aden, he called for the Saudi-led military intervention. Shah wrote on April 6, 2015, that "... an intervention would not violate the sovereignty of Yemen if the incumbent government consents to or invites external military intervention... However, such assistance can only be lawfully provided if the incumbent government requesting it exercises 'effective control' over its territory... Under international law, it no longer enjoys effective control if it loses control over the capital city and is in 'imminent danger of col-



President Barack Obama and Yemen's President, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi talk to the media as they meet at the White House, August 1, 2013, in Washington.

lapse.' Yemen is in the midst of the latter, where the capital city and sizable chunks of territory are under the control of the rebels. Control enjoyed by Hadi is limited to Aden and that too is not far from collapse. Therefore, legally speaking, relying on the president's consent for military intervention is highly problematic."³

The Yemen war therefore is not, as portrayed by Western media, primarily a civil war, but an attack on a sovereign member nation of the UN. The Pakistanis refused to become proxies for the British in this war. Egypt, another nation with experience of fighting in British-instigated wars, refused to send soldiers, although nominally supporting the war as a member of the Saudi-led alliance. British puppet Obama, however, rushed into this new regime-change war, like the wars against Iraq, Libya, and Syria. In a not-merely-symbolic move indicating Obama's complete allegiance to the Anglo-Saudi Empire, then-Saudi ambassador to the United States Adel Al-Jubair announced the start of "Operation Storm of Resolve" on March 26 at a news conference in Washington.

The Obama administration was later instrumental in supporting the UN Security Council Resolution 2216 on Yemen, which is used as a basis for the Saudi-led military aggression. This resolution was passed on April 14, 2015, a full three weeks after the

³ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1174185>

bombing started, and without any mention of it. The resolution was proposed by Jordan, one of the members of the Saudi-led coalition, and it provides only for a one-sided mediation process by the GCC nations. A veto in the UN Security Council could have stopped Resolution 2216, but tragically, China voted with the Western powers and Russia abstained. The Russian position is clear from an article in Sputnik News of May 2, 2015 where the late Russian UN Representative Vitaly Churkin insisted “that the UN Security Council’s previous resolution on Yemen, 2216, did not authorize airstrikes by the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition... It is clear from Resolution 2216 that it did not authorize the use of military force. Some colleagues were saying that the Saudi-led coalition is trying to make sure that Resolution 2216 is implemented. This is not the case. Their action is completely outside the resolution.”⁴

Resolution 2216 further provides for an arms blockade, which has resulted in mission creep allowing for a full land, sea, and air blockade of food, medicine, and fuel, causing the genocide against the Yemeni people. The Obama Administration in this way allowed for both war crimes and the worst starvation crisis in the world. On top of that, the killer Obama continued his personally directed drone warfare ostensibly against AQAP in Yemen.⁵

The Backlash against the Drones

The drone warfare is creating a tremendous backlash of hate against the United States in Yemen and in most of the Arab street in the whole region. What in the Orwellian language of the Obama Administration was called “collateral damage” in these strikes, are pure and simple massacres of families, neighbors, or innocent bystanders. Rules of decision making in the White House Tuesday kill sessions specified that if more than the targeted person on Obama’s “baseball card” risked being killed, then Obama personally always had to take the decision, i.e. for the massacres of families.

The drone attacks killing families and bystanders as “collateral damage” in Yemen are so generally hated in Yemen, that even those who are at war against AQAP and ISIS are protesting. The Yemenis point to the reck-



UNICEF/UNI191720/Yasin

A malnourished 2-year-old girl receiving treatment at a hospital in Sana'a.

less targeting, the absence of any justice, the devaluation of human life, the brutal infringement on their sovereignty and more. They also protest because Obama’s drone war helped AQAP and ISIS in their recruitment, bringing still more drone attacks.

These protests continued under President Trump, too. The U.S. Navy Seal raid on Jan. 29 in a Yemeni village in the Al-Baidha province killed 70 people, among them 16 women and children. The picture of eight-year old Nora al-Awlaki, killed in the operation, with her red hair rosette, went viral in Yemen. As another drone hit a few days later, a demonstration against the drone war was organized in Sana’a March 3, where tens of thousands of armed men, who are themselves at war against the terrorists of Al-Qaeda and ISIS, poured out in anger into the streets.⁶

Anyone who has studied the history of war, knows that no war can be won by airstrikes alone, not even with complementary action by special forces. The terrorists in Yemen, just like those in Iraq and Syria, have to be defeated by the regular army and the blocking of supplies from foreign interests. What is needed beyond that, is the power of the nation mobilizing for recon-

4. <https://sputniknews.com/amp/politics/201505021021620895/>

5. http://www.larouchepub.com/other/2017/4410obm_good_at_killing.html

6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a15kKFiltZY>



youtube/rt

Yemen: Mass demonstration in Sana'a decries Saudi-led coalition war.

struction and peaceful development, giving the youth a positive life alternative, instead of the terrorist death cults.

The Yemen Government

In the Yemeni capital of Sana'a, President Saleh Al-Samad is serving as the acting president pending the presidential election, as the Constitution of the Republic of Yemen requires. The National Salvation government was recognized on Dec. 10, 2016, in its latest formation by the Yemeni parliament majority elected before the war. The Houthi movement is but a part, although a very important part, of this broad national government.

This national coalition government is in administrative control of the ministries and public authorities, including the national army, as well as the majority of the population. The people of Yemen demonstrated its most determined and widest support of the acting president and his government in the exceptional demonstration in Sana'a of Aug. 20, 2016, in which two million Yemenis took part, despite ongoing bombardment. A new million-man demonstration is planned in Sana'a for the second anniversary of the beginning of the war on March 26. The government and its public authorities are the only ones capable of receiving and distributing the absolutely necessary foreign emergency aid,

because the harbor of Aden and its surroundings are under the control of militias and terrorists, making it too unsafe for the UN aid agencies to approach the shore. The government has a plan for taking part in the New Silk Road, and is therefore bringing hope for the reconstruction and future development of the nation.

Those who think that there is a way to get at Iran via Yemen, are wrong. Iran is playing no practical role in this war. The claim that the Houthis are proxies for Iran against Saudi Arabia, collapses

under the fact that Yemen is under a total sea blockade. Most of the weapons, used in the war by the Sana'a government forces of the national army and Houthi tribesmen, were given to Yemen under the massive arms transfer, especially from the United States, for the fight against terrorism beginning in 2001. At the time the former president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, was an ally of the United States in the fake war against AQAP in Yemen. There are plenty of arms in Yemen, especially as the Saudis in the war also brought even more weapons that could be seized by the Sana'a government forces.

It is high time to end this genocidal war, which was made possible by the collusion of President Obama with the Anglo-Saudi Empire, and to bring about a completely new American and international policy vis-à-vis Yemen: Stop the war, start the reconstruction of the admittedly poorest country in the region, and integrate Yemen into the 21st Century's greatest peace project, China's "One Belt, One Road," the New Silk Road. With a positive collaboration between China, Russia and the United States, with the national forces and the youth of Yemen, this country could be made a "pearl in the necklace of the New Silk Road," as Helga Zepp-LaRouche pleaded in her statement to the International Schiller Institute conference in Berlin on June 26, 2016.