



War on terror spreads to Yemen

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Following the aborted suicide bombing of a US flight in December 2009, the USA, claiming that the plot originated in Yemen, has been escalating its intervention into that country. US military 'aid' to Yemen has gone from \$0 to \$70M dollars, and that is set to double this year.

Even before this incident, Yemeni airstrikes have taken place on al Qaeda positions, notably on 17 and 24 December, both times killing civilian lives. Because of the widespread discontent with the Saleh regime, local peoples tend to offer refuge to al Qaeda militants, making whole communities vulnerable to attack. Thousands of Yemeni troops have been deployed to Marib, Jouf and Abjan provinces, al Qaeda strongholds. Yemen is on the road to becoming another Pakistan - a country which could be plunged into civil war by the war on terror.

The US certainly backs these airstrikes, and there are claims that American cruise missiles were used in the attacks, fuelling the deep anti-US resentment among the population, and embarrassing president Saleh, who is seem to be increasingly tied to US interests. It has also has caused tension in the government, which includes conservative islamist elements, hostile to the US, as well as resentment from the Yemeni 'counter terrorism' force, which feels marginalized by the growing American role.

As attacks on al Qaeda have escalated, so has the Yemeni government's war on the northern rebels. There have also been lethal clashes between peaceful separatist protesters in the south and security forces. This has brought further tension with the US, who want Yemen to 'resolve' these other conflicts and focus on fighting al Qaeda.

Showing she couldn't care less about long-suffering Yemenis, secretary of state Clinton said, "There have been numerous conflicts in Yemen and they seem to just get worse and worse." Mentioning "expectations and conditions" on US 'support', she made it clear that the real problems tearing Yemeni society apart do not matter ? only fighting the 'global threat' of al Qaeda counts.

These various conflicts threaten to embroil Yemen in a full scale, bloody civil war, which could entail the complete collapse of central government, and lead to military intervention by Saudi Arabia and other states. The danger of direct military involvement by the US is also real. Despite the strain on US forces ? not to mention its budget - by the Afghan war, conservative forces are calling for intervention.

Even the current escalation of US involvement has worsened the situation. Opposition to imperialist involvement in Yemen is an important internationalist duty. Whenever opportunities arise, such as during anti-war meetings or actions, we need to raise this issue along with the demand that the US and other imperialist powers halt all interference and keep out of Yemen.

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