

Dialogue in Aden Paves the Way for Restoring the South Yemen State and its Conflicts

Situation Assessment
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Overview

On Monday, May 8, 2023, the Southern Transitional Council (STC) concluded the Southern Consultation and Dialogue Meeting, attended by several factions of the southern movement, civil society organizations, and southern military and tribal leaders. The meeting resulted in issuing a national charter, which was followed by an almost complete restructuring of the top bodies of the UAE-backed STC, the first complete restructuring since the founding of the Council in 2017.

The conference, which was held on 04 through 08 May 2023, was organized under the slogan "Towards a new South that embodies the Southern people's aspirations for independence and the restoration of the independent federal state of the south". This slogan evidently was designed to convey the message that the next regime in the south will be different from the regime that ruled South Yemen from 1967 to 1990, and was very central. However, a number of southern entities viewed the conference with much skepticism. This attitude is expected in light of the behavior of the STC since its establishment until last year after taking control of the strategic oil-rich Shabwa governorate, a behavior that reminds the southern and eastern governorates of the crimes that were typical of the rule of the Socialist Party.

The significance of this conference lies in the fact that it comes at a time when it seems that there is no victor in the ongoing Yemeni war that erupted in 2014, and soon involved a regional Arab intervention in 2015. Early in April, a Saudi delegation headed by the Saudi ambassador to Yemen, Muhammed Al-Jaber, visited the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, to negotiate a peace agreement in Yemen with the Houthis after months of consultations between the two parties in the Omani capital, Muscat. The STC accused Riyadh of excluding the "main stakeholders" from those consultations.¹

Lack of Southern unanimity

The STC is one of some 20 organizations and alliances that make up the Southern Movement that began in 2007 championing the southern issue and raising the question of grievances in the context of the civil war in 1994. Not all of these blocs accept the self-proclaimed role of the STC as a champion of the southern cause or a representative of the southern governorates. Therefore, it is important that southern consultative meetings should engage most of the active entities in the southern governorates,

including revolutionary political movements, influential and active personalities from all regions and intellectual and political backgrounds, both at home and in the diaspora. This is something that was taken into account by the STC leadership, which, over one year and a half, actively held meetings with several bodies, actors and entities in preparation for this consultative meeting, which was attended by 330 people.

It is difficult to determine the exact number of active organizations in the Southern Movement that actually or officially support the STC today, but the reasons for opposing STC representation of the southern cause or the south generally are quite evident. Clearly recognizable and persistent provincial identities are predominant in the ranks and practical attitudes of the STC. Besides, conflicts within the southern elite club still influence developments in southern Yemen even today. For example, the top leaders of the STC come mainly from the governorates of Al-Dhali' and Lahj, while many advocates of federalism or autonomy are from Abyan, to which former President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi and former President Ali Nasser Muhammad belong. These two leaders were members of the faction of the politburo of the Socialist Party, which lost the January 1986 war. Consequently, both of them fled to former North Yemen. People in the south still refer to the two parties to the 1986 conflict as 'tughmah' (band) and 'zumrah' (gang) to designate the losing and victorious factions in the January 1986 war, respectively. Although many influential southern personalities support secession, they are afraid of STC domination, especially as the STC has demonstrated practicing exclusion and marginalized most entities and regions during the past few years. In addition, despite political differences among consortiums in eastern governorates, they agree to remain part of Yemen, provided that they enjoy self-rule, and do not want to be part of a southern state. Demands for secession and the call for an independent state in these governorates are merely meant to boost political maneuvering with the aim of achieving autonomy, especially in view of the future of Yemen as a decentralized state. The eastern governorates also are apprehensive of the specter of the return of the former southern state, under which these governorates suffered marginalization and the exclusion of their historical and cultural roles, and became subordinate to the center in Aden, a later development that was quite out of the question at the time of the declaration of independence under the National Front in 1967. For example, up to then, Hadramout was not part of any larger state, but was rather an independent unit. There was no indication that this would change when the British left southern Yemen in November 1967 and a new state was born.

However, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), better known as South Yemen, immediately abolished all the sultanates and sheikhdoms that had been associated with the British, including the Sultanates of Al-Quaiti and Al-Kuthairi. ²

Therefore, a consultative meeting that seeks to build a unified vision of the southern cause or a new southern state has to overcome this legacy of differences. In view of the groups that participated in this conference, it may be noted that the STC ensured that representatives from the eastern governorates (Hadramout, Shabwa, Al-Mahra and Socotra) were present to confirm its representation of southern Yemen, rather than Al-Dhali and Lahj only. However, the most important consortiums of the eastern governorates, such as Inclusive Hadhramout Conference, Hadramout Tribes Confederacy, Hadramout Parliamentary Bloc, Hadhrami Uprise, Al-Mahra Sit-in Committee, etc. refused to participate in the event. These bodies have an active and influential presence in those governorates, and most of them were predated the STC by several years. Rejection statements were also issued by influential political currents, forces, and figures, such as the Southern National Coalition, chaired by businessman Ahmed Saleh Al-Issi, the National Conference of the People of the South chaired by Mohammad Ali Ahmed, and the Southern People's Congress led by Ahmed al-Maysari. All of these aforementioned leaders come from Abyan governorate. So far, the STC has failed to overcome the Abyan historical complex through a balanced representation in the Council's project and vision³. Former President, Ali Nasser Muhammad, refrained from supporting the STC. In addition, Ambassador Ahmed Abdullah Al-Hasani, who is one of the most prominent southern leaders abroad, refused to participate in the meeting.

In addition, members of the Southern Movement negotiating team and the southern leaders who participated in the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) in Sana'a in March 2013-January 2014, did not endorse or attend the meeting. In fact, the NDC, which comprised 565 participants from different political parties and geographical backgrounds, was a good opportunity to express grievances and provide appropriate visions for resolving various issues, including the southern issue which strengthened self-rule. The NDC managed to address many of the grievances of the southern movement, and induced the Yemeni government - at that time - to apologize for those grievances. ⁴

The most vehement rejection came from Hadhramaut governorate, especially as the rejection was expressed by the most prominent forces and blocs that enjoy political weight and mass bases, foremost among which are Inclusive Hadhramout Conference, Hadramout Tribes Confederacy, Hadramout Uprise, Hadramout League, Hadramout Parliamentary Bloc, Bakathir Family Grouping, etc.

The same is true of the adjacent Al-Mahra governorate, where statements of rejection were issued by several groups, including the Public Council of the People of Al-Mahra, and the Al-Mahra Sit-in Committee. This move deprived the STC of an advantage it sought to secure, especially in light of the strategic and economic significance of the governorates of the eastern region; namely, Hadramout, Al-Mahra, Shabwa and Socotra, especially in view of the regional and international struggle for influence in those governorates and their significance. Moreover, Hadramout began to regain its historical cultural and economic presence as a center of the neighboring governorates and perhaps of Yemen as a whole. It will not tolerate sacrificing the gains towards self-rule by a few individuals from Hadramout in exchange for joining the project of restoring the South Yemen state, where the province was subjected to political, economic, social and cultural marginalization.

Leading figures who have been associated with the STC since its inception, were also absent. An example is Sheikh Al-Qibli Saleh bin Farid Al-Awlaki, who was named among the members of the top STC leadership body at the time of its establishment, and one of the most prominent sheikhs of Shabwa. The consultative meeting also came at a time when a popularity crisis of the STC in Lahj governorate is evident. Al-Sabbiha tribes are a significant power pool for the STC. After creating the pro-Saudi National Shield Force, the leaders of which come mainly from this tribe, opposition to the STC rose and clashes broke out in December 2022 between Sabbiha tribesmen and the Security Belt units (the STC effective force) on the road linking coastal Lahj with Bab al-Mandab Strait area. The Security Belt forces were later forced to withdraw from their previous positions.⁵

The National Shield Force also controls the strategic Al-Anad Airbase, following the withdrawal of the STC forces and Sudanese troops. On the other hand, the STC cannot rely on its allies in this tribe, such as Hamdi Shukri al-Subaihi, a close ally of the STC and prominent Salafist and military leader and commander of the Second Giants Brigade, a force founded and sponsored by the UAE. In spite of the long cooperation of the STC and Al-Subaihi, the military leader has not succumbed to the STC leadership. His loyalty to the STC is not guaranteed, as leaders from the Sabbiha tribe have steadfastly given primacy to their tribal affiliation over other affiliations. In addition, no leading personalities or entities emerge from Aden governorate, which is the temporary and main capital of the country. This seems to be a reenactment of the political approach that prevailed during the rule of the National Front, which marginalized the administrative cadres from Aden on behalf of people from other provinces whose engagement in long fighting in Aden turned the city into a stage of their political and military conflicts.

The key success of the STC in bringing together the various entities was the inclusion of the Southern Movement leader, Fadi Hasan BaOum, former Southern Revolutionary Movement (RMC) politburo's chairman. Although this latter entity had held an organizational conference in which a new leadership was named, excluding Fadi BaOum after it was found that he was contained by the STC, BaOum participated in his presumed capacity as a representative of the RMS, and announced joining the STC also in the name of the RMS. The STC was also able to encourage a number of loyal activists to announce their defection from another group also called the Southern Revolutionary Movement (RMS), after the STC failed to contain its chairman, Fouad Rashid.

The two new breakthroughs of the STC prior to holding its last conference were the containment of two southern movement leaders, Ali Haitham Al-Gharib and Aidarous Al-Yahri, chairmen of the politburos of the Southern Movement Council and the Southern Revolutionary Movement, respectively. However, these two entities do not enjoy a popular base or tangible presence on the ground. In addition, the STC also contained in this meeting the Sons of the South Grouping (aka TAJ), a political organization that was active in London about 20 years ago, but has declined in recent years and many of its rank and file have joined the STC. However, it came to the foreground this time through several activists.

Although the Supreme Council of the RMS, led by Siraj Abu Madram, announced its refusal to participate, Fadi BaOum participated as a representative of the politburo, and so did the Council led by Fouad Rashid. The STC managed to appoint a new leadership loyal to it.⁶ Then, these two components officially announced joining the STC. Although the STC views these moves as a new breakthrough, these entities are not significant in the southern governorates and do not have a popular base. Some of them have more than one self-proclaimed leader.

The Southern Charter: Reading the Secrets of Conflict

On the closing day of the conference, thirty-three personalities from the various bodies and civil society organizations signed the document, which was called the "Southern National Charter". The document consists of an introduction and three chapters, entitled "General Principles," "The South Cause," and "General Provisions" respectively.

In the following, the charter will be discussed further.

i. Responsibilities and Form of the Imagined State

1. The declared National Charter contains a set of governing principles articulated in most provisions of the Charter and aim to bring people together and unite the divided entities: “No one has the right to violate, abridge or abolish the equal citizenship rights of any southern citizen, or accuse a southern citizen of national treason or practice exclusion or political marginalization against them.” The Charter also stressed “respecting and preserving cultural and historical identities and specificities within the framework of the unifying southern national identity.” This is meant to win the support of governorates that accuse the STC and the Marxist regime that ruled South Yemen of abolishing their historical and cultural specificities. The Charter insists on the national identity that unites all “southern” citizens, which is a very important structural problem in any state, since regionalism dominated during the rule of the former southern state. Residents of the eastern provinces fear similar treatment. Hadramis were not the only southern Yemenis dissatisfied with the situation in their country. The communist regime was aware of the legacy of regional identities that were a leftover of British rule and hoped to replace them with a single southern Yemeni identity. To this end, in 1967, Aden decided to issue a decree replacing the names of the country's governorates with numbers. Hadramout province was assigned number 5. However, far from resolving the issue of regional identities and merging distinct communities into one, this step backfired, and the south witnessed demonstrations against replacing the names of their homeland with numbers, and the decree was canceled in 1979.⁷

2. Promises concerning the Form of the State: The document makes a promise that the “southern state” will not be like the one that ruled the south in the pre-1990 era, in which the center, Aden, dominated all governorates, despite the assertion that the state will have sovereignty over the same national territory of the former southern state (1967-1990). The Charter further explains, “The southern state shall be built on the basis of a federal, civil, democratic, independent, Islamic, sovereign state, based on popular will, equal citizenship, and the rule of law, guaranteeing the right of regions to local administration with full powers away from the domination of the central authority, and giving them complete control over their resources and policies while preserving national unity.” This is a rehearsal of the 1967 policy, when the other governorates were subordinated to the center, Aden, a policy that angered the population of these governorates.

For example, activists in the National Liberation Front in Hadramout expected that after the demise of British occupation, the province, and all other provinces as well, would be given at least a form of autonomy based on its history and its economic and social significance, yet this did not happen. Instead, the form of government adopted by the regime in the capital, Aden, reduced the status of Hadramout, which simply became one of several provinces in the new state. Moreover, the regime adopted a socialist system that advocated strict centralization of administration in all its forms. This reduced all governorates into satellites of Aden.⁸

The charter postpones declaring the name of the promised "southern state" until holding a constitutional referendum. It also affirms that the political system will be based on the principle of separation of powers and political pluralism. However, it "forbids and criminalizes" the formation of political parties on a religious, sectarian, ethnic, dynastic or regional basis. There were no representatives of other parties in the consultative meeting except for representatives of the Socialist Party. There are also representatives of the Liberation Front Party, but the party, which has a very meagre base at any rate, disclaimed them. The STC and the UAE have previously fought battles against, targeted and killed leaders and members of the main parties in the country, including the Salafist Rashad Party and the Islah Party.⁹

3. Freedom of Thought and Worship: The charter stresses freedom of thought, but it refers to the "prohibition and criminalization of all forms of extremism, intolerance, and religious, doctrinal and sectarian extremism, as well as drying up all its direct and indirect sources." This clause can be used as a pretext to hunt down members of parties that pursue any divergent thought. The charter also grants the "southern state" the right to build what it called a "normal Muslim personality" mentally, intellectually and practically, which is inconsistent with freedom of thought and belonging.

The charter grants the STC authority to manage the affairs of mosques, "resources of mosque endowments and support, appoint and hold accountable their imams and staff, the contents of sermons, lectures and in-mosque lessons, and to prevent the use of mosques to serve any destructive goals, agendas, or political or incitement projects that harm social and national peace and security." The phrase "social and national peace and security" is a loose phrase that can be used to target opponents of the STC or of any of its authorities.

4. Prohibition of Decision-making: The charter prohibits taking a decision that contradicts what it called "the will of the people of the south". No one has the right to practice authority or take an important decision, contrary to the will of the people of the south, without specifying the possible mechanisms for gauging the will of the southern Yemeni citizens.

This can be used as an instrument of monopolizing this 'will' by the STC - or the ruling authority in the promised state. The Charter as a draft constitution can be used to indict persons who violate its provisions for treason. It can also be used to target entities that see autonomy or federalism within the united state of Yemen as an appropriate option.

5. Opening the door of displacement: Since 2017, the STC has launched campaigns to expel Yemenis from the northern governorates from the STC-controlled southern governorates¹⁰, while many STC leaders keep telling Western envoys and diplomats that such campaigns are merely casual individual incidents. The charter states otherwise when it refers to demography: protecting the demography of the south, keeping and documenting the pre-1990 civil registry, and reviewing it thereafter. In addition to the dangers of widespread displacement campaigns and criminalization of "hiding northern Yemenis," changing demography and killing on the basis of identity were common under the rule of the Marxist regime in South Yemen. These measures culminated in the civil war in 1986.

6. Ending the cycle of political violence: The charter asserts "ending the painful cycles of political violence, engaging in dialogue concerning contentious issues, and turning over a new page of reconciliation, coexistence, and southern harmony to face threats and challenges." In the preceding paragraph, the charter states: "After being restored, the envisaged state of the south shall undertake a holistic treatment of all repercussions, mistakes, and problems of the southern past, based on the concepts and good practices of reconciliation, tolerance, and transitional justice, taking into account the nature of those problems and the circumstances of the southern reality."

This is a reference to the ruling junta of South Yemen (1967-1990) and the ensuing painful conflict between the 'band' and 'gang' the repercussions of which are still felt today amidst fears that those grievances might lead to a major explosion incited by the wounds of war, exclusion and marginalization of that period, consequently undermining national reconciliation and the representation of the various southern governorates in the STC. This has been evident since the establishment of the STC with the support of the UAE. The STC has been controlled, both at the leadership and rank and file levels, by elements from Al-Dhali', Yafi' and Radfan Triangle.¹¹ Residents of the eastern governorates, especially Shabwa, feel that they are being persecuted by STC forces in the governorate. These forces are mainly recruited from Al-Dhali' governorate, to which the chairman of the STC, Aidaroos Al-Zubaidi, and most of the leaders of the STC belong.

ii. The South Cause

7. Urging citizens to acknowledge the cause: The Charter defines the South Cause in these terms: "The current cause of the people of the south vis-à-vis the occupying forces of Yemen Arab Republic in terms of its roots, dimensions, and repercussions is a cause encompassing land, a people, a state, sovereignty, and identity at once, produced by the failure and collapse of the united state project and its replacement by forcible annexation (occupation) of the land, people and state of the south by the ruling regime in Sana'a in the summer 1994 war." Based on this definition, the charter states that the people of the South must acknowledge that "restoring the homeland of the South, its sovereignty, and its independent state is the common national responsibility" of all political, social and civil forces and components of the people of the south, and that each of them is required to work towards overcoming all obstacles and difficulties and provide all necessary requirements to expand the circle of national partnership to include all southern components, personalities and elites, in a way that preserves the rights of the South and guarantees its active presence in any upcoming settlement under one project and one leadership."

Violation of acknowledgment and commitment could expose the southern elites who do not abide by the provisions of this agreement to accusations of "treason". The charter also requires them to work towards overcoming all obstacles and difficulties" to ensure the active presence in any upcoming settlement "under one project and one leadership." This coerces the elite to consent to the main goal of the charter and what it sees as "restoring the state" and its leadership.

8. Resolving the South Cause: The document does not contain a formula of a final solution to the South Cause. However, from the wording of the charter, it evidently pushes towards only one solution; namely, secession. Therefore, it points out that "any solutions to the issue of the people of the south without restoring their fully sovereign state must be subject to the approval of the free and independent will of the people of the south."

As indicated earlier, the charter did not provide a definition or a method of gauging "the will of the people of the south." The STC usually uses this term as a synonym for what it describes as a "popular mandate," which involves demonstrations by STC supporters (most of them from Al-Dhali' and Yafi') in Aden and voicing their demands which the STC would then turn into decisions such as those it announced in what is known as the "Historic Aden Declaration" in May 2017.

9. Representation of southern Yemen in the upcoming consultations: The charter states the goal of holding the main consultative meeting; namely, "authorizing the STC to represent southern Yemen." It defines the manner of this representation: "representing the south and its cause in the UN-sponsored settlement process, within the independent framework in which the issue of the people of the south is a priority in the solution on the basis of equal and bilateral negotiations between north and south. Northern forces and parties have no right to interfere or influence the formation of the southern negotiating team. Negotiations shall be held in a foreign country named by the sponsors of the settlement. The agreement shall be signed in the presence of representatives of the United Nations, the five permanent members of Security Council, the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the European Union. Guarantees to implement the agreement shall be provided by these bodies and states."

The North-South dimension has dominated governments and negotiations ever since the NDC was held. The participation of representatives of the Southern Movement in the upcoming negotiations is not only desirable but absolutely necessary because a peace agreement without their participation will undoubtedly be short-lived, and grievances and fragmentation will increase in the south. However, the Charter imposes the method and outcomes, and requires any representatives of the southern cause, including representatives of the Inclusive Hadramout Conference or other representatives, to abide by the STC vision of the solution; i.e., secession. It also imposes the precondition of a separate delegation from southern Yemen, which has been repeatedly rejected by the internationally recognized government, the Presidential Leadership Council, local, regional and international actors, and even by the United Nations. This indicates that the STC puts a new obstacle to reaching a peace agreement. It also raises the question of who will be appointed to this delegation, whether the new STC leadership will do that and who gave it this right.

The new STC intervention disrupts the efforts of Saudi Arabia to end the war, establish a long-term truce, and push the Yemeni parties to consultations. It makes the position of the internationally recognized government vulnerable and fragmentary vis-à-vis the Houthis. It also clearly violates the Riyadh Agreement, 2019, which was approved by the STC and which affirms that the negotiating delegation of the Yemeni government shall include all parties.

The 'Popular Mandate' Doctrine

The STC was established on May 11, 2017, after hundreds demonstrated in Aden on May 4, 2017. Those demonstrations resulted in the so-called Historic Aden Declaration, "which authorized Major General Aidaroos Al-Zubaidi to establish a southern political council in response to the aspirations of the southerners."

The leadership body of the STC was named "pursuant to this" 'Popular Mandate' celebrated by the STC every year,¹² and comprised most of the Yemeni officials loyal to the UAE, who had been dismissed by the former President, Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi.

In 2018, the STC began to realize that the mandate and representation that it monopolized were unreal. So, it launched the first round of dialogue to which only its supporters responded. Nevertheless, this round of dialogue went on, and some of the participants claimed that they represented bodies and forces that opposed the STC. This was again repeated when the STC launched what it called 'the second round of dialogue' in May 2019. The STC considered these meetings new victories that helped it expand its popular base and contain its opponents, even though the second round of dialogue, like its predecessor, was attended only by STC followers and loyalists.

Subsequently, the STC entered into new political conflicts and military confrontations since August 2019 in Aden, Lahj, Abyan, and Shabwa, then into the May 2020 confrontations and the subsequent events and political developments that distracted it from dialogue. However, it resumed its efforts of dialogue about a year ago, after forming two dialogue teams, one for internal and the other for external dialogue. Both teams were tasked with meeting the various southern political and social forces, parties, and personalities, and to win them over to the STC, or at least keep them close to it. Meetings went on unabated at home and abroad. Yet, the internal team seemed more active and successful as it visited the various districts and governorates and held meetings with groups and personalities. In general, the response seemed limited because the meetings mostly targeted only STC loyalists.

The 'popular mandate' rationale was monopolized repeatedly in the STC expansion and control campaigns. It was cited in the STC control of the government headquarters in Aden, demanding dismissal of the government of Ahmed bin Dagher in 2018. It was also used when the STC moved to control Aden and other governorates in (2019), and when the self-administration was announced in April 2020, which was later dropped. The STC claimed that the latter move was taken to obtain "popular mandate."

The timing of commencing the consultative meeting on the May 04 was an attempt to win support for the popular mandate, which the STC considers "the free and independent will of the people of the south,¹³" as referred to repeatedly in the Charter. It was confirmed by the officials of the STC and participants in the meeting.¹⁴

The decisions issued after the meeting indicate that the STC indeed considers that meeting a sufficient ground for controlling the decision of representing southern Yemen in the upcoming consultations.

The STC announced restructuring its top leadership body and other executive bodies to include the southern members in the Presidential Leadership Council, except for Abdullah Al-Alimi, as members of the STC. Al-Zubaidi appointed Abu Zara'a Al-Mahrami and Faraj Salmeen Al-Bahsani as his vice-chairmen, along with the Speaker of the STC National Assembly (parallel parliament) Ahmed Bin Brik. He also appointed 22 persons from the southern and eastern governorates, who are loyal to the STC in various executive positions.

These unexpected appointments indicate a chaotic situation within the Yemeni PLC, which undermines its image as an internationally recognized Yemeni government and make it much weaker in the event of a political settlement with the Houthis. It threatens Saudi Arabia's perception of the expected agreement with the Houthis on the basis of two equal parties (the Houthis and the internationally recognized government) and portend such a huge division within the PLC. They threaten not only the settlement with the Houthis, but also the stability of the PLC as ruling over all northern, southern and eastern governorates, which may lead to the emergence of rebel movements in those provinces, to express their rejection of acquiescing a settlement that does not meet the aspirations of their regions.

Conclusion

The European Union and the international community have previously made strenuous efforts to coordinate a consultative meeting of the southern bodies and entities since the start of the war, but each time they failed to reach an all-inclusive meeting. Convening such a meeting was very important in order to determine the priorities of the southern cause during the next phase, but apparently it did not achieve this very important goal. Instead, it was used as a card to put pressure on entities at home and abroad to proclaim the exclusive rights of representing "South Yemen" and the southern cause in favor of the STC. Yet, it will have consequences on the future of the political settlement that the United Nations and Saudi Arabia seek to reach, and on the future of Yemen in the short and medium terms, since this conduct increases the possibility of eruption of small-scale wars that encourage national rebellions against the post-war authority.

On a regional level, the UAE is the sole beneficiary. Indeed, the fact that the STC is currently the dominant organization of the Southern Movement is largely due to the support of the UAE. As a result, its current position is closely tied to the interests of Abu Dhabi, which believes that being ignored by Saudi Arabia in its negotiations with the Houthis and ensuring its interests in the upcoming settlement plans push it to ensure these interests through the STC. Therefore, this step is a dangerous escalation by the distant Abu Dhabi against the interests and influence of Riyadh in neighboring Yemen, and ignites the fires that Saudi Arabia is trying to extinguish as a prelude to creating a comprehensive state of stability in the region.

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