

"As the Saudi-led coalition crumbles, Yemen needs a nationwide ceasefire."

The Saudi-led coalition's intervention in Yemen is proof of how things can go wrong with an ill-conceived, poorly strategised and geopolitics-driven military interference that cares little about human lives.

After four years of war, the Saudis have not met their declared goal — pushing back the Shia Houthi rebels from the capital Sana'a and restoring the ousted government which is now temporarily headquartered in the southern city of Aden. On the contrary, the war has pushed Yemen into what the UN calls the worst humanitarian crisis. Thousands have been killed, tens of thousands displaced and about two thirds of the country's 28 million people do not have enough to eat.

And now, there is a rebellion within the coalition. Last week, the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a militia group that was fighting the Houthis as part of the Saudi-led coalition, turned against their masters and captured the presidential palace in Aden as well as the city's main port. In return, Saudi jets targeted STC fighters before a tenuous ceasefire set in.

It now looks like a three-way conflict. The Shia Houthis, who the Saudis claim are backed by Iran, are controlling much of the country's north including Sana'a. Yemen's internationally-backed government of Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, the Saudi ally, is controlling the south, though Mr. Hadi is running the purported administration from Saudi Arabia. The STC wants the south to be an independent entity, like it was till the Yemeni unification in 1990.

The STC's rebellion also signals the growing friction in the multi-national coalition Saudi Arabia has stitched together to fight the Houthis. The STC is backed by the UAE, a crucial partner of Saudi Arabia in its foreign policy adventures.

They stayed together in propping up the military dictatorship of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Egypt, in countering the spread and influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world, in opposing the Iran nuclear deal and



on blockading Qatar. But when it comes to Yemen, the Saudis see the Hadi government and Sunni Islamic parties, including the Islah, as allies who could stabilise and rebuild the whole country after the Houthis are defeated, while the UAE, already frustrated by the coalition's failure to defeat the rebels, counts on the STC and is staunchly opposed to the Islah party, which has ties to the Brotherhood.

The UAE has already pulled out of the Yemen war leaving it to Saudi Arabia to defeat the Houthis. And with their continued backing to the STC, the Emiratis appear less concerned about defeating the Houthis than maintaining their influence in southern Yemen.

This should be a moment of reckoning for Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi Arabian Crown Prince and the main architect of the Yemen intervention. He has lost the war and his coalition is crumbling, while Yemen is left with unimaginable human suffering. It is time for a nationwide ceasefire and talks with all stakeholders under the mediation of a willing UN to find a political settlement to the crisis.



GS World Team...

Yemen and Saudi dispute

Why in discussion?

- Recently, the Saudi Arabia-led coalition force said on Sunday that it had launched attacks against southern separatists in Yemen.
- The Riyadh-backed Yemen government has condemned the coup backed by the United Arab Emirates. The occupation of Rashtrapati Bhavan shows the deep gulf between the separatists and the loyal army of the government.
- Both have fought Shia Houthi rebels. "The coalition targeted the area which is a direct threat to one of the important places of legitimate government," the coalition military said in a statement.
- It also warned the separatists' Southern Transitional Council to leave the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Aden or be prepared for further attacks.

The background

- Yemen's President Abderebbo Mansoor Hadi had the backing of a coalition led by Saudi Arabia and its ally United Arab Emirates which is fighting the Houthis in Yemen. But only the United Arab Emirates-trained Army Security Belt Force in the anti-Houthi coalition is fighting the government's loyal army in Aden.
- An officer of the 'Security Belt Force' said that they have captured the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The force supports the Southern Transitional Council (STC), which seeks to restore southern Yemen as an independent state as it was from 1967 to 1990.

Humanitarian situation in Yemen?

- According to the World Health Organization, at least 10,000 people have been killed in Yemen since the Saudi intervention in 2015.
- The airstrikes by coalition forces have destroyed basic infrastructure, depleted the supply of food items and medicines, causing severe losses to Yemen.

□ If aid is not provided to Yemen, about 12 million people may be victims of starvation. At this time the whole country is also affected by the outbreak of cholera. According to information provided by UNICEF, one child dies every 10 minutes in Yemen.

Why Saudi Arabia intervenes in Yemen?

□ Saudi Arabia began to intervene in Yemen when Houthi rebels captured the capital city of (Sana'a) and President Hadi's internationally recognized government was confined to the southern part.

□ Saudi Arabia accused Iran of destabilizing the Arabian Peninsula and providing financial assistance to Shia Houthi rebels. In fact, Saudi Arabia's plan was to establish stability in the peninsula.

□ But despite four years of tireless efforts by Saudi Arabia, the Houthi rebels continued to control the capital Sanaa, as well as control most of northern Yemen. The same thing is causing trouble for Saudi Arabia.



Expected Questions (Prelims Exams)

1. Consider the following statements-

1. Yemen crisis started in 2011-12 with the movement against president Ali Abdullah Saleh.
2. Sweden and Switzerland convened pledging Event for tackling Humanitarian crisis of Yemen.
3. Sarawat mountains is a mountain range of Western coast of Arabian Peninsula.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) 1 and 2
- (d) All of the above

Expected Questions (Mains Exams)

Q. Mediation from United Nations is expected now considering the present state of Yemen. How are Saudi led coalition and other Yemen organisations responsible for making the situation of Yemen to this level? (250 Words)

Note: Answer of Prelims Expected Question given on 13 Aug. is 1 (c)