



## UAE's Information War against Turkey

**OE Watch Commentary:** News stories and social media rumors highlighting Turkish activity in Yemen have proliferated in recent months. Islah, a Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Yemeni political party that is influential in the Saudi-backed, internationally recognized government, is accused of encouraging and enabling Turkish actions. UAE-linked publications, most notably the English-language *Arab Weekly*, have taken the lead in making this argument. The accompanying passage, for instance, accuses a former transportation minister affiliated with Islah of carrying out a “Turkish scheme with Qatari financing to create anti-Arab coalition militias.” From the perspective of *TRT World*, Turkey’s state news channel, this and similar reports are part of an Emirati “information-war against Turkey” that aims to “insert Turkey’s name into the Yemeni crisis by promoting a non-existent Turkish security role in Yemen.” The UAE’s goal, according to this analysis, is “to shape regional and global opinion, incite it against Turkey’s increasing role and influence, and shift the attention away from its malicious and dark role in the region.”

Turkey is a minor player in Yemen. Not so in Libya, where Turkish-Emirati competition has escalated into armed proxy conflict. Emirati perceptions of Turkish regional ambitions, gleaned from the July issue of the UAE military’s monthly journal *Nation Shield*, include the observation that Turkish policy in Arab countries “includes continuous attempts to sneak into the Horn of Africa.” Yemen is highlighted as one of the countries where Turkey sought to exploit 2011 protests to help the Muslim Brotherhood obtain power.

Assuming the Emirati assessment of Turkish regional ambitions and capabilities is accurate, there is reason to think that conflict within the Saudi-Emirati alliance in Yemen is indeed a strategic opportunity for Turkey. On the face of it, Iran and the UAE would seem unlikely to encourage Turkish involvement in Yemen. However, such involvement could fracture the Saudi-backed Hadi government along pro and anti-Islah lines, a development that both the Houthis and the Emirati-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) would likely welcome. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

***“Turkish interest in the Arab region... also includes continuous attempts to sneak into the Horn of Africa...”***

**Source:** “Qatar finances Turkish scheme to form militia in Yemeni province,” *The Arab Weekly*, 15 June 2020. <https://the arabweekly.com/qatar-finances-turkish-scheme-form-militia-yemeni-province>

*Private sources revealed to The Arab Weekly that the resigned Yemeni transport minister, Saleh al-Jabwani, has opened a militia recruitment camp in the city of Ataq, the capital of Shabwa province in Yemen, in accordance with a Turkish plan and with Qatari financing... As transport minister, Jabwani was known for his stance against the Arab coalition and took it upon himself to sign a bilateral agreement between his ministry and the Turkish government that was later rejected by the Yemeni government... Doha’s agenda in Yemen is to confuse the Arab coalition and create the right political and security environments for a supposed Turkish role in Yemen (that the Muslim Brotherhood’s media outlets are now clamouring for).*

**Source:** “How the UAE is using fake news to manufacture a Turkish role in Yemen,” *TRT World*, 9 July 2020. <https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/how-the-uae-is-using-fake-news-to-manufacture-a-turkish-role-in-yemen-38006>

*The UAE is engaged in an information-war against Turkey as it seeks to draw the country in a mess that it has no one to blame for but itself... an increasing barrage of fake news and reports that are specifically dedicated to insert Turkey’s name into the Yemeni crisis by promoting a non-existent Turkish security role in Yemen... The UAE move should be understood as an attempt to shape regional and global opinion, incite it against Turkey’s increasing role and influence, and shift the attention away from its malicious and dark role in the region.*

**Source:** الدور التركي في المنطقة العربية: الأبعاد والأهداف والتأثيرات الاستراتيجية “Turkey’s Role in the Arab Region: Dimensions, Goals and Strategic Impacts,” *Nation Shield*, 7 July 2020. <https://tinyurl.com/ybp63g7c>

*... Turkey found an opportunity in the events of the second decade of the twenty-first century in the Arab region. The opportunity was to achieve its ambitions in several Arab countries including Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia and Syria, by helping the “Muslim Brotherhood” obtain power, to the point of directly intervening militarily in Syria and Libya. Turkish strategic interests with important Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Emirates were cast aside, and its policy even became a constant endeavor to harm the interests of these countries by building unrealistic tactical alliances with the regime in Qatar, the Sarraj government in Libya and extremist terrorist organizations that were able to conclude suspicious secret deals with the Turkish regime to open passages for terrorists to cross into Syria and elsewhere... Turkish interest in the Arab region is not limited to Syria and Libya or to pressuring some countries and harming their interests, but it also includes continuous attempts to sneak into the Horn of Africa...*