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BY JOHN CLAMP

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Yemen, Where Pitiless Geopolitics is Causing Famine

What is it about proxy wars that make them so very nasty? Is it really possible that at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, hard-by some of the richest kingdoms in the world, millions of children may starve to death in the worst famine of recent times? Are these questions linked?

The region is an epic governance fail that probably cannot be resolved in any ordinary, decent person's favour until the oil, morally adulterated with millions of gallons of human blood over the decades, runs out. Unfortunately for the cohorts of children who could starve to death imminently in Yemen, the oil will keep flowing. And many of them will most likely die. That's because the blockade of the country imposed by the Saudis, flush with petrodollar-purchased artillery and jets, has made humanitarian relief in the country near-impossible on a nationwide basis.

It's not like this is like for like, either. Yemen, by an accident of geology denied the oleaginous riches of its northern neighbours, has in modern times rarely made it out of the bottom five poorest states anywhere in the wider region.

When it comes to the vicious rat-sack that is Persian Gulf politics, the religious freakery of Saudi-Sunni/Iranian-Shi'ite means that, just as in European religious wars of a previous period, no holds are barred. Kids? Let 'em starve. Billions of dollars-worth of high-tech U.S., British, and French arms spray death all around. It's a humanitarian desert, by design, *pour encourager les autres*. Mothers and fathers hunched weeping over lifeless children must understand that a Shi'ite-inflected government in Yemen, no matter how

responsive to the needs of its people, cannot be. Some guy in a silk *bisht* trimmed with cloth of gold, with a beef about the inheritance of the Prophet, said so.

Children will die. Shells will pound UNESCO World Heritage sites. Shards of the distinctive local brickwork, making up some of the oldest continuously inhabited urban locations in the world, will lacerate the skin of peace-loving citizens. There won't be any succor for them, either, what with the smashed health system, the endemic corruption, the basket-case disregard for one's fellow human beings, Shi'ite or Sunni it matters not.

Just think about Yemen's wonders, currently being smashed to dust by high-explosive rounds and rockets, and drone strikes, and fighter-bombers. These include Sana'a, the high-altitude capital, which should be preserved simply as a visual marvel for curious and appreciative eyes.

The current situation is just a tragic death trap. The west of the country is controlled by Shi'ite Houthis, who were widely supported in their takeover of the Sunni former president Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi by Muslims of both persuasions, sick of the corruption and neglect of previous administrations.

Round and round we go. The war is underreported in the West, as it's U.S.-supported. UN appeals to reason and humanity fall in the Oil Peninsula on ears deafened by ideology to the cries of children, crushed to dust by these geopolitics. It's the new Middle East, 21st-Century style.

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John Clamp writes for [Maqshosh](#).

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