

# **Pentagon Escalates Military Presence in Yemen: Genocidal Cholera Epidemic, U.S. Seeks to Seize Control of Yemen's Strategic Resources**

Threatening war-induced humanitarian disaster United States military operations bolster allies in seizure of oil and gas resources

By [Abayomi Azikiwe](#)

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*A grave healthcare crisis in Yemen is being compounded by the increasing deployment of United States ground forces inside this war-ravaged and impoverished Middle Eastern state.*

*Since March 2015, the country has been bombed everyday by Pentagon-coordinated air strikes carried out by the Saudi Arabian led Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).*

The massive bombing of Yemen over the last 29 months began during the administration of former President Barack Obama. After withdrawing diplomatic personnel in the early months of 2015, the Saudi-GCC Coalition unleashed aerial campaigns which are principally designed to halt the advances of the Ansurallah Movement (Houthis) which controls the capital of Sanaa and other areas of the North and Central regions of the country.

From his earliest days in the White House, President Donald Trump has intensified the war. A deadly commando raid in January resulted in the death of a U.S. Seal Team 6 soldier and scores of Yemeni civilians. At present Pentagon troops are being deployed under the auspices of fighting al-Qaeda which reportedly controls several towns and an important port in the South of the nation.

After the commencement of the bombing campaign in March 2015, the interests of Yemen-based al-Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) have converged with the strategic objectives of the U.S.-allied regime of ousted President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi and its allies. The Ansurallah (Houthis), a Shiite-based movement, is politically supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran therefore providing a rationale for the role of Washington and Riyadh.



Nonetheless, to justify the enhanced troop presence in Yemen, the U.S. is claiming that its main purpose is to fulfill the mandate of successive administrations to wage an unrelenting war on al-Qaeda. It is al-Qaeda in Yemen, yet in Syria, Iraq and Libya, the enemy has been designated as ISIS or ISIL. Notwithstanding the Pentagon's utilization of these Sunni-based Islamist groups for its own political aims in Libya during the 2011 counter-revolution against the Jamahiriya under Col. Muammar Gaddafi and the ongoing war to topple the Syrian government of President Bashar al-Assad, both al-Qaeda and ISIS/ISIL can serve dual purposes throughout the Middle East and Africa as both foe and tacit collaborator.

Estimated deaths from the constant bombings and ground fighting over the last two-and-a-half years are in excess of 10,000 killed and approximately 40,000 injured. The targeting of hospitals, clinics, water and power systems, schools and civilian populated areas has created a widespread cholera epidemic afflicting hundreds of thousands.

When Trump visited Saudi Arabia to finalize a \$300 billion arms deal with the monarchy several months ago, Iran and Qatar were specifically targeted as adversaries of the foreign policy imperatives of imperialism. Since this visit, other leading members of the Saudi-GCC coalition have put forward demands to Doha calling for the closing of Al-Jazeera television, the halting of cooperation with Tehran and the purported support for terrorism by Qatar. There was no mention of the correlation between the aggressive Pentagon-engineered military campaign of the Saudi-GCC alliance and the cholera epidemic.

Although Yemen is categorized as the least developed state in the region, the country does have oil and natural gas resources. The geographic location of the nation where the southern region of the Arabian Peninsula encompasses offshore straits in the Gulf of Aden which are important in the facilitation of the global trade in petroleum, natural gas and military hardware, makes control of Yemen an important aspect of imperialist hegemony extending from the Persian Gulf to the Horn of Africa.

#### U.S. Seeks to Seize Control of Strategic Resources in Yemen

Although the Trump administration claims that its main concern in Yemen is the proliferation of al-Qaeda armed units, an article in the New York Times on August 6 suggests otherwise. After acknowledging the continuation of foreign policy objectives toward Yemen extending over from the Obama to the Trump White House, the newspaper maintains that the propping up of the Hadi forces is essential to the broader objectives inside the country.

The NYT report says:

"The current operation began overnight Wednesday (Aug. 2) with Yemeni

fighters (Hadi-aligned armed forces) traveling from Hadramawt Province, where they had been receiving training from Emirati advisers, toward oil and gas facilities in northeast Shabwa Province, according to Katherine Zimmerman, a Yemen analyst with the American Enterprise Institute in Washington. The Yemeni forces, called the Shabwani Elite, are in the process of securing major cities in the province — such as Azzan, Ataq and Jordan — from Qaeda militants and are also conducting clearing operations in the surrounding areas, officials said.”

This same article continues noting that:

“A local government official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters, said the military operation was explicitly designed to secure oil and gas facilities in Shabwa Province. Around the Balhaf liquefied natural gas plant in Shabwa, Khalid Al Adhami, a local army commander responsible for security of the facility, said that Sudanese, Emirati and Yemeni soldiers were protecting it. ‘The plant is secured from Al Qaeda attacks,’ he said.”

### Cholera Epidemic Genocidal in Character

A direct by-product of the Pentagon-coordinated war against Yemen is the manifestation of the world largest cholera epidemic ever recorded in history. Specific numbers of those affected vary. However, even conservative estimates from western-based news agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and United Nations relief agencies indicate that hundreds of thousands have come down with the illness.



Nearly 1,900 deaths associated with the outbreak are cited as of July 31 while the capacity of the medical infrastructure to respond to the epidemic is severely hampered due to the bombing and ground attacks on health facilities and water supplies. Children have been particularly impacted by the disease which is an acute diarrheal infection caused by ingestion of food or water contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholera*.

(<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2017/joint-visit-yemen/en/>)

The BBC in a July 10 report on Yemen emphasized:

“The WHO (World Health Organization) said on Saturday (July 8) that 297,438 cases had been recorded, but the agency was still analyzing the latest figures from the Yemeni health ministry on Monday (July 10). The outbreak has affected all but one of Yemen’s 23 provinces. The four most affected provinces – Sanaa, Hudaydah, Hajja and Amran – have reported almost half of the cases.

UN agencies say the outbreak is the direct consequence of the civil war, with 14.5 million people cut off from regular access to clean water and sanitation. More than half of health facilities are no longer functioning, with almost 300 having been damaged or destroyed, and some 30,000 local health workers who are key to dealing with the outbreak have not been paid for 10 months.”

### U.S. Desire to Maintain Regional Dominance is the Motivation of War Policy

U.S. military presence in Yemen illustrates its significance as a major battleground in Washington’s efforts geared toward regional dominance of the Middle East along with the Horn of Africa. Additional Pentagon troops are being sent to Syria as the full-scale assault on Raqqa, the self-proclaimed caliphate of ISIS/ISIL, is intensifying. Under Obama and now Trump, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), composed of Kurdish armed units led by the Protection Forces (YPG) are set to serve as the ground troops in the removal of the Islamists. What is often overlooked is that Raqqa is Syrian territory and should be returned to the sovereign rule of the government in Damascus.

Mosul was recently retaken by the Iraqi military utilizing U.S. air power and the cooperation of Shiite-allied militias supported by Iran. Casualties and material damage done by ISIS/ISIL have been enormous. The nature of this war emanates from the intervention by Washington in 2003 where hundreds of thousands of Pentagon and allied troops occupied Iraq in order to overthrow the government of President Saddam Hussein.

The war in Syria was begun by the Obama administration in an effort to replace the internationally-recognized state headed by President Bashar al-Assad. Millions have been dislocated within and outside of Syria while clashes continue between government forces and opposition militia backed by the Pentagon, NATO and their surrogates in the region. The Syrian government has requested and received the assistance of Iran, the Russian Federation and Hezbollah of Lebanon.

In the Horn of Africa, the war in Somalia continues amid the increase in U.S. forces in that embattled and humanitarian challenged oil-rich nation. Djibouti, the base for AFRICOM ground and aerial forces on the continent is within close proximity of the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Yemen.

Irrespective of the divisions among the two capitalist-imperialist parties in the U.S., the war machine remains constant. With a renewed focus on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the People’s Republic of China in Asia, there will undoubtedly be an enhancement of militarist propaganda in order to maintain the trillion-dollar military-security industrial complex in the U.S.

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