

## Course correction – **War within war: On Saudi's intervention in Yemen**

### ***As the Saudi-led coalition crumbles, Yemen needs a nationwide ceasefire***

The Saudi-led coalition's intervention in Yemen is proof of how things can go wrong with an ill-conceived, poorly strategised and geopolitics-driven military interference that cares little about human lives. After four years of war, the Saudis have not met their declared goal — pushing back the Shia Houthi rebels from the capital Sana'a and restoring the ousted government which is now temporarily headquartered in the southern city of Aden. On the contrary, the war has pushed Yemen into what the UN calls the worst humanitarian crisis. Thousands have been killed, tens of thousands displaced and about two thirds of the country's 28 million people do not have enough to eat. And now, there is a rebellion within the coalition. Last week, the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a militia group that was fighting the Houthis as part of the Saudi-led coalition, turned against their masters and captured the presidential palace in Aden as well as the city's main port. In return, Saudi jets targeted STC fighters before a tenuous ceasefire set in. It now looks like a three-way conflict. The Shia Houthis, who the Saudis claim are backed by Iran, are controlling much of the country's north including Sana'a. Yemen's internationally-backed government of Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, the Saudi ally, is controlling the south, though Mr. Hadi is running the purported administration from Saudi Arabia. The STC wants the south to be an independent entity, like it was till the Yemeni unification in 1990.

The STC's rebellion also signals the growing friction in the multi-national coalition Saudi Arabia has stitched together to fight the Houthis. The STC is backed by the UAE, a crucial partner of Saudi Arabia in its foreign policy adventures. They stayed together in propping up the military dictatorship of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Egypt, in countering the spread and influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world, in opposing the Iran nuclear deal and on blockading Qatar. But when it comes to Yemen, the Saudis see the Hadi government and Sunni Islamic parties, including the Islah, as allies who could stabilise and rebuild the whole country after the Houthis are defeated, while the UAE, already frustrated by the coalition's failure to defeat the rebels, counts on the STC and is staunchly opposed to the Islah party, which has ties to the Brotherhood. The UAE has already pulled out of the Yemen war leaving it to Saudi Arabia to defeat the Houthis. And with their continued backing to the STC, the Emiratis appear less concerned about defeating the Houthis than maintaining their influence in southern Yemen. This should be a moment of reckoning for Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi Arabian Crown Prince and the main architect of the Yemen intervention. He has lost the war and his coalition is crumbling, while Yemen is left with unimaginable human suffering. It is time for a nationwide ceasefire and talks with all stakeholders under the mediation of a willing UN to find a political settlement to the crisis.

### **Meanings of Difficult Words :**

- **crumble** (verb) – disintegrate/collapse, fall to pieces, fall apart.
- **ceasefire** (noun) – a temporary stoppage of a war, truce, armistice.
- **ill-conceived** (adjective) – absurd, ridiculous, not carefully planned.

- **push (someone) back** (phrasal verb) – remove someone by exerting force.
- **oust** (verb) – remove, expel, dismiss from power/office.
- **on the contrary** (phrase) – in contrast, just the opposite, conversely.
- **humanitarian crisis** (noun) – humanitarian disaster; it is defined as a singular event or a series of events that are threatening in terms of health, safety or well being of a community or large group of people. It may be an internal or external conflict and usually occurs throughout a large land area.
- **rebellion** (noun) – dissent, nonconformity, defiance.
- **militia** (noun) – armed forces, military unit, soldiery (from the civil population to support main forces).
- **in return** (phrase) – in exchange for, against.
- **tenuous** (adjective) – fragile, doubtful, questionable.
- **set in** (phrasal verb) – develop, get underway, established (of something unpleasant/unwelcome).
- **back** (verb) – support, endorse, uphold.
- **ally** (noun) – partner, supporter, accomplice/confederate.
- **purported** (adjective) – alleged, claimed, professed.
- **friction** (noun) – conflict, dispute, argument.
- **stitch** (verb) – join, combine.
- **prop up** (phrasal verb) – support, assist, help.
- **dictatorship** (noun) – despotism, autocracy, absolute rule.
- **counter** (verb) – tackle, confront, stand up to.
- **blockade** (verb) – barricade, bar, block off.
- **count on** (phrasal verb) – rely on, depend on, have confidence in.
- **staunchly** (adverb) – loyally/faithfully, devotedly, firmly/resolutely.
- **pull out** (phrasal verb) – withdraw, leave, get out.
- **reckoning** (noun) – opinion, judgement, consideration/evaluation.
- **stakeholder** (noun) – a person with an interest in something.

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## Course correction – **Deliberate, don't disrupt: On Budget session**

### ***Legislators could do well by adhering to a model code of conduct***

One of the most unedifying sights in public life is lawmakers taking to organised disruption of legislative business. Such displays became common in Parliament in the past decade as political parties and legislators demonstratively advertised their points of view without recourse to debate. A number of crucial bills have taken an inordinate time to be enacted due to disruption, while others were not enacted despite a broad consensus — such as the Women's Reservation Bill — due to the behaviour of a few naysayers. Many sessions of Parliament in the recent past saw little business being done due to repeated disruption. In this context, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu's exhortation to political parties to incorporate a model code of conduct for their legislators in State Assemblies and in Parliament is welcome. He suggested that the code should include stipulations on members not entering the well of the House, and desisting from sloganeering and unruly acts. If indeed parties adopt a code, it will go a long way in making parliamentary work meaningful. Otherwise, the general

public will lose interest in the procedural aspects of parliamentary democracy and limit their participation to just voting in the elections.

But the absence of disruption alone does not make for meaningful debate. The current Budget session sailed through with minimal disruption. Yet the high productivity during the session came without sufficient deliberation over crucial bills, several of which were rushed through without vetting by parliamentary standing and select committees. These committees have in the past been useful in expanding discussion over laws with civil society and experts from various streams of the larger society. They have also facilitated an enhanced cross-party coordination over issues. By not sending a single Bill among the 28 that were introduced and passed to a standing or select committee for scrutiny, the current session accentuated the trend that has minimised the importance of such committees over the last few years. Unlike the 15th Lok Sabha (2009-2014), when 71% of the bills were referred to such committees, in the 16th Lok Sabha, they constituted only a fourth of the overall number of bills. Time spent on debates in the current session in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha was barely a third of the overall business. This does not augur well for lawmaking. As Mr. Naidu has also pointed out correctly, deliberation is an important component of parliamentary democracy apart from legislation and accountability of lawmakers. All three aspects must cohere for a thoroughgoing procedural democracy.

### **Meanings of Difficult Words :**

- **deliberate** (verb) – think about, ponder, consider.
- **adhere to** (verb) – abide by, stick to, hold to.
- **model code of conduct** (noun) – a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for conduct of political parties and candidates during elections.
- **unedifying** (adjective) – distasteful; unpleasant, undesirable (public event).
- **recourse** (noun) – option, choice, possibility/way out.
- **inordinate** (adjective) – unreasonable, excessive, unnecessary.
- **consensus** (noun) – an idea or opinion that is shared by all the people in a group. agreement, concurrence.
- **naysayer** (noun) – a person who always denies or opposes something.
- **exhortation** (noun) – urging/pushing, pressure, insistence.
- **stipulation** (noun) – condition, requirement, provision.
- **desist from** (verb) – abstain, refrain, hold back.
- **sloganeering** (noun) – an act of using slogans (mostly for political reasons).
- **unruly** (adjective) – disorderly, uncontrollable, wild/troublemaking.
- **go a long way** (phrase) – achieve great success, to be very useful.
- **sail through** (phrasal verb) – succeed easily at.
- **deliberation** (noun) – careful consideration, thought/thinking, contemplation.
- **rush through** (verb) – fast, speedy, rapid.
- **vet** (verb) – assess, evaluate, consider.
- **parliamentary select committee** (noun) – ‘parliamentary select committee’ can be formed for a specific purpose, for instance, to deliberate on a particular bill. Once the Bill is disposed of, that select committee ceases to exist. whereas “parliamentary standing committee” is usually constituted on an annual basis. but the purpose of these parliamentary committees is to enable detailed consideration of a piece of legislation.

- **accentuate** (verb) – highlight, underline, focus attention on.
- **augur well** (verb) – bode, indicate, portend (a good outcome).
- **point out** (phrasal verb) – identify, recognize, designate.
- **accountability** (noun) – responsibility, liability, answerability.
- **cohere** (verb) – hold together, be united, bind.

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## Course correction – **Italy afloat: On an unlikely ruling coalition in Rome**

### *The rise of the far right has been halted, but the respite might be temporary*

Rome's unlikely ruling coalition of the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) and the centre-left Democratic Party (PD) seems free of the many unwieldy elements of the previous **government**. To begin with, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte would now command greater functional independence. Earlier, he was hamstrung by two deputies from the M5S and its former ally, the far-right League, whose antagonism weighed on the 14-month long coalition. As Interior Minister, the League's leader, the hard-line anti-immigrant Matteo Salvini, adopted a hostile stance on the rescue of refugees stranded at sea, in the Mediterranean. Under the stewardship of a known immigration expert, Italy can hope to return to a course consistent with (EU) policy it had helped shape during the onset of the refugee crisis earlier this decade. Similarly, there will be relief in Brussels over the appointment of an influential PD member of the European Parliament to the economy portfolio. Under his predecessor, the bloc was faced with the risk of a deliberate breach of its already shaky fiscal rules. Worse, given the size of its economy, Rome's threat to quit the Euro single currency was far more potent than Greece's in 2015, sending financial markets into a tizzy. A key plank of the new coalition is to expand education, research and to stimulate growth.

As Foreign Minister, the M5S leader Luigi Di Maio would be obliged to temper his populist anti-EU rhetoric, which at times bordered on suggestions to the effect that **Italy**, one of the EU's founder-members, would withdraw from the bloc. The coalition has been granted additional legitimacy following its online ratification by the M5S's vast membership. But the unusual coming together of the two traditional adversaries was brought about by the intervention of veterans Beppe Grillo and former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, respectively. They overruled their parties from going for a general election, given that the M5S is the largest in Parliament and much of its term still remains. That move spectacularly wrong-footed Mr. Salvini, who in mid-August pulled the plug on the coalition with M5S, following the League's emergence as the largest party in May's European elections. He has already attacked the new government as one engineered by Paris and Berlin. With his incendiary campaign, Mr. Salvini continues to receive high poll ratings and strong populist backing. Frictions in the new coalition would be apt for him to force an election. Governance by consensus would therefore have to form the operative principle. Mr. Conte has been reported to have emerged from his relative political inexperience during the recent crisis, confronting Mr. Salvini's sectarian agenda and enabling the coalition to close ranks. The good former professor would know that the far-right's current halt in Italy is but temporary. More needs to be done to keep Italy afloat.

**Meanings of Difficult Words :**

- **afloat** (adjective) – out of danger/difficulty; above water.
- **the far right** (noun) – the extreme right wing of a political party or group.
- **respite** (noun) – stop/halt, rest, break, breathing space, interval/interlude.
- **unwieldy** (adjective) – cumbersome, unmanageable, unhandy.
- **hamstring** (verb) – cripple, restrict, handicap, impede/obstruct.
- **ally** (noun) – partner, supporter, accomplice/confederate.
- **antagonism** (noun) – enmity, hostility, antipathy.
- **weigh on** (phrasal verb) – oppress, be a burden to, trouble/disturb.
- **hard-line** (adjective) – relating to a group/a political party with people who support a strict ideas and they are extreme & uncompromising.
- **hostile** (adjective) – opposed; aggressive, confrontational/belligerent.
- **stance** (noun) – attitude, outlook, point of view.
- **rescue** (noun) – help, assist, aid.
- **refugee** (verb) – displaced person, asylum seeker, escapee/exile.
- **strand** (verb) – maroon, abandon, left behind.
- **stewardship** (noun) – it is a set of principles that forms the responsible planning and management of resources. Stewardship can be applied to the environment and nature, health, technology, economics and etc.
- **onset** (noun) – start, beginning, appearance.
- **refugee** (noun) – displaced person, asylum seeker, escapee/exile.
- **Brussels** (noun) – The headquarters of the European Union. Brussels is a **metonym** of the European Union.
- **influential** (noun) – powerful, authoritative, dominant (people).
- **portfolio** (noun) – the position and duties (of a Minister).
- **predecessor** (noun) – previous holder of the post; forerunner, precursor, antecedent.
- **bloc** (noun) – alliance, association, union.
- **deliberate** (adjective) – intentional, considered, predetermined.
- **breach** (noun) – contravention, violation, breaking, non-observance.
- **shaky** (adjective) – questionable, unreliable, undependable.
- **fiscal** (adjective) – financial.
- **potent** (adjective) – powerful, strong, vigorous.
- **tizzy** (noun) – disturbance, upset, confusion.
- **plank** (noun) – a fundamental & important point/principle on which something (political program, policy, etc) is based on.
- **oblige** (verb) – require, bind, compel.
- **temper** (verb) – moderate, modify, lighten.
- **populist** (noun) – the politicians who claim that they are representing the common/ordinary people.
- **rhetoric** (noun) – bombast, loftiness, hyperbole/extravagant language.
- **legitimacy** (noun) – reasonableness, justification, validity.
- **ratification** (noun) – authorization, approval, formal consent (on a decision).
- **adversary** (noun) – rival, enemy, nemesis/opponent.
- **veteran** (noun) – (long-serving) expert, mature established/experienced person in an area of activity.

- **overrule** (verb) – cancel, reverse, rescind, repeal.
- **spectacularly** (adverb) – largely, extremely, especially.
- **wrong-foot** (verb) – put (someone) in a difficult situation by saying/doing something unexpected.
- **pull the plug on** (phrase) – stop, end, cancel.
- **engineer** (verb) – organize/mastermind, orchestrate, choreograph.
- **incendiary** (adjective) – provocative, agitational, rabble-raising.
- **backing** (noun) – support, endorsement, approval.
- **friction** (noun) – conflict, dispute, argument.
- **relative** (adjective) – considerable, some, proportionate.
- **sectarian** (adjective) – denoting a sect (a group of people); factional, partisan.
- **close ranks** (phrase) – unite/join as a means to defend common interests.

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## Course correction – **A life in the balance: On**

### **Kulbhushan Jadhav**

#### ***India must use all available channels with Pakistan to negotiate a reprieve for Jadhav***

More than three and a half years after Pakistan announced it had arrested Kulbhushan Jadhav on charges of espionage and terrorism, India finally received consular access to him on Monday. The path to receiving the access, which should technically have been provided shortly after the arrest, had to be bitterly fought for by India. Despite being a signatory to the Vienna Convention of 1963, which mandates that arrested foreign nationals be allowed to meet consular officers, Pakistan refused the access until it was ordered to by the International Court of Justice at the Hague this July 17 in response to an Indian petition. Even after India won the case for consular access, Pakistan took weeks to respond, offering to allow the meeting only in the presence of video cameras, and Pakistani officials. India rejected this at first, and it is unclear why the government finally accepted those same terms, and nominated its Charge d'affaires to meet Mr. Jadhav despite the conversation being recorded, and Pakistani officials being present. According to the officials who met him, Mr. Jadhav's responses during the meeting seemed to be tutored and coerced, much like his "confessional" statements that were released by Pakistan during his trial in a military court. The MEA concluded that he was under "extreme pressure to parrot a false narrative". As a result, Pakistan's consular access appears to be as much of a sham as the trial itself, which was held in complete secrecy. And Mr. Jadhav, who was not allowed to choose a competent lawyer, was pronounced guilty and handed a death penalty in a matter of months.

Despite the disquiet over the process thus far, the consular access provided on Monday marks Pakistan's initial compliance with the ICJ ruling, and it is hoped that Islamabad will follow through with the next part of the court's verdict. This includes a review of the trial process and a reconsideration of the death sentence, pending which Mr. Jadhav's execution must be stayed. This will clearly be complicated by the present breakdown in bilateral ties, including rising rhetoric over the government's moves in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan's daily efforts to raise the issue at global fora, and its leadership's repeated reference to the threat of nuclear conflict. While it may be difficult to imagine such a scenario at present, the two sides must use their diplomatic channels to

negotiate a possible reprieve for Mr. Jadhav, or discuss conditions under which Pakistan may be prevailed upon to release him to India. New Delhi has been able to secure access to Mr. Jadhav by appealing to international processes, but the road ahead must be negotiated bilaterally, with the understanding and empathy that a man's life hangs in the balance.

### **Meanings of Difficult Words :**

- **in the balance** (phrase) – uncertain, unknown, unresolved, in a critical state.
- **channel** (noun) – method, means, system (for communication).
- **reprieve** (noun) – stay of execution; cancellation, suspension, postponement (of a punishment or something undesirable event).
- **espionage** (noun) – spying, undercover work, infiltration/counter-intelligence.
- **consular access** (noun) – consular access simply means that a diplomat or an official will have a meeting with the prisoner who is in the custody of another country.
- **bitterly** (adverb) – extremely, forcefully, ferociously.
- **signatory** (noun) – the person who signed an official document/agreement.
- **Vienna convention** (noun) – the treaty that lays down the rules about treaties – legal agreements between countries. This Vienna Convention on Diplomatic/Consular Relations, which was agreed in 1961 and went into force in 1964.
- **chargé d'affaires** (noun) – (French); a diplomat who heads an embassy in the absence of the ambassador.
- **tutor** (verb) – instruct, direct, guide.
- **coerce** (verb) – pressure, force, compel/influence.
- **confessional** (adjective) – relating to confessions.
- **parrot** (verb) – repeat mindlessly/mechanically, say again (without thinking).
- **narrative** (noun) – a representation of a particular situation; report.
- **sham** (noun) – pretence, fake, act, fiction.
- **guilty** (noun) – culprit, offender, wrongdoer.
- **disquiet** (noun) – distress, unease, worry/concern.
- **thus far** (phrase) – so far, until now, hitherto.
- **compliance with** (noun) – adherence to, conformity to, accordance with.
- **execution** (noun) – capital punishment, the death penalty.
- **breakdown** (noun) – failure, collapse, foundering.
- **bilateral** (adjective) – involving two groups or countries.
- **ties** (noun) – relationship, allegiance, association/link.
- **rhetoric** (noun) – bombast, loftiness, hyperbole/extravagant language.
- **fora** plural form of **forum** (noun) – assembly, gathering, conference.
- **scenario** (noun) – course of events, situation.
- **diplomatic** (adjective) – (delicate & sensitive) consular, foreign-policy, political.
- **prevail upon** (verb) – influence, induce, pressure someone into.
- **road ahead** (phrase) – future.
- **bilaterally** (adverb) – between two countries involved.
- **hang in the balance** (phrase) – uncertain, undetermined, unresolved.

## IMPORTANT IDIOMD & PHRASES

### 1. Cut the mustard

**Example** – Mr. Bansal appointed Rajesh as the project manager, but can he cut the mustard?

**Meaning** – To succeed./ To come up to expectations.

### 2. To fish in troubled waters

**Example** – My uncle is fishing in troubled waters by buying shares of that software company.

**Meaning** – Involving oneself in a difficult situation in the hope of gaining some personal advantage.

### 3. The green-eyed monster

**Example** – She criticized Maya's effort of presenting the demonstration. Do you think it is valid or is just a case of green-eyed monster?

**Meaning** – The feeling of being jealous.

### 4. End in smoke

**Example** – He is trying to figure out the programming error since two days. But unfortunately, all his efforts end in smoke at last.

**Meaning** – No concrete or positive result.

### 5. To get into hot water

**Example** – Rajesh gets into hot water after he had a fight with the manager.

**Meaning** – To get into trouble.

### 6. To bury the hatchet

**Example** – These two teammates should bury the hatchet to win the final match.

**Meaning** – To forget about arguments and disagreements with someone.

### 7. To wet one's whistle

**Example** – You must be tired after all days work. Would you like to wet your whistle?

**Meaning** – To take a drink, especially an alcoholic drink.

### 8. Cloak and dagger

**Example** – How many days you will cloak and dagger like this? Why don't you tell your boss about your new job?

**Meaning** – Involving or characterized by secrecy or mystery.

### 9. A bread and butter letter

**Example** – After I came back from the tour, I have decided to write a bread and butter letter to the tour organizer for such an amazing service.

**Meaning** – A thank you letter./ A letter or note to follow up on a visit.

### 10. Thick and thin

**Example** – From last ten years, we have been together through thick and thin.

**Meaning** – Including both good times and bad times.

☞ “THE BEST VIEW COMES AFTER THE HARDEST CLIMB” ☞