**Yemen: Why is there Always War in Yemen?**

**Meng Chao, Dünya Tarihi Enstitüsü, Çin Sosyal Bilimler Akademisi**

**November 2024**

Yemen has been in a state of political instability and war for a long time. The reasons can be mainly attributed to the following aspects: The interweaving of political, religious and economic factors. Yemen is a country where political, religious and economic factors are intertwined, and there have always been many problems in national construction, social development and national unity.

Politically, Yemen's history has seen various factions and political groups fighting for power and suppressing dissidents;

religiously, there are major differences and contradictions between Sunnis and Shiites in Yemen;

economically, Yemen is a poor and backward country with slow economic development, low levels of social welfare, and serious social contradictions.

**The impact of regional conflicts.**

Yemen is located in the Middle East, and there are frequent political and military conflicts in neighboring countries, which often affect Yemen.

For example, Saudi Arabia and other countries launched military intervention in Yemen, which aggravated the complexity and crisis level of the situation in the country.

**The breeding of terrorism and extremism.**

 Terrorist organizations are active in Yemen, such as al-Qaeda and other extremist organizations, which were once active in the country.

These organizations manipulate and exploit various contradictions and problems in various ways to create terrorist attacks and violent incidents, further exacerbating the turbulent situation in the country.

It should be pointed out that the political and military conflicts in Yemen have lasted for a long time, and many social problems and humanitarian crises have arisen in the process. We should call on all parties to stop the violence as soon as possible, uphold the principles of peace and dialogue, and work together for peace and stability.

**What is the root cause of the conflict in Yemen? Why is it also the UK and Türkiye's mess?**

In recent years, Yemen, a country located on the Arabian Peninsula, has been in constant turmoil and has often become the protagonist of international news. Yemen has been divided for a long time in history, and various conflicts have occurred after its unification in 1990. So what is the historical background of these conflicts? What is the history of Yemen?

**Yemen's place in the world**

In fact, Yemen is also a region with a long history. It has played an important role in the world trade system very early on and is an important node connecting the East and the West. For example, during the Han Dynasty and the Roman era, when Chinese silk was imported into Europe, a large amount of it entered the Roman Empire through Yemen. At that time, fine cotton cloth from Sri Lanka, cinnamon from Indonesia, and gems and tortoise shells from India also entered Europe in large quantities through Yemen.

In the 4th century AD, a Himyarite Kingdom that believed in Judaism appeared in Yemen. In 524 AD, the king of this kingdom, Dunouwas, massacred all the Christians in Najran, a city under his rule at the time, located on the border between Saudi Arabia and Yemen today, in retaliation for the massacre of Jews by the Eastern Roman Empire, which believed in Christianity at the time. This incident also became one of the important events in the history of the conflict between Christianity and Judaism.

**The Himyarite Kingdom at its peak in the 6th century AD**

In the 7th century AD, with the rise of the Arab Empire, Yemen was also conquered by it and became a region that believed in Islam. In the 9th century AD, northern Yemen became the base camp of the Zaydi sect, a branch of Shia Islam, and the influence of this sect continues to this day. In the following hundreds of years, northern Yemen was successively ruled by different warlords from the Fatimid dynasty in North Africa, while southern Yemen was successively controlled by some forces based on maritime trade. Although they nominally paid tribute to the warlords in the north, they were actually independent, so it can be said that there was already some estrangement between the north and the south of Yemen at that time.

After entering the 16th century, Yemen quickly attracted the attention of neighboring powers because it controlled important trade routes. Portugal, Britain and the Ottoman Empire invaded Yemen successively, and the Ottoman Empire eventually became the winner. However, in 1634, the Zaydi faction, which had long been entrenched in northern Yemen, drove the Ottoman forces out of Yemen, and the Qasimi dynasty, which originated from the Zaydi faction, controlled most of Yemen.

**The approximate territory of the Qasimi dynasty at its peak**

During this period, Yemen became the first region in the world to plant and produce coffee, and once monopolized the global coffee trade, bringing Yemen into another period of unprecedented prosperity. But soon, countries such as Britain, the Netherlands, and France smuggled coffee trees out of Yemen and began to plant them extensively in their colonies in East Africa and the Americas. After the coffee planting industry in these regions gradually developed, Yemen's prosperity quickly faded.

After the economy began to decline, Yemen was once again in turmoil. A chieftain in the Lahj region in southern Yemen captured Aden, an important port in southern Yemen, and established the Lahj Sultanate, officially dividing North and South Yemen. But the independence of the Lahj Sultanate did not last long. In 1839, the British captured Aden and soon expanded its control to the entire southern Yemen, beginning colonial rule. The British expansion in southern Yemen soon triggered a strong reaction from the Ottoman Empire. In 1848, the Ottoman Empire reoccupied parts of northern Yemen. The division of Yemen was further deepened by the intervention of foreign forces. The north and south of Yemen have embarked on completely different historical trajectories.

**Ottoman Province of Yemen**

In 1918, the Ottoman Empire collapsed. The north of Yemen became independent under the leadership of the Zaydi faction and established the Kingdom of Yemen. After the independence of the Kingdom of Yemen, it once wanted to drive British forces out of the south of Yemen, so it fought a war with Britain and its vassal forces for many years. The war did not achieve much, but the existence of the Kingdom of Yemen was gradually recognized by the international community. In 1962, a coup took place in the Kingdom of Yemen and its royal family was deposed. On November 26 of that year, the Yemen Arab Republic was established.

**British-controlled Protectorate of Aden**

In the south of Yemen, British rule has continued. Before World War II, British India played an important role in maintaining British rule over southern Yemen. After the disintegration of the British Empire after World War II, the British gradually changed their way of ruling in Yemen. In 1959, the British established the South Arabian Federation in South Yemen, which was directly subordinate to the British government, to maintain their rule in South Yemen. However, Britain's rule in South Yemen soon aroused increasing dissatisfaction among the South Yemeni people. Starting in 1963, the left-wing forces in South Yemen launched an armed struggle and successfully defeated the British in 1967, establishing the People's Republic of South Yemen that year. In 1970, the name of South Yemen was changed to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, becoming the only socialist country in the Arab region.

**Yemen Arab Republic and People's Democratic Republic of Yemen**

However, in the international environment at that time, South Yemen naturally relied on the Soviet Union to a considerable extent in all aspects of the economy and society. Therefore, after the Soviet Union's obvious decline in the 1980s, South Yemen's survival began to be difficult. Finally, in 1990, it merged with the Yemen Arab Republic in a unification process led by the Yemen Arab Republic to form the Republic of Yemen. However, after the unification of Yemen, a series of contradictions between the leaders of North and South Yemen quickly intensified, and the two sides broke out in a civil war again in 1994. A few months later, the South was defeated and Yemen was unified again.

**Current situation of Yemeni civil war**

**However, separatism and terrorism in Yemen have been rampant since then, so the situation has been relatively turbulent.**

In 2011, Hadi, who was a military officer in South Yemen in his early years, became the president of Yemen. In 2014, the Houthi armed forces, which originated from the Zaydi faction in northern Yemen, rose up and seized control of the Yemeni capital Sanaa in September of that year. Since then, Yemen has been in a civil war, and some neighboring countries have also intervened, which has continued to this day.