
ISLAM IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

AL'ESBILI FAIZAH SALEKH MOHAMMED. RUSSIAN – YEMENI RELATIONS AT THE PRESENT STAGE // The article was written for the bulletin “Russia and the Moslem World.”

Keywords: Russian-Yemeni relations, Russian policy in the Middle East, mutual cooperation.

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Abstract. There is an analysis of Russian-Yemeni relations and stages of their development.

Introduction

Russia and Yemen maintain cordial and friendly relations which total more than a century. Russia always supported both the Yemen Arab Republic (The republic which was in the northern part of Yemen), and the People's Democratic Republic Yemen (the southern Yemen) and continue to maintain close ties after their association.

Relations between Russia and Yemen have considerably improved recently, Yemen was in the forefront of the countries which established diplomatic relations with Russia after the collapse of the USSR. These bilateral ties gained unprecedented growth and development within the last seven years that is a unique example of relations.

The history of Russian-Yemeni relations

The first treaty of friendship and trade between Moscow and Sana was signed in 1928, and diplomatic relations were established in 1955. The Soviet Union actively supported both the Yemen Arab Republic, and the People's Democratic Republic Yemen and provided them non-repayable aid.

The president of the Arab Republic Yemen (and then the Republic of Yemen) Ali Abdullah Saleh, visited Moscow 5 times during the period from 1981 to 2009. The relations between two countries are based on the large legal basis presented by treaties of friendship and cooperation with the Yemen People's Democratic Republic (1979), the Yemen Arab Republic (1984) and other bilateral documents.

The Republic of Yemen was formed in May, 1990 as a result of the voluntary union between the Arab Republic Yemen (The republic which was in the northern part of Yemen after the Yemen revolution of 1962) and the People's Democratic Republic Yemen (the southern Yemen). In December, 1991 the Republic of Yemen officially announced recognition of Russia as a legitimate successor of the former Soviet Union, including recognition of all signed international treaties and conventions.

In December, 1991 during the official visit of the president Ali Abdullah Saleh to Moscow there were signed: Declaration of principles of friendship and cooperation between Russia and Yemen; Agreement on cooperation between the governments of two countries in the sphere of science, culture, education, sport and tourism; Agreement between the governments of two countries on mutual encouragement and investment protection. Both countries conduct an active dialogue in the political sphere, Moscow was visited also by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of Defense of Yemen. In May, 2004 it was declared closer cooperation on fight against terrorism, especially within the UN and the Counter-terrorism Committee of the UN Security Council.

Russia's position on war in Yemen

Information center "Sputnik" held press-conference¹, devoted to resolution of the Yemen crisis and need of additional efforts to put civilians out of misery. Professor of department of oriental studies of Moscow institute of international relations.

N. Surkov² said that Russia strives for the political solution of crisis because the military option and language of force are useless or useful only within international interventions. N. Surkov said the following: "One of the most important obstacles on the way to political settlement is the three year civil war in Yemen which is beyond control in addition to external intervention and disagreements between two main countries of the alliance, that is Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and these distinctions emerged from time to time."

According to N.Surkov the best solution for removal of these obstacles is the use of wide-ranging strategy, including the approval of Saudi Arabia of the proposals made by the UAE, transition of power in the south to local authorities, but only if the foreign parties agree among themselves. According to the professor the Saudi-Iranian conflict which is one of the main reasons for political instability in Yemen must be terminated. He also emphasized the need to stop the support of the USA of "The Saudi military campaign" against Yemen.

Answering the question of a role which Russia could play in war with Yemen, the expert said: "The role of Russia in Yemen has to be limited by the framework of the Security Council as well as in the aggregate when using veto power of Moscow against the

¹ https://arabic.sputniknews.com/arab_world/201803211030949941%D8%AE%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%8A%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%A3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A5%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%86/

² ib

British project supported by the USA and France to resume the arms embargo to Yemen, condemning inability of Iran to prevent delivery of its weapon to Houthis, and Russia can do its part in mediation in the crisis and also in assistance and humanitarian aid which will alleviate suffering of Yemeni population.¹

Cooperation of Russia and Yemen

Military and technical cooperation. In recent years Yemen has become a permanent customer of different kinds of armaments, having spent for it since 1998 2 billion dollars, 1 billion dollars of which was spent for purchasing of Russian weapon.²

Russia delivered to Yemen M29, Mi17, B2 and other military hardware, military contracts for delivery of fighter aircrafts and helicopters are being concluded. A few years ago, the president of Yemen received the helicopter Mi 171 VIP. The Russian ammunition factories are ready to prepare upgrading programs and repair of weapon for the Yemen army and also to provide a long run of spare parts and equipment. In March, 2007 telephone conversation between the President of Russia V.V. Putin and then-President of the Republic of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh during which the last one requested urgent deliveries of military hardware to Yemen at preferential prices in view of continuing combat activity near Saad took place.³ In the memorandum issued on April 3, 2013 just before the meeting of the Russian Prime Minister D.A. Medvedev with the president of Yemen Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi it is said that Yemen is interested in procurement of the Russian air defense facilities and light weapons. It is said also that Sana is interested in acquisition of the armored personnel carriers PTR80A, anti-aircraft weapons and development of BTR60 BP armored vehicles and

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² https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9

³ ib

BDRM2 for the Yemen army, modernization of combat helicopters, transport helicopters, maintenance of the Mig29 fighters and reparations of air freighters Il76 and AN26 by Russian experts. In the memorandum it is also said that Yemen is a traditional importer of the Russian defense production. However the volume of military and technical cooperation is quite modest. The cost of all Russian military export to Yemen during the years of cooperation with it was 9 billion dollars.

Trade and economic cooperation. Economic and trade relations with Yemen develop since 1956. The total extent of obligations of the USSR fulfilled in 1960s and 1970s was generally about 6% of the external economic help received by the Yemen Arab Republic. Cooperation with the People's Democratic Republic Yemen (the southern Yemen) began in 1969. With the help of the Soviet Union a large number of industrial and social facilities in the country was constructed. The share of the Soviet Union in foreign loans received by the Southern Yemen for economic development made more than 50%.

In February, 1991 Russia and the Republic of Yemen signed the trade agreement on creation of joint governmental committee on economic, trade and scientific and technical cooperation and also the Protocol on trade mission in Sana. In 1996 it was signed the protocol on cooperation between the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Yemen and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Russia. Nowadays in full pelt there are implemented the agreements of the memorandum concerning trade development, economic and technical cooperation signed on December 11, 2002 in Moscow. In December, 2007 the Russian-Yemen business forum took place in Sana. The trade value between two countries in 2007 reached 178.9 million dollars and doubled against 2006. So far export of Yemen to Russia is not vast and is at the level of 1 million dollars. Traditional Russian exports for Yemen are grain (59.7%), machines and equipment, including transport and military goods (28.2%) and also instrumentations, household appliances and medical facilities (10.8%). In Yemen

there are offices of such Russian companies as Technopromexport, Rosoboronexport, Tekhnostroyexport, Zdravexport.

Many contracts are at the finishing stage and under commissioning, for example, hydroelectric power station Hasva in Aden. In the Zdravexport company more than 260 doctors work. Recently there is a tendency towards replacement of Russian doctors by experts from the CIS countries.

In November, 1997 the meeting of the Paris Club for discussion of the matter on the external debt refunding of Yemen and signing of the document on concessional debt settlement of Yemen to the Russian Federation for Sana. As a result of the meeting it was signed the agreement between Russia and Yemen on debt relief. In December, 1999 about 80% of the debt of Yemen in the amount of 6.4 billion dollars were written off.

Humanitarian cooperation. In the Soviet Union (and then and in contemporary Russia) for all years of bilateral cooperation about 50,000 Yemeni academically trained experts in various areas were prepared. In 1999 the cooperation agreement between ITAR TASS and the Yemen press agency "Saba" was signed. In August, 2003 in Moscow the constituent conference of the Russian-Yemen Association of Friendship took place. The number of the Russian experts working in Yemen through the governmental organizations is 281 people, and the total number of the Russian community hovers around one thousand people (figures are shown during the pre-war conflict in Yemen).

In 2007 the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation provided the Yemen party with of seventy maintenance allowances for studying in universities. After graduation there were most of all employed experts in technical and medical disciplines. Nowadays 305 Yemeni students and candidates study in higher educational institutes of Russia. The Institute of Oriental Studies of RAS in the territory of Yemen carries out digs on historical archaeological objects of the country.

From the beginning of 2011 the Republic of Yemen, as well as some other Arab countries, is in internal decline which

snowballed into the real civil war which subsequently led to reduction of volume of cooperation between two countries.

Russian policy in the Middle East

The global best practices, over the past few decades Russia remains the largest, the most credible and devoted country in the relations with developing countries in the Arab East. The head of the Russian Council on International Affairs Fedor Lukyanov said that "Syria has remained the region of the Russian success," having reminded that even the most optimistic experts did not expect three years ago that Russia would avow itself as "the superpower with the greatest influence "in the Middle East region," bundling hardness and flexibility among usage of military power and diplomatic skill and a political ploy, with clear strategic goal which consists in maintenance of the seat of power in Damascus."¹

Conclusion

Yemen was at the forefront of the countries which established relations with Post-Soviet Russia and these bilateral relations developed over the last few years, forming a unique model what the president Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi repeatedly declared during his official visits in Moscow. The position of Russia on Yemen for many years is aimed at guaranteeing its unity, security, stability and also support of Yemen in military conflicts. Russia concerning military-political crisis in Yemen adheres to a political solution of the conflict and suppression of external intervention from Saudi Arabia and the UAE and also cease of any military escalation in this region.

As for the Russian policy in the Middle East, the latest historical events confirmed that for the last decades Russia is the largest and credible partner in relations with the Arab countries in the East.

¹ <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/2018/12/28>

It is worth referring both ideological and cultural dimension to key determinants of establishment and development of the Russian-Yemen relations. Development of cultural ties between the USSR and Yemen was going in the line of ascent and peaked after the revolution in September, 1962 when monarchical regime in Yemen was overthrown.

Remarkably that liaison between two countries goes down in many spheres. Cooperation with Yemen in trade and economic and investment sphere began since 1956 when hefty dose of objects of industrial and social nature was constructed with the participation of the Soviet Union. Besides, more than 50% of the foreign credits obtained by the Southern Yemen fell on the Soviet share. Now some Russian companies continue to work in the Yemen market, despite the existing problems with provision of security in Yemen.

In the humanitarian sphere special attention is paid to preparation of the Yemen domestic labour in Russia.

As for legal aspect, after the collapse of the Soviet Union the Republic of Yemen officially confirmed validity of all agreements which were signed during the existence of the USSR.

For foreign policy of Russia, the Middle East is traditionally one of the key directions that induces active participation of the country in all processes there. In the Middle East there are involved more players than in any other region of the world and one of these key players is Russia.

A noteworthy detail is that further cooperation between Russia and Yemen is favorable for the reason that Yemen has the major strategic position and controls approaches to the Suez Canal. At the same time Russia is interested in a possibility of use of the Yemen seaports by Russian military ships and merchantmen in fight against pirates off the coast of Somalia.

The growing relations between Russia and Yemen are a strong basis for achievement of common interests between two countries and promotion of economic relations with broad prospects especially as Yemen is a breeding ground for the Russian investments in oil and gas spheres.

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Abstract: In the twentieth century the emergence of "triple alliances" with the participation of Iran has become traditional in Asia. Islamic foreign policy has been significantly influenced by Islamization, geopolitization and globalization. The Islamic