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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY 3 SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND CULTURAL

Effects of proxy war.

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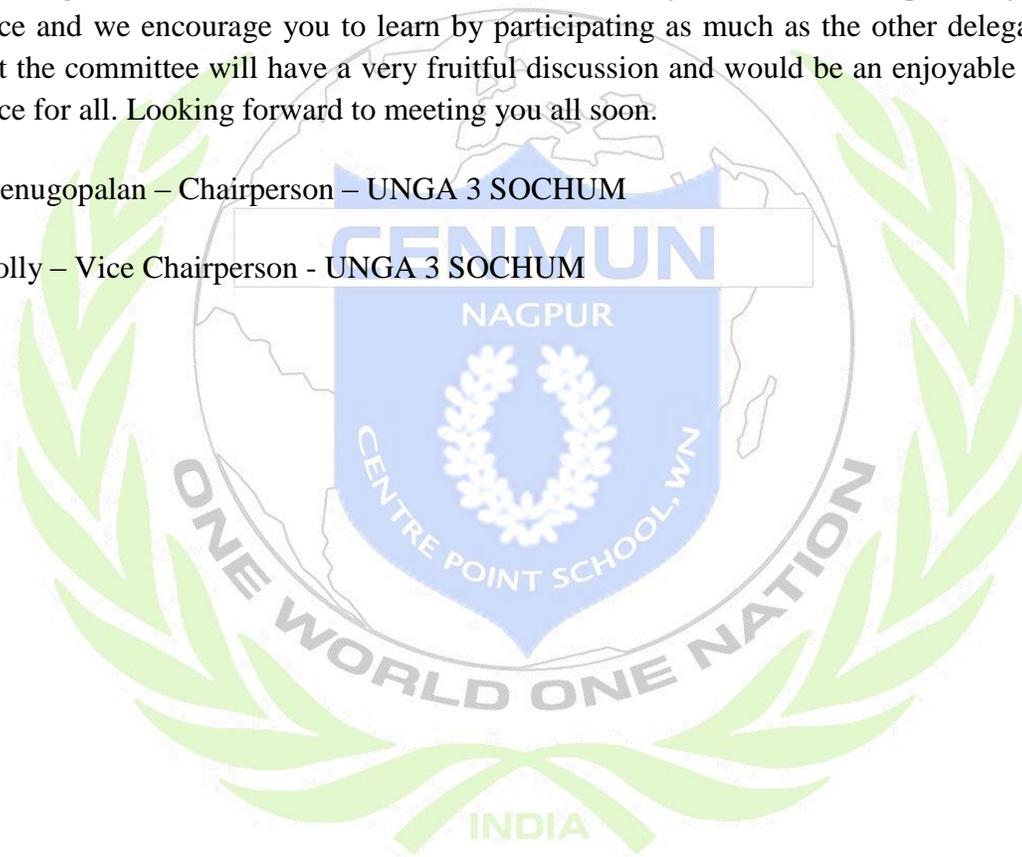
Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings diplomats!

It is our utmost pleasure to welcome you all to the session of the UNGA 3 - SOCHUM at CENMUN 2019. We are honoured as well as excited to moderate the session. The agenda for the session is “Effects of Proxy War”. This background guide is a part of your research curricula, which should provide a brief outline of the agenda. Remember this guide only touches on the basics of everything, and how committee moves forward will depend on the depth of your research and understanding of the situation. To the MUN veterans out there, we promise you a very enriching debate and to the new comers, we are really excited to be a part of your first experience and we encourage you to learn by participating as much as the other delegates. We hope that the committee will have a very fruitful discussion and would be an enjoyable learning experience for all. Looking forward to meeting you all soon.

Archit Venugopalan – Chairperson – UNGA 3 SOCHUM

Sakshi Jolly – Vice Chairperson - UNGA 3 SOCHUM



Guidelines

Rules of Procedure (ROP): The purpose of putting in a set of procedural rules in any committee is to ensure a more organised, efficient and effective debate. All queries regarding the ROP would be answered by the Executive Board before commencing the committee session. Although the Executive Board shall be fairly strict with the Rules of Procedure, the discussion of agenda will be the main priority. The ROP to be followed will be UNIC's UN4MUN procedure as to be found on <http://cenmun.com/rules-of-procedure/>.

Foreign Policy: Following the foreign policy of one's country is the most important aspect of a Model UN Conference. This is what essentially differentiates a Model UN from other debating formats. To violate one's foreign policy without adequate reason is one of the worst mistakes a delegate can make. One can always refer to <https://foreignpolicy.com/> to get a clear view of their country's stance and foreign policy.

Role of the Executive Board: The Executive Board is appointed to facilitate debate. The committee shall decide the direction and flow of debate. The delegates are the ones who constitute the committee and hence shouldn't hesitate while presenting their opinions/stance on any issue. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points of time to further debate and test participants as well as Executive board has the power to make the necessary changes in the committee for better the flow of debate.

Nature of sources/evidence: This Background Guide is meant solely for preliminary research and reference purposes and must not be cited as evidence to substantiate statements made during the conference. Evidence or proof for substantiating statements made during formal debate is acceptable from the following sources:

1. United Nations: Documents and findings by the United Nations or any related UN body is held as a credible proof to support a claim or argument.
2. News Sources: I. Reuters II. Amnesty International III. Al Jazeera

Note - Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia, or newspapers like the Guardian, Times of India etc. be accepted as a proof, whenever asked by other delegates or the Executive Board. However, delegates are still free to quote/cite from any source as they deem fit as a part of their statements.

About the Committee

UNGA 3 SOCHUM

All 193 Member States of the United Nations Organization are represented in the General Assembly - one of the six main organs of the UN - to discuss and work together on a wide array of international issues covered by the Charter of the United Nations, such as development, peace and security, international law, etc.

The General Assembly allocates to the Third Committee, agenda items relating to a range of social, humanitarian affairs and human rights issues that affect people all over the world.



About the agenda

Effects of Proxy War

What is a proxy war?

A proxy war is a conflict instigated by opposing powers who do not fight against each other directly. Instead, they use third parties to do the fighting for them.

Why a proxy war?

Opposing powers are usually core countries who have conflicting ideologies and interests with each other. However, a direct large-scale war between them would cause enormous damage to all belligerent powers. Therefore, they rather conduct proxy wars in developing countries in order to avoid loss and achieve some certain interests at the same time. Third-parties can be local governments built or supported by opposing powers or armed forces, mercenaries and terrorist groups who could strike an opponent without leading to full-scale war. Theories of civil war focus largely on factors internal to countries, generally ignoring the systemic effects of superpower rivalry during the Cold War, or great power politics associated with regional rivalries and ambitions. Great powers often influence the politics of lesser powers by supporting sides in contentious politics as a means to achieve foreign policy objectives relatively cheaply. Great powers influence the politics of other nations without bearing the costs of direct involvement by supplying the logistics that allow the feasibility of rebellions. Examining these issues is all the more critical today because the multipolar world emerging out of the Cold War era promises to generate proxy struggles in many strategic places. How to cauterize great-power machinations in civil war must in turn become a primary focus of international institutions, such as the United Nations, for strengthening instruments that would curtail external influences that propagate civil wars.

Proxy wars: The current global scenario

Proxy conflicts are complicated in ways that are not fully accounted for by standard moral frameworks. Scholars and political leaders have grappled with the dilemma: War is awful but sometimes necessary. Just war theory helps to establish when: The decision to go to war must come from the right intention, come from the right authority, and be a last resort. Additionally, combatants must take measures to spare civilian lives, the force they apply must be proportional to the threat, and the war they wage must have a high probability of leading to a conflict's peaceful resolution.

These criteria provide an important framework for containing the worst excesses of war, but as the proxy commitments of the Soviet Union and later Russia, Iran, and the United States have

shown, they are incomplete. Proxy conflicts, as the war in Yemen reveals, introduce complications that just war theory does not consider.

Much of this comes from a single flawed assumption: that if a proxy's cause is just, then a benefactor's support for them must be just. This ignores a reality now borne out by six decades of U.S. involvement in proxy conflict. The moment the United States has intervened on a proxy's behalf, whether in Vietnam, Afghanistan, or Yemen, this has immediately changed a proxy's thinking. Once a proxy has a benefactor's support, they have greater incentive to escalate a conflict rather than resolve it. A proxy has greater resources, and greater reason, to forgo risks around the negotiating table and pursue them on the battlefield.

This is one reason why intervention in a proxy war like Yemen's often deepens the very conflict it is intended to resolve. Some recent history helps to demonstrate another: In nearly every civil war between 1946 and 2002, when one warring side received support from a benefactor, the opposing side received support from one of its own, ratcheting up the stakes and costs.

The U.S. role in the Vietnam War is a prime example of these risks and their consequences, both moral and strategic. A U.S. commitment that began with a few dozen military officers in the 1950s to advise pro-American Vietnamese ended in the 1970s with more than 58,000 dead Americans and a communist Vietnam.

Stinger missiles the United States provided to mujahideen in Afghanistan fighting the Soviets were pivotal to their success over the Red Army. They were also a boon to terrorist groups and criminal gangs from Iran to Bosnia to Palestine. In fact, only a small portion of the Stingers the United States supplied to proxies in Afghanistan were ever recovered.

For the United States, a nation that has historically derived influence from both the example of its military power and the power of its example, the greatest danger of proxy war is how easily it can dirty a benefactor's hands. If a nation provides a proxy with advanced weaponry without instituting practices to prevent their indiscriminate use, then that nation bears some responsibility for their crimes.

When a benefactor like the United States intervenes in proxy conflict, this provides reason for a proxy to escalate. In Yemen, they did. If a benefactor provides weapons to a proxy, they can land in the hands of terrorists. In Yemen, they have. And if proxies violate the laws of war, taking the lives of innocents, a benefactor has a responsibility to take action to prevent this from happening again. In Yemen, and in all proxy wars, the United States must.

THE SYRIAN Civil War is the world's bloodiest conflict, and much of the blame can be laid at the feet of Syria's neighbors and the world's major powers. So far, France, Iran, Israel, Jordan,

Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the uae, the United Kingdom and of course the United States have all intervened—and this long list of countries excludes the dozens of other coalition members that back U.S. efforts or otherwise played smaller roles. These states have bombed their enemies in Syria, provided money, arms and training to allied government or rebel groups, offered a safe haven to fighters, pressed their preferred cause at international fora like the United Nations, and otherwise used their power to help a local group that acts as a proxy for their interests.

Syria's experience is not uncommon. Indeed, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that all of today's major wars are in essence proxy wars. In Ukraine, Russia backs rebel groups who have proclaimed the Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic. Russia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE back militia leader Khalifa Haftar, who seeks to control Libya while the United States notionally recognizes the rival government in Tripoli but works on a day-to-day basis with militias to fight the Islamic State in the country. In Afghanistan, Pakistan has long supported the Taliban, which has also received occasional support from Iran and Russia. The Congolese Civil War, which was the bloodiest conflict since World War ii, involved nine countries and twenty-five rebel groups.

Understanding the prevalence of proxy war is not hard. Proxies enable intervention on the cheap. They cost a fraction of the expense of deploying a state's own forces and the proxy does the dying. Because the costs are lower, proxy war is also more politically palatable—few Americans know the United States is bombing Libya, let alone which particular militia it supports in so doing. Indeed, using proxies is that rare foreign policy tool that seems to fit the approaches both used by Donald Trump and Barack Obama to foreign policy. For all their differences, both presidents are skeptical about large-scale U.S. troop deployments yet promised to fight terrorism.

Despite their many advantages, proxies often disappoint their sponsors. Rather than be grateful and obedient, local groups often go their own way, pursuing their own interests while pocketing the money and other support they receive. Their competence is often minimal, while their brutality knows few bounds. Some even drag their supposed masters into unwanted interventions.

In practice, proxy war is a spectrum, and in a conflict the balance between the forces of a sponsoring state and a proxy often changes. In Vietnam, the United States went from having several hundred advisers to support the South Vietnamese army in 1959 to the deployment of over 500,000 U.S. troops in 1968 to a small presence backed by massive U.S. airpower at the end of the war. If the bulk of a state's military campaign is conducted through a proxy rather than with its own forces, then the proxy-war label works well. How much direct military support is too much to count as a proxy war is a bit in the eye of the beholder, but in general think the lower end of the involvement spectrum.

For countries like Iran, proxy war is the norm. In addition to using over 20,000 Shia foreign fighters from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan in Syria, Iran backs the Lebanese Hezbollah, an array of Shia militias in Iraq and the aforementioned Houthis in Yemen, among others. Russia uses proxies in Ukraine, and the United States often does so in its operations in the Middle East and Africa, supporting Kurdish "People's Protection Units" (YPG) against the Islamic State in Syria and working with armed groups in Libya to fight terrorists there. Indeed, much of the U.S. struggle against terrorism in parts of Africa and the Middle East involves working with local forces or governments to get them to more aggressively go after groups linked to Al Qaeda or the Islamic State. By design it is the proxy, not the United States, that is doing much of the lifting,

with US providing intelligence and using special operations forces and drones to keep its footprint light.

The Cold War was rife with instances when the United States or the Soviet Union backed a local power or group to gain a more favorable position on the global chessboard, whether it was in Angola, Nicaragua or Afghanistan. Today, most proxy wars involve a substate group, with the sponsor's primary efforts going to arm, train or otherwise help that group fight and gain power. At times, as in Yemen or Libya, one side may back "the government," but in such cases the officially recognized regime is just one faction of many—and despite the international support on the ground, it is just another band of fighters.

States use proxies for many reasons. For the United States, the issue is often cost: locals fight, and die, so that Americans do not have to. In addition, because they are local, they are often (though not always) more accepted by the affected communities, can better gain intelligence from them by drawing on community ties, cultural knowledge and a common language, and are less likely to promote a nationalistic backlash that so often accompanies foreign interventions. If the proxy is a guerrilla force, they often know the terrain better and can blend in with the population in a way that foreigners never could.

For states like Iran, proxies are often the only option. Most states lack the power projection capacity of the United States and turn to proxies as a way to influence events far from their borders. Iran lacks a navy or massive airlift capacity necessary to sustain large forces in Yemen: supporting the Houthis gives Iran influence there nonetheless.

Proxies also offer a way of fighting that can limit escalation. States often deny they are supporting proxies—Russia, for example, claims not to be involved in Ukraine despite funding an array of groups opposed to the government of Kiev, arming them and supporting them with its own forces. At times, other states may genuinely not know about foreign support, or at least the extent of support, but in others it is a convenient fiction: not knowing or at least not having the support trumpeted publicly allows a state not to respond when it would prefer to avoid the matter. Deniability makes escalation harder, or at least limited to a certain arena. Israel, for example, has warred repeatedly against the Lebanese Hezbollah but has not struck Iran directly despite Iran's substantial financial and military support for the group. This is especially important for Iran, which cannot match Israel economically, militarily or even diplomatically, given the Islamic Republic's global pariah status.

For many states, however, factors other than cost and fighting power come into play. Some of Iran's proxies, such as Hezbollah, are ideological soulmates, and advancing them helps advance Iran's broader revolutionary agenda. Even in Yemen, where the Houthis remain far from loyal Iranian servants, support for their cause has moved them closer to Iran, with the Houthis at times trying to emulate Hezbollah in their style and propaganda. States at times back proxies because they enhance a leadership's credibility at home: an array of Arab governments often backed Yasir Arafat or other Palestinian leaders, many of whom they loathed, in order to burnish their Arab nationalist credibility among their populations that saw the Palestinian cause as the beating heart of Arab identity. Similarly, the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin has used the Ukraine conflict as a way to burnish his nationalist credentials.

Yet for all advantages, proxy warfare has many risks. Despite the power asymmetry, proxies almost invariably act according to their own interests and impulses. Right after 9/11, the United States asked the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, its key Afghan ally made up primarily of

minorities, not to take Kabul so that a force composed of ethnic Pashtun, Afghanistan's dominant community, could do so and assuage the fears of minority dominance. The Northern Alliance **did so anyway**. In another case, the United States sought to kill Islamic State fighters as its local Kurdish and Arab proxies retook their territory, but the proxy was often pleased to let the fighters **slip away from key strongholds like Raqqa** and gain the territory without a bloody battle: They wanted the territory, not a high body count. This independence creates a tension for a proxy's patron. A stronger group is a more effective proxy, but a more effective proxy has a greater ability to stay independent.

Such independence often risks dragging the sponsor into an unwanted conflict on behalf of its proxy. Palestinian guerrilla cross-border raids sparked conflicts with Israel, leading to a back and forth that created political pressure on the guerrillas' erstwhile Arab-state supporters who hosted them and at least pretended to support their efforts. Wars in **1956, 1967, and 1982** grew out of these dynamics, with Syria and Egypt being sucked into the fray. Indeed, by giving a group money and support, it may become more reckless, knowing, or at least hoping, that a major power is behind it and would bail them out in the face of trouble.

The United States spent millions training various Syrian opposition-group members, but in the end **only a handful showed up** for the fight. Proxies' brutality may not matter to some power: Russia and Iran, gross human-rights violators themselves, presumably care little about the abuses of their proxies. The United States, however, is often tarred with the behavior of its proxy, making it difficult to sustain domestic support.

Support for a proxy often leads other states to back their own favored horse, worsening the overall conflict. Lebanon, for many years, saw Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Syria, and **other powers regularly meddle** and support rival factions, often solely because one of their great power

rivals was doing so. This, in turn, increased the independence of the proxies as they could threaten to turn to other powers if they felt unsupported.

To gain or solidify domestic support for aid, **the sponsoring power often talks up the proxy's cause** and the heroic nature of the fighters, making it harder to walk away from them. Programs and even entire bureaucracies develop, creating vested interests in continuing the fight. Iran's **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps**, for example, is tasked with supporting pro-Iranian revolutionary forces; as its role outside the country expanded, so too did its influence inside. Weak groups and states are often masters of the political dynamics in their patron's country, manipulating the media and domestic support there to get the sponsor to do their bidding.

A state can impose **intrusive monitoring and reporting requirements**, but these are often expensive, and in any event they usually rely on the proxy for information and reduce plausible deniability. At times proxies can be pushed, educated, or wheedled into better behavior, but too often the United States can only move the dial a little.

U.S. special operations forces advise, assist, and accompany AMISOM units during operations in Somalia, and U.S. aircraft provide strikes when these patrols come under assault by al-Shabaab.

In Laos, the Hmong launched a successful guerrilla war against the North Vietnamese army and its local communist ally, the Pathet Lao. But once emboldened by U.S. air power, the Hmong went on to fight conventionally against the North Vietnamese, and subsequently suffered devastating losses.

In the Middle East, leaders or movements who have emerged during or in the wake of coup d'états existed as proxies for years. They have maintained their existence either in the name of a major power, or over the “threat of [Israel](#)”, or over economic-political equilibrium.

As long as the Freedom and Justice Party can prevent this transition period turning into a battle in the first instance, and can prevent ‘benign’ intervention in the long run, it will contribute not only to Egypt’s democratization but also to the stabilization of the region.

Social and humanitarian effects of Proxy Wars

Proxies are likely to commit human rights abuses. The contras indiscriminately attacked Nicaraguan civilians, and reports of sexual assault in Somalia have dogged AMISOM forces. The Kurdish contingent of the SDF allegedly **threatened Arabs with U.S. airstrikes** as the Kurds moved to displace the local population from areas the SDF captured.

Yemen

Yemen, which is the poorest country on the Arabian Peninsula, has been devastated by war, famine, and mass destruction of infrastructure due to the proxy war between the Saudi-UAE-US-UK-led coalition and Iran-backed Houthi rebels. Approximately 3.5 million Yemeni civilians are in critical need of food and humanitarian aid. This Saudi-Iranian conflict in Yemen has resulted in mass starvation, destruction of clean water supply, Cholera outbreak, malnourished children, displaced civilians, and the death of over ten thousands civilians.

Since 2015, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), approximately 22.2 million people were in need of life-saving assistance like food, safe water, nutritional support, and basic medical care.

Doctors without Borders reported that Yemen's health care system collapsed and over half of the country's medical facilities were closed. Many others are unable to provide care due to being damaged by airstrikes or lacking in medical personnel and supplies. Airstrikes, landmines, and snipers are often preventing civilians from seeking medical help, leading to deaths from preventable diseases. Since the airstrikes have destroyed clean water supplies, there have been 101,475 cases of Cholera, the largest cholera epidemic in the world. UNICEF reports that every ten minutes, one child in Yemen dies from malnutrition. Yemeni children, most of whom are malnourished, die from diseases that could be prevented by mere vaccination.

Sea, air and land blockades led by Saudi Arabia causes significant harm to food imports into the country. The Head of World Food Programme (WFP) called for new entry points for humanitarian and commercial food imports.

Ironically, earlier this year Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have very publicly donated \$930 million to Yemen. Yet, the Saudi Defense Minister and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who ultimately orchestrated this humanitarian crisis, have not taken any action to end the blockades. Reportedly, Saudi intelligence thought weaponry was being smuggled into Yemen for the Houthi rebels and cut off all entry and exit points to aid and access to the country's most important ports which led to increased food prices and lack of much needed medical supplies for the healthcare system. Since the Saudi-led 2015 blockade, the economy collapsed and civilians in Yemen have suffered through terrible conditions due to scarce amounts of water, food, and medicine. And it's only getting worse every day.

This isn't a new trend, the Saudi-Iranian conflict has led to devastating proxy wars in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Lebanon, and Bahrain. Almost in every conflict in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and Iran back groups fighting each other and make matters worse. This decades-old rivalry between Saudis and Iranians have led to conflicts in almost every major Muslim country in the world.

Though Saudis and Iranians are the faces of this devastating war in Yemen, there is plenty of blame to go around. The United States and the United Kingdom play a vital role in the destruction of Yemen by supplying bombs, military strategy, military training, heavy artillery weapons, and refueling the planes that are dropping bombs. United States' weapons are the primary reason why Yemeni civilians die.

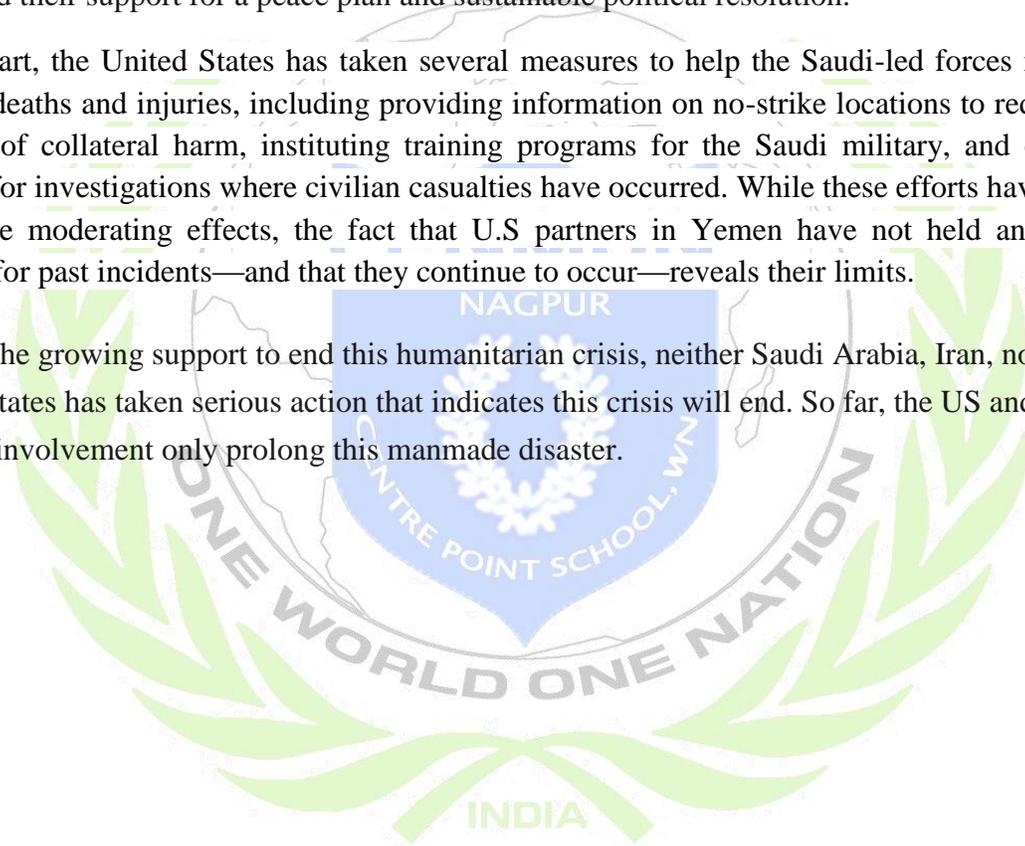
American intelligence agencies have been fully aware of this conflict since 2015 and even halted their weapon sales to Saudi Arabia in 2016. The Obama administration was wary of Prince Salman military campaign, but the Trump Administration signed off on billion-dollar arms deals that provide direct support to the Saudi army.

Sept 21- The Security Council had a briefing on the humanitarian situation in Yemen by United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief

Coordinator Mark Lowcock. Mr. Lowcock made a compelling statement on the critical situation in Yemen and gave an update on the port city of Al Hodeidah, which is essential for imports and humanitarian aid. The Security Council members and the Yemeni Representative made statements on the conditions in Yemen and expressed urgency for a peaceful resolution. The Security Council members expressed an overall support for UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths. Ironically, the United States and particularly Russia made strong remarks on the importance of respecting humanitarian laws. While Russia is involved in a rather similar armed conflict with Syrian rebel groups and the United States is the primary weapon supplier to Saudi Arabia, the Security Council condemned the airstrikes that caused the civilian deaths and expressed their support for a peace plan and sustainable political resolution.

For its part, the United States has taken several measures to help the Saudi-led forces mitigate civilian deaths and injuries, including providing information on no-strike locations to reduce the chances of collateral harm, instituting training programs for the Saudi military, and offering support for investigations where civilian casualties have occurred. While these efforts have likely had some moderating effects, the fact that U.S partners in Yemen have not held anyone to account for past incidents—and that they continue to occur—reveals their limits.

Despite the growing support to end this humanitarian crisis, neither Saudi Arabia, Iran, nor the United States has taken serious action that indicates this crisis will end. So far, the US and UK military involvement only prolong this manmade disaster.



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