

By Chicago World Can't Wait

World Can't Wait Chicago joined a coalition of other organizations and concerned individuals on April 25 to condemn the U.S.-backed Saudi Arabian war on Yemen now underway. Called on short notice, it was good to see 50-75 people with banners and signs saying "Hands Off Yemen" and "Saudi Rulers Are War Criminals" and "No U.S. Intervention."

Of course World Can't Wait brought out the "Crimes Are Crimes" banner with mugshots of Bush and Obama - which was a reminder to all that this whole messy situation has been shaped and triggered in large part by the US military over the course of the past 14+ years.

While not many passersby stopped to join the protest, we did get some supportive comments, and many accepted fliers. There were quite a few confused looks as well. The situation in Yemen has developed quickly, and without much attention in the press, so informing people (including many tourists, as we were on Michigan Ave. in front of Millennium Park) of the basic facts of this unjust war was important.

What is going on in Yemen and why is it important?

First of all, Yemen is the most impoverished country in the region, located just to the south of Saudi Arabia. It has been drone-bombed for years and years by the U.S. in certain areas (for instance, the al-Majalah massacre in 2009 which killed 45 civilians), but now large areas of the country including the capital, Sanaa, are being subjected to major airstrikes by Saudi Arabian jets. More than 1,000 civilians have been killed since "Operation Decisive Storm" started in late March (now re-named "Operation Renewal of Hope"). 150,000 people have been displaced and 15,000 have been injured. The people of Yemen have been traumatized enough and the

bombing must stop!

Digging into the background of this mess is vital for Americans. Saudi Arabia, in the grand tradition of its US patron state of putting together “coalitions” to carry out unjust wars, heads up the “coalition of the cowardly” which is attacking Yemen, consisting of Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan, Morocco, Egypt and Sudan.

In [How the US Contributed to Yemen's Crisis](#), Stephen Zunes details the events which prompted the Saudis to launch this aggression. The recent people's movement against the oppressive Yemeni government was thwarted from truly realizing any change by repeated US interventions: first by propping up former President Saleh, then by encouraging Saleh to step down and allow his VP, Hadi, to come to power.

As the people's movement fractured under repression, a sectarian group known as the Houthis came to seize greater and greater control of territory, supported by the ex-President Saleh. Saudi Arabia then started its war - with the endorsement of the now-exiled Hadi.

As the U.S. and Iran have been in talks and appear ready to come to some new understanding, Saudi Arabia (which jockeys with Iran for regional dominance) may be attempting to force a confrontation over Yemen. However, there's no question that the Saudis have permission from the Obama administration, which has also materially assisted in the war by arming the Saudis and blockading Yemen from potentially receiving any aid from Iran or elsewhere. As the U.S. floats unsubstantiated accusations against Iran for allegedly arming the Houthis and patrols the waters off the coast of Iran with nine warships, Iran has refused to take the bait and for now the conflict remains confined to Yemen.

However, all this takes place against the backdrop of the U.S. War on the World that has caused enormous suffering in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond. War criminals like Bush and Cheney roam free after invading Iraq and killing a million people there, while the U.S. has the gall to scold Iran and other countries for human rights abuses even as it props up dictator after dictator and sends drones to terrorize whole nations and kills thousands of people. As illustrated by the death of Warren Weinstein recently, usually the U.S. doesn't even know who it's targeting with its missiles! As things become more unstable in Iraq and beyond as a result of the ongoing U.S. military actions, it is more important than ever to say Humanity and the Planet Come First! Stop the U.S. Wars - No More War for Empire!

