

We negate. Resolved: The United States should end its arms sales to Saudi Arabia

C1: Keeping a balance

The new agreed-upon ceasefire is bringing the Yemeni conflict towards peace. Abdul-Aziz 2019 finds that “With that said, **the Hodeida ceasefire is still a noteworthy step towards lasting peace. The willingness of the Houthis and the government to come to the table demonstrates a newfound desire to achieve peace.**”¹ That is why AFP from yesterday finds that **Yemen’s government and Houthi rebels have agreed on the first phase of a withdrawal from the key city of Hodeidah, in a deal the UN described as important progress.**² AFP furthers that **The fragile truce deal marks the first step toward ending a devastating war that has pushed Yemen to the brink of famine**

Unfortunately, voting pro undermines this newfound solution in 2 ways

1 Alienating Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is beginning to agree to this ceasefire. Abdul-Aziz finds in 2019 that In order to salvage their reputation and their standing amongst the international community, **Saudi Arabia may follow the path laid out by the UN and cease hostilities in the near future.**³ The underlying reason why is pressure from the US. Rogan 2018 finds that **For a start, the only reason the Saudis are now moving toward a cease fire is the Trump administration's pressure. Trump has earned Saudi trust** and their corresponding deference on issues negatively affecting America: in this case, the human suffering of the Yemeni civil war. Problematically, cutting off arms sales destroys this trust, by removing any semblance of a relationship with US, which is why Rogan 2018 finds But the problem is that the senators are wrong. **If the U.S. pulls its functional support for the Saudi alliance,** two negative consequences will immediately follow. First, the Saudis will lose all the inhibitions about accurate targeting of Houthi formations that American intervention has forced. Second, **Riyadh will lose interest in energetic efforts by Washington to reach a durable cease fire**⁴.

¹Abdul-Aziz 2019 (Qasim Abdul-Aziz works with the Next Century Foundation, a think tank and track II diplomacy organisation that operates in various conflict zones, primarily the Middle East, “Yemen – Hopeful Ceasefire in Hodeida”, *Global Risk Insights*, January 20th 2019, <https://globalriskinsights.com/2019/01/yemen-hopeful-ceasefire-in-hodeida/>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

²Landry 2019 (Carole LANDRY, “Warring Yemen parties agree compromise on Hodeida pullback”, *Yahoo News*, February 7th 2019, <https://news.yahoo.com/warring-yemen-parties-agree-compromise-hodeida-pullback-184928057.html>. DOA: February 8th 2019) TG

³Abdul-Aziz 2019 (Qasim Abdul-Aziz works with the Next Century Foundation, a think tank and track II diplomacy organisation that operates in various conflict zones, primarily the Middle East, “Yemen – Hopeful Ceasefire in Hodeida”, *Global Risk Insights*, January 20th 2019, <https://globalriskinsights.com/2019/01/yemen-hopeful-ceasefire-in-hodeida/>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

⁴Rogan 2018 (Tom Rogan is a commentary writer for the Washington Examiner and a senior fellow with the Steamboat Institute, “Ending US support for Saudi Arabia would make things much worse in Yemen”, *Washington Examiner*, November 28th 2018, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/ending-us-support-for-saudi-arabia-would-make-things-much-worse-in-yemen>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

2 Reinvigorating the rebels

Due to US pressure and posturing, Iran and the Houthi rebels are giving in to peace talks. McKay 2018 **"Iranian-backed Houthi rebels are beginning to engage more with the peace process."**⁵ This is because the Houthis have lost ground, as McKay continues that **Early in the conflict, the Houthis controlled some 85 percent of Yemeni territory.** But according to satellite imagery, **that percentage has since reversed."**⁶ Unfortunately affirming reverses this trend by easing the military pressure on the Houthi rebels. Alasrar 2018 finds **But the Houthis will have little incentive to negotiate in good faith absent continuing military pressure.**⁷

For these two reasons,

Tritten 2018 finds that **The withdrawal of American support could derail an ongoing peace process** and *make it more difficult for the U.S. to counter Iran and al Qaeda terrorists in the war-torn country, Mattis said during a joint briefing with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to all senators.*⁸

There are 2 impacts:

1 Starvation

Houthi rebels have historically blocked aid shipments to Yemen. Palmer 2018 finds that "Palmer in interrupts him to point out that **global aid agencies do want to help, but many say the Houthi regime is getting in the way, putting up bureaucratic hurdles and blocking aid shipments from getting into ports under the rebels' control"**⁹. Critically, the ceasefire allows aid to begin to reach those who are suffering. Abdul-Aziz 2019 finds that "UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths outlined the main achievements of the agreement as; President Abdu Rabbuh Mansour Hadi agreeing to pay the salaries of civil servants in Houthi-controlled areas, the exchange of prisoners between

⁵McKay 2018 (Hollie McKay has been a Fox News Digital staff reporter since 2007. She has extensively reported from war zones including Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma, and Latin America investigates global conflicts, "US withdrawal from Iran deal helping wind down Yemen war, officials say" *Fox News*, August 7th 2018, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/us-withdrawal-from-iran-deal-helping-wind-down-yemen-war-officials-say>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

⁶McKay 2018 (Hollie McKay has been a Fox News Digital staff reporter since 2007. She has extensively reported from war zones including Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma, and Latin America investigates global conflicts, "US withdrawal from Iran deal helping wind down Yemen war, officials say" *Fox News*, August 7th 2018, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/us-withdrawal-from-iran-deal-helping-wind-down-yemen-war-officials-say>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

⁷Alasrar 2018 (Fatima Alasrar, Senior Yemen Analyst at the Arabia Foundation, July 25 2018, "Yemen Is Bad but It Would Be Worse Without U.S. Involvement", <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/yemen-bad-it-would-be-worse-without-us-involvement-26801> DOA: 1/14/19) SP

⁸Tritten 2018 (Travis J. Tritten is a defense and national security reporter at the Washington Examiner, "Jim Mattis tells Senate pulling Yemen support is 'misguided'", *Washington Examiner*, November 28th 2018, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/jim-mattis-tells-senate-pulling-yemen-support-is-misguided>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

⁹Palmer 2018 (Elizabeth Palmer has been a CBS News correspondent since August 2000, "Yemen's Houthi rebels pin hopes for peace on the U.S. government", *CBS News*, December 18th 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/yemen-houthi-rebels-us-help-ceasefire-saudi-arabia-aid-reach-starving/>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

warring groups and most importantly, **a ceasefire in Hodeida, which gives the UN control of the strategic port, allowing crucial humanitarian aid to reach Sana'a and other affected parts of the country**¹⁰. Unfortunately, by voting pro and reversing this positive development, people will starve, as Zavis 2017 finds **"Nearly a quarter of Yemen's 27 million people are "one step away from famine,"**¹¹

2 Continued casualties

The war in Yemen has been devastating Jones 2018 finds "11 December 2018: As UN-led peace talks proceed in Stockholm and a landmark bill to end US support for the Saudi-backed coalition works its way through Congress, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) now estimates that over 60,000 people have been killed in the Yemen War since just 2016."¹² By voting pro and pushing the conflict away from peace, people will die, as Cockburn 2018 finds Oxfam said this week, **a civilian is being killed every three hours in the fighting,** and between 1 August and 15 October, 575 civilians were killed in the port city, including 136 children and 63 women.¹³

C2: Containing Iran

The US and Saudi Arabia cooperate to counter Iran. Mohammed 2018 finds that **"The United States and Saudi Arabia both wish to contain Iran, and Washington depends on Riyadh to serve as a bulwark against Iranian influence, notably in Syria and Lebanon."**¹⁴ Unfortunately, cutting off arms sales risks losing this relationship. Bisaccio 2018 finds that These are strong points, but it is worth pointing out that **a significant or total shutdown of U.S. arms cooperation with Saudi Arabia would come with its own set of risks. The most immediate consequence would be jeopardizing American ties with Riyadh,** a country that remains influential in the world especially because of its ability to act as a swing oil producer.¹⁵ This would undermine efforts to deter Iran, as cooperation is essential. Byman 2018 finds that **If the United States threatens Iran, it carries far more credibility if it has broader support from the Arab and Western world** and popular backing, and this

¹⁰Abdul-Aziz 2019 (Qasim Abdul-Aziz works with the Next Century Foundation, a think tank and track II diplomacy organisation that operates in various conflict zones, primarily the Middle East, "Yemen – Hopeful Ceasefire in Hodeida", *Global Risk Insights*, January 20th 2019, <https://globalriskinsights.com/2019/01/yemen-hopeful-ceasefire-in-hodeida/>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

¹¹Zavis and Ahmed, 2017 (Alexandra Zavis and Zayd Ahmed. "U.S. arms sold to Saudis are killing civilians in Yemen. Now the Trump administration is set to sell them more." June 13th, 2017. *Los Angeles Times*.

<https://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-yemen-us-arms-2017-story.html> DOA 01/07/19) GSH

¹²Jones 2018 (Sam Jones, Communications officer for the ACLED, Armed Conflict Location Event and Data Project, 11 December 2018, "PRESS RELEASE: YEMEN WAR DEATH TOLL NOW EXCEEDS 60,000 ACCORDING TO LATEST ACLED DATA", ACLED, <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/12/11/press-release-yemen-war-death-toll-now-exceeds-60000-according-to-latest-acled-data/>, 01/08/19) ERA

¹³Cockburn 2018 (Patrick Cockburn, writer for the Independent, 26 October 2018, "The Yemen Death Toll is Five Times Higher than we Think—We can't Shrug Off Our Responsibilities any longer", *The Independent*, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/yemen-war-death-toll-saudi-arabia-allies-how-many-killed-responsibility-a8603326.html>, 01/08/19). ERA

¹⁴Mohammed 2018 (Arshad Mohammed, writer for Reuters. "US, Saudi Arabia Have Leverage on Each Other; Using It Has Costs," 10/16/2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-saudi-arabia-have-leverage-on-each-other-using-it-has-costs/4616830.html>. DOA: 1/19/2019) DE

¹⁵Bisaccio 2018 (Derek Bisaccio, Military markets analyst, and studies Eurasia/ME militaries and arms trade, Central Asia politics, "Examining U.S. Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia," 10/23/2, <http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/feature/5/196962/us-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia%3A-policy-options.html>, DOA: 1/8/2019) DE

support will only exist in rare circumstances—**otherwise Iran may call the United States' bluff.**¹⁶ Which is why Bisaccio concludes **But if the Trump administration's goal in the present is to isolate Iran and concretely address its nuclear and missile programs as well as foreign policy in the region, coordination of efforts with Saudi Arabia will prove essential.**¹⁷

The impact is regional conflict

Because of US presence, a new war in the Middle East is currently unlikely, as Baffa 2018 finds that **Despite a steady string of altercations and provocations, neither Iran, its primary proxy Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), nor Israel appear to be seeking all-out war, at least for now.**¹⁸ That is why Baffa concludes that the best policy for the US is **The United States would be better off reaffirming its presence in Syria and maintaining its hard and soft power efforts to constrain Iran and reduce the risk of another large-scale and disastrous war in the Middle East**¹⁹. By voting pro and undermining the US-Saudi alliance, this hard and soft power goes away, increasing the chance of conflict induced by an emboldened Iran.

Regional wars in the Middle East are devastating, as Specia quantifies in 2018 that as a result of the Syrian civil war **At that time, a United Nations official said 400,000 people had been killed.**²⁰

¹⁶Byman 2018 (Daniel Byman is a senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, where his research focuses on counterterrorism and Middle East security, "Iran's foreign policy weaknesses, and opportunities to exploit them", *Brookings*, January 3rd 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2018/01/03/irans-foreign-policy-weaknesses-and-opportunities-to-exploit-them/>. DOA: February 5th 2019) TG

¹⁷Bisaccio 2018 (Derek Bisaccio, Military markets analyst, and studies Eurasia/ME militaries and arms trade, Central Asia politics, "Examining U.S. Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia," 10/23/2, <http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/feature/5/196962/us-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia%3A-policy-options.html>, DOA: 1/8/2019) DE

¹⁸Baffa and Vest 2018 (Richard Baffa is a senior international/defense policy researcher at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation. Nathan Vest is a research assistant and Middle East specialist at RAND, "The Growing Risk of a New Middle East War", *RAND Corporation*, August 21st 2018, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2018/08/the-growing-risk-of-a-new-middle-east-war.html>. DOA: February 5th 2019) TG

¹⁹Baffa and Vest 2018 (Richard Baffa is a senior international/defense policy researcher at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation. Nathan Vest is a research assistant and Middle East specialist at RAND, "The Growing Risk of a New Middle East War", *RAND Corporation*, August 21st 2018, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2018/08/the-growing-risk-of-a-new-middle-east-war.html>. DOA: February 5th 2019) TG

²⁰Specia 18 (Megan Specia, Story Editor for International Desk of the New York Times. Published 4-13-18. "How Syria's Death Toll is Lost in the fog of war", *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/13/world/middleeast/syria-death-toll.html>. DOA January 17 2019) JG

SA withdrawal won't solve the conflict, but the ceasefire is a good step

Abdul-Aziz 2019 (Qasim Abdul-Aziz works with the Next Century Foundation, a think tank and track II diplomacy organisation that operates in various conflict zones, primarily the Middle East, "Yemen – Hopeful Ceasefire in Hodeida", *Global Risk Insights*, January 20th 2019,

<https://globalriskinsights.com/2019/01/yemen-hopeful-ceasefire-in-hodeida/>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

Hopes for peace *The reputational damage caused by Khashoggi's murder should not be underestimated, with Saudi Arabia facing increasing international pressure. However, if the Saudi-led coalition were to leave the conflict, this would not completely end the fighting in Yemen – indeed, the existing conflict between the Houthis and the government require complex negotiations. With that said, the Hodeida ceasefire is still a noteworthy step towards lasting peace.* The willingness of the Houthis and the government to come to the table demonstrates a newfound desire to achieve peace. The UN, by way of its Special Envoy Griffiths, needs to act quickly to sustain the agreement and support the peace process on the ground.

Compromise is happening right now, and negotiations are going to continue finalizing negotiations

Landry 2019 (Carole LANDRY, "Warring Yemen parties agree compromise on Hodeida pullback", *Yahoo News*, February 7th 2019,

<https://news.yahoo.com/warring-yemen-parties-agree-compromise-hodeida-pullback-184928057.html>. DOA: February 8th 2019) TG

Yemen's government and Huthi rebels have agreed on a preliminary compromise for redeploying their forces from the port city of Hodeida, the UN said Thursday, shoring up a truce deal that marks the first step toward ending the devastating war. The pullback from Hodeida was initially agreed under the ceasefire deal reached in December in Sweden. But deadlines for both sides to move their forces away from the ports and parts of city were missed. Following three rounds of talks aboard a UN ship in Hodeida's harbour, a proposal was put forward by Danish General Michael Lollesgaard, who heads a UN observer mission, "that proved acceptable, in principle," said UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric. "A preliminary compromise was agreed, pending further consultation by the parties with their respective leaders," said Dujarric. *The two sides are to meet again next week to finalize details for the redeployment, if the compromise is endorsed by the Huthi and government leadership. The ceasefire and the redeployment of forces agreed in Stockholm have been hailed as a major step toward ending Yemen's nearly four-year war that has left millions on the brink of famine.* UN officials however have warned the peace gains are fragile. The first phase of the redeployment from the ports of Hodeida, Saleef, Ras Issa and from parts of the city where there are humanitarian facilities was scheduled to happen two weeks after the ceasefire went into force on December 18. But that deadline was missed as the government and Huthis haggled over the interpretation of the agreement. The Red Sea port is the entry point for the bulk of Yemen's imported goods and humanitarian aid, providing a lifeline to millions in the Arab world's poorest country.

The world has put increased pressure on Saudi Arabia to make peace

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Shifting attitudes towards Saudi Arabia *The Saudi-backed government of Yemen lost control of the port city Hodeida to Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in 2015, and it is no coincidence that the tides of peace are shifting as Saudi Arabia’s standing in the international community has been challenged. The future of Yemen is closely tied to Saudi geopolitics, and recent political events impacting the powerful kingdom are increasing the likelihood of a tenable peace for its warring neighbour. The killing of Jamal Khashoggi is an example of a recent event that has contributed to Saudi Arabia’s threatened stature.* U.S senators have made it known that they believe that the crown prince is complicit in the murder of Khashoggi. The murder also focused the world’s attention on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, something that had previously been ignored. The Saudi narrative explaining the death of Khashoggi has been widely criticised and diminished their public credibility, casting further doubt on the Saudi interpretation of the war in Yemen. *This partly explains Saudi Arabia’s decision to opt for diplomacy with the Houthis and their support for the ceasefire. The U.S. Senate’s recent vote to end its involvement in the war also signals that Saudi Arabia is falling out of favour, sending a clear message to MBS that he no longer has unconditional support. This will not compel Saudi Arabia to drastically change its foreign policy, as both the Kingdom and the U.S have many common regional interests, including quelling the threat of Iran. However, Saudi Arabia will be well-served by changing its strategy in Yemen if it is to win back support from figures in the U.S. Winding down the war and embracing the ceasefire will do that.* Beyond the U.S., the broader international community has largely supported the war through arms sales and have overlooked the humanitarian crisis raging in Yemen. However, with this public condemnation of MBS, a number of countries have indicated their intentions to cut weapons exports to Saudi Arabia. Germany, Norway, and Denmark have all suspended new licenses for arms exports, specifically citing their concerns over their use in the war in Yemen. *In order to salvage their reputation and their standing amongst the international community, Saudi Arabia may follow the path laid out by the UN and cease hostilities in the near future.*

SA wants a ceasefire due to US pressure

Rogan 2018 (Tom Rogan is a commentary writer for the Washington Examiner and a senior fellow with the Steamboat Institute, "Ending US support for Saudi Arabia would make things much worse in Yemen", *Washington Examiner*, November 28th 2018, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/ending-us-support-for-saudi-arabia-would-make-things-much-worse-in-yemen>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

For a start, the only reason the Saudis are now moving toward a cease fire is the Trump administration's pressure. Trump has earned Saudi trust and their corresponding deference on issues negatively affecting America: in this case, the human suffering of the Yemeni civil war. The Saudis have not suddenly woken up and realized that the war is causing too much suffering without adequate prospect of strategic gain. *Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman sees Yemen as a defining battleground in an existential fight against Iran.* With Iran repeatedly firing ballistic missiles at Riyadh and helping assassinate erstwhile Saudi allies, it is ludicrous to think the prince would cease his war effort absent the present mix of major U.S. pressure and resolute U.S. support.

The world has put increased pressure on Saudi Arabia to make peace

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US ending support will undermine peace talks and undermine accurate targeting

Rogan 2018 (Tom Rogan is a commentary writer for the Washington Examiner and a senior fellow with the Steamboat Institute, "Ending US support for Saudi Arabia would make things much worse in Yemen", *Washington Examiner*, November 28th 2018, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/ending-us-support-for-saudi-arabia-would-make-things-much-worse-in-yemen>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

The Senate is now leaning toward ending U.S. participation in the Saudi-United-Arab-Emirates-led war in Yemen. I believe that the Senate has the authority to do this, but I also believe that course of action would be a terrible mistake, doing more harm than good to the civilians who have been suffering through the conflict. I know that sounds odd. After all, tens of thousands have starved to death or died in the fighting since 2015. So it's understandable that senators want to end to the Saudi campaign against Iranian-supported Houthi rebels in Yemen. They believe that pulling American support will put immense pressure on Riyadh to accept a rapid cease fire. But the problem is that the senators are wrong. *If the U.S. pulls its functional support for the Saudi alliance, two negative consequences will immediately follow. First, the Saudis will lose all the inhibitions about accurate targeting of Houthi formations that American intervention has forced. Second, Riyadh will lose interest in energetic efforts by Washington to reach a durable cease fire. Both of those developments will be disastrous for Yemeni civilians.*

Strong posturing against Iran is pushing the Houthis towards peace deals

McKay 2018 (Hollie McKay has been a Fox News Digital staff reporter since 2007. She has extensively reported from war zones including Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma, and Latin America investigates global conflicts, "US withdrawal from Iran deal helping wind down Yemen war, officials say" *Fox News*, August 7th 2018, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/us-withdrawal-from-iran-deal-helping-wind-down-yemen-war-officials-say>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

Despite Tehran's repeated denials of arming Shiite Houthi rebels in war-torn Yemen, government and military officials insist President Trump's withdrawal from the landmark Iran nuclear deal has had an immediate impact in helping bring the four-year conflict at least a step toward closure. "There is still some support, but we have seen it drop since the U.S. pulled out," Abd-Rabbo Moftah, deputy governor of the Yemen city, of Ma'rib told Fox News. "Any way that support from Iran is lessened, is helpful in stopping the war. The Houthis were feeding on this deal, and legitimacy." Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, Ambassador of Yemen to the U.S. and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, said that after talks started between the U.S. and Iran on the deal during the Obama administration, Iran subsequently "stepped up its military and financial support for the Houthi rebels in Yemen." "Nevertheless, the clear-eyed President Trump's Iran strategy, along with withdrawing from the Iran deal and demanding that Iran cease its destabilizing behavior in the region, has made clear to Iran and its proxies in Yemen that meddling in the region will not be overlooked again," Mubarak said. He added that as a result of these "strong and positive signals," Iranian-backed Houthi rebels are beginning to engage more with the peace process.

Houthis have lost lots of ground, and are fracturing

McKay 2018 (Hollie McKay has been a Fox News Digital staff reporter since 2007. She has extensively reported from war zones including Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma, and Latin America investigates global conflicts, “US withdrawal from Iran deal helping wind down Yemen war, officials say” *Fox News*, August 7th 2018, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/us-withdrawal-from-iran-deal-helping-wind-down-yemen-war-officials-say>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

“So withdrawing from the Iran deal will definitely contribute to the end of the war in Yemen,” he said. *The Yemen conflict has largely been seen as a proxy war by the international community, framing Yemen as a battleground between Sunni-dominant Saudi Arabia and its Shiite nemesis, Iran. In March 2015, a Saudi-led coalition launched a bombing campaign to defeat the Iranian-aligned Houthis, who the year before had taken over swaths of territory. That territory included the capital, Sana’a, which they still control. But multiple military sources running clandestine operations from Saudi Arabia also asserted that in the months since the Iran deal exit, Houthis have become somewhat more fractured.* “Tehran knows they have an economic fire to deal with in their own country now,” one official observed, indicating that their focus has thus since shifted a little more inward to domestic issues rather than external affairs, like Houthi support. *Early in the conflict, the Houthis controlled some 85 percent of Yemeni territory. But according to satellite imagery, that percentage has since reversed. Despite Iranian support, Houthis officials insist their behind-the-scenes role has been carefully orchestrated for some time* “When the war started, there was an average of four to six airplanes leaving from Tehran and landing in Sana’a airport and we did not know what was inside,” Moftah claimed. “And then after several attacks, we noticed the missiles being used were not local missiles.”

Withdrawing Saudi support will exacerbate the crisis in Yemen

Alasrar 2018 (Fatima Alasrar, Senior Yemen Analyst at the Arabia Foundation, July 25 2018, “Yemen Is Bad but It Would Be Worse Without U.S. Involvement”,

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/yemen-bad-it-would-be-worse-without-us-involvement-26801> DOA: 1/14/19) SP

America should continue to support United Nations Special Envoy Martin Griffiths’ in his attempt to broker a lasting political resolution.

But the Houthis will have little incentive to negotiate in good faith absent continuing military pressure. *Withdrawing U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition and for Yemen’s internationally recognized government* will ease this pressure without doing anything to end Yemen’s war. It also *will* not help—and may even *exacerbate—the country’s humanitarian crisis while dealing a blow to America’s regional prestige and its short and long-term strategic interests.*

Lawmakers would do well to consider these costs as they seek to reclaim war-making powers from the executive branch.

Pulling back US support would undermine peace and US interests, and US influence can limit civilian casualties

Tritten 2018 (Travis J. Tritten is a defense and national security reporter at the Washington Examiner, "Jim Mattis tells Senate pulling Yemen support is 'misguided'", *Washington Examiner*, November 28th 2018, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/jim-mattis-tell-s-senate-pulling-yemen-support-is-misguided>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis on Wednesday implored senators to oppose a measure aimed at stopping U.S. support for Saudi Arabia in the Yemen war, calling it "misguided." *The withdrawal of American support could derail an ongoing peace process and make it more difficult for the U.S. to counter Iran and al Qaeda terrorists in the war-torn country, Mattis said during a joint briefing with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to all senators.* The briefing came on the eve of a potential vote on a resolution ending U.S. training and logistical support to the Saudi-led coalition, and growing backlash from lawmakers over the kingdom's killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi. "Senators, I know all too well the difficulty in reconciling human aspirations with war's grim reality, but I also recognize that we cannot limit civilian casualties or advance the peace effort commencing early next month in Sweden by disengaging," Mattis said, according to prepared remarks provided by the Pentagon. *Saudi Arabia has been leading an Arab coalition battling Iran-backed Houthi rebels in a war that has hit the Yemeni civilian population with violence and starvation. With calls for a ceasefire, U.N. special envoy Martin Griffiths has been meeting with Mattis and working to broker peace with the negotiations on the horizon.* Mattis acknowledged the bipartisan concerns over Khashoggi and the possibility that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was directly involved. Senators have halted arms sales to the kingdom in response, even as Trump warned against scuttling the possibility of \$110 billion in sales over the coming decade. But he said "security interests cannot be dismissed" even as the U.S. seeks accountability. "I must note we are seldom free to work with unblemished partners. Long-standing relationships guide but do not blind us. Saudi Arabia, due to geography and the Iranian threat, is fundamental to maintaining regional and Israeli security, and to our interest in Mideast stability," Mattis said. *"Pulling back our limited U.S. military support, our weapons sales to our partners, and our protection of the Saudi and Emirati populations would be misguided on the eve of the promising initial negotiations."* The reports of Saudis bombing civilian targets and the growing humanitarian disaster caused by the three-year-old war has also sparked opposition in Congress. But the administration support to Saudi Arabia has helped reduce innocent casualties and ease suffering, Mattis said. The State Department said Wednesday it will provide \$131 million in additional food assistance to Yemen. The military support includes advisers and training to no-fire and restricted-fire areas, he told senators. *"While tragedies occur in war, we assess restraint and improved tactical judgment by Arab coalition pilots has reduced the risk of civilian casualties," Mattis said*

Rebels are blocking aid shipments

Palmer 2018 (Elizabeth Palmer has been a CBS News correspondent since August 2000, "Yemen's Houthi rebels pin hopes for peace on the U.S. government", *CBS News*, December 18th 2018,

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/yemen-houthi-rebels-us-help-ceasefire-saudi-arabia-aid-reach-starving/>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

"As a Yemeni government, we are doing our best in trying to hold the state as it is. As institutions. But we cannot do anything. We have no cash, no oil to export, we have nothing to lift the burden." Palmer interrupts him to point out that global aid agencies do want to help, but many say the Houthi regime is getting in the way, putting up bureaucratic hurdles and blocking aid shipments from getting into ports under the rebels' control. "Number one, there are some elements who are not really obeying instructions," Sharaf says. "We are trying to correct this." The foreign minister is talking about certain rogue armed groups which have been blocking aid distribution. But aid groups struggling to address what the U.N. has called the single biggest humanitarian disaster on the planet blame Houthi politicians for all kinds of interference, including not issuing visas to their staff.

A UN commission has worked for a ceasefire

Abdul-Aziz 2019 (Qasim Abdul-Aziz works with the Next Century Foundation, a think tank and track II diplomacy organisation that operates in various conflict zones, primarily the Middle East, “Yemen – Hopeful Ceasefire in Hodeida”, *Global Risk Insights*, January 20th 2019,

<https://globalriskinsights.com/2019/01/yemen-hopeful-ceasefire-in-hodeida/>. DOA: January 30th 2019) TG

A breakthrough in Yemeni peace talks On 6 December 2018, UN-brokered talks brought together warring factions for the first talks in two years. After a week of negotiations in Sweden, UN Security General Antonio Guterres announced the ceasefire agreement between the Iranian-backed Houthis and the Yemeni government. UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths outlined the main achievements of the agreement as; President Abdu Rabbuh Mansour Hadi agreeing to pay the salaries of civil servants in Houthi-controlled areas, the exchange of prisoners between warring groups and most importantly, a ceasefire in Hodeida, which gives the UN control of the strategic port, allowing crucial humanitarian aid to reach Sana’a and other affected parts of the country. *Troops are set to withdraw first from Hodeida, and then from the wider city. The agreement came to fruition amidst mounting international pressure to mitigate the crisis. The attendance of both Houthi spokesperson Mohammed Abdul-Salam and the Yemeni FM Khaled Al-Yamani was an important indicator that the ceasefire initiated a long-term peace process.*

U.S. arms sold to Saudis are killing civilians in Yemen, and causing their economic collapse and famine

Zavis and Ahmed, 2017 (Alexandra Zavis and Zayd Ahmed. "U.S. arms sold to Saudis are killing civilians in Yemen. Now the Trump administration is set to sell them more." June 13th, 2017. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-yemen-us-arms-2017-story.html> DOA 01/07/19) GSH

"*With all the arms they have given to Saudi Arabia, the Saudis have achieved nothing* after more than two

years but *killing civilians and destroying infrastructure*," he complained bitterly. The State Department says the arms package, announced during Trump's [recent visit to the Saudi capital, Riyadh](#), will help a key Middle East ally defend itself against "malign Iranian influence" and contribute to counter-terrorism operations across the region. In addition to replenishing the kingdom's dwindling supply of precision-guided bombs, the administration is offering howitzer artillery pieces, Blackhawk helicopters and the antimissile

system known as Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD. *The Saudis say they need the weaponry to defend*

themselves against Yemeni rebels, who they charge are being armed by Shiite Muslim Iran in a bid to increase its clout against the region's Sunni monarchies. The rebels, known as Houthis, surged out of their northern

strongholds in September 2014 and seized control of Yemen's capital with the help of rogue elements of the armed forces loyal to the country's deposed strongman, Ali Abdullah Saleh. Six months later, Saudi Arabia assembled a military coalition to restore power to the internationally recognized president, Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi, who set up a parallel government in Yemen's southern port city of Aden. The Houthis have lobbed thousands of mortar shells and rockets into Saudi territory in response to the coalition's campaign and claimed to have aimed a ballistic missile at Riyadh the day before Trump arrived. (The strike was not successful.) "We don't want people to think we are purchasing weapons to have influence," said a high-ranking Saudi defense official who was not authorized to discuss the deal publicly. "We respect the sovereignty of countries. But if there is a threat to our borders, we need to defend ourselves." Although all sides in the war stand accused of abuses, United Nations officials attribute most of the heavy civilian toll to the air campaign waged by

Saudi Arabia and its Persian Gulf allies. The *fighting has killed more than 10,000 people, destroyed vital*

infrastructure and pushed what was already *the Arab world's poorest nation to the brink of a [humanitarian catastrophe](#).* *Nearly a quarter of Yemen's 27 million people are "one step away from famine,"* U.N.

humanitarian chief Stephen O'Brien told the Security Council last month. *The economy is collapsing; government*

employees have not been paid for months; prices for [food and fuel](#) have skyrocketed; half the country's health facilities are closed and a raging cholera epidemic is killing hundreds. "This is not an unforeseen or coincidental result of forces beyond our control," O'Brien said. *"It is a direct consequence of actions of the parties and supporters of the conflict."*

ACLED 2018 (ACLED, Armed Conflict Location Event and Data Project, 11 December 2018, “PRESS RELEASE: YEMEN WAR DEATH TOLL NOW EXCEEDS 60,000 ACCORDING TO LATEST ACLED DATA”, ACLED, <https://www.acleddata.com/2018/12/11/press-release-yemen-war-death-toll-now-exceeds-60000-according-to-latest-acled-data/>, 01/08/19) ERA

11 December 2018: As UN-led peace talks proceed in Stockholm and a landmark bill to end US support for the Saudi-backed coalition works its way through Congress, the [Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project \(ACLED\)](#) now estimates that **over 60,000 people have been killed in the Yemen War since just 2016. According to data collected and analyzed by ACLED, reported fatalities since the beginning of 2016 are more than six times higher than the frequently cited UN figure of 10,000.** ACLED’s estimate only includes deaths directly caused by violence. Complementary estimates produced by organizations like [Save the Children](#) indicate that tens of thousands more may have died from other causes linked to the conflict, such as starvation and disease.

Saudi Forces Cause Civilian Death Cockburn 2018 (Patrick Cockburn, writer for the Independent, 26 October 2018, “The Yemen Death Toll is Five Times Higher than we Think—We can’t Shrug Off Our Responsibilities any longer”, The Independent,

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/yemen-war-death-toll-saudi-arabia-allies-how-many-killed-responsibility-a8603326.html>, 01/08/19). ERA

Casualties are rising by the day as Saudi and UAE-directed forces try to cut off Hodeidah — the last port controlled by the Houthi rebels — from the capital, Sanaa. Oxfam said this week, a _ civilian is being killed every three hours in the fighting, and between 1 August and 15 October, 575 civilians were killed in the port city, including 136 children and 63 women. An airstrike on Wednesday killed 16 civilians in a vegetable market in Hodeidah, and other strikes this month have hit two buses at a Houthi-held checkpoint, killing 15 civilians, including four children.

US-Saudi deals essential in many benefits for US interests

Reuters 2018 (Reuters, reputable international news agency in UK. "US, Saudi Arabia Have Leverage on Each Other; Using It Has Costs," 10/16/2018,

<https://www.voanews.com/a/us-saudi-arabia-have-leverage-on-each-other-using-it-has-costs/4616830.html>. DOA: 1/19/2019) DE

U.S. lawmakers have grown uneasy with a Saudi-led coalition's war in Yemen because of civilian casualties. The Khashoggi case could accentuate calls in Congress to limit U.S. support for the coalition. **The U.S. military refuels jets for the coalition**

carrying out strikes against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels and also engages in limited intelligence sharing. A small number of U.S. special forces are on the Saudi border with Yemen to help the kingdom defend against missiles fired by the Houthis into Saudi Arabia. Yemen is just one theater where Sunni Gulf states

such as Saudi Arabia are vying for regional supremacy with Shi'ite Iran. **The United States and Saudi Arabia both wish to contain Iran, and Washington depends on Riyadh to serve as a bulwark against Iranian influence, notably in Syria and Lebanon.**

Saudi Arabia will not switch to Russia or China for arms sales

Bisaccio 2018 (Derek Bisaccio, Military markets analyst, and studies Eurasia/ME militaries and arms trade, Central Asia politics, "Examining U.S. Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia," 10/23/2,

<http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/feature/5/196962/us-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia%3A-policy-options.html>, DOA: 1/8/2019) DE

It would be expensive, take significant amounts of time, and require a restructuring of Saudi Arabia's security outlook, all to import systems whose quality and usefulness Saudi Arabia is already skeptical of. These are strong points, but it is worth pointing out that a significant or total shutdown of U.S. arms cooperation with Saudi Arabia would come with its own set of risks. **The most immediate consequence would be jeopardizing American ties with Riyadh, a country that remains influential** in the world especially **because of its ability to act as a swing oil producer. Opponents of Saudi Arabia** in general **see no issue with downgrading U.S.-Saudi relations**, and perhaps in time the U.S. might view its security interests as diverging from requiring Washington to work with governments like Saudi Arabia's. But if the Trump administration's goal in the present is to isolate Iran and concretely address its nuclear and missile programs as well as foreign policy in the region, coordination of efforts with Saudi Arabia will prove essential. Critics of the Crown Prince regularly paint him as reckless, which, if an accurate depiction, should prompt consideration of whether reducing America's ability to influence Saudi policy choices is the wisest course of action for Washington to take.

US military pressure against Iran doesn't work if it isn't backed up

Byman 2018 (Daniel Byman is a senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, where his research focuses on counterterrorism and Middle East security, "Iran's foreign policy weaknesses, and opportunities to exploit them", *Brookings*, January 3rd 2018,

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2018/01/03/irans-foreign-policy-weaknesses-and-opportunities-to-exploit-them/>. DOA: February 5th 2019) TG

Given Iran's weak conventional forces, the country is vulnerable to U.S. military pressure—but only in narrow circumstances and in response to credible threats. Iran understands both U.S. politics and international political dynamics. If the United States threatens Iran, it carries far more credibility if it has broader support from the Arab and Western world and popular backing, and this support will only exist in rare circumstances—otherwise Iran may call the United States' bluff. Similarly, economic pressure from the U.S. helped drive Iran to the negotiating table over its nuclear program, but such pressure is far more effective when it is multilateral. U.S. allies and major economic powers like China are skeptical of unilateral U.S. sanctions, seeing them as driven more by politics than strategy. *To gain international support for more economic penalties, when possible the United States should highlight Iran's violations of existing U.N. Security Council resolutions such as those involving transfers of arms to Hezbollah in Syria or its Houthi allies in Yemen or complying with money laundering and terrorist financing rules. International sanctions and financial penalties make it harder for Iran to attract foreign investment, maintain its financial system, and otherwise expand (or even sustain) its economy.* Given the IRGC's massive role in Iran's economy, pressure on IRGC front companies might yield modest results. In addition, the United States should constantly highlight the cost of Iran's adventurism in Yemen and support for the Syrian regime to increase popular disgruntlement regarding the regime's foreign policy.

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<http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/feature/5/196962/us-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia%3A-policy-options.html>, DOA: 1/8/2019) DE

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Iran and Israel's escalations aren't going to go into war for now

Baffa and Vest 2018 (Richard Baffa is a senior international/defense policy researcher at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation. Nathan Vest is a research assistant and Middle East specialist at RAND, "The Growing Risk of a New Middle East War", RAND Corporation, August 21st 2018,

<https://www.rand.org/blog/2018/08/the-growing-risk-of-a-new-middle-east-war.html>.

DOA: February 5th 2019) TG

Despite a steady string of altercations and provocations, neither Iran, its primary proxy Lebanese Hezbollah (LH), nor Israel appear to be seeking all-out war, at least for now. Iran has exercised a measure of restraint in its attacks, and Israel's responses have been intended to eliminate a specific threat and restore a measure of deterrence, not escalation. Moreover, Iran reportedly withdrew its forces in Syria 85 kilometers away from Israel's border to placate Israel;

however, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asserted that Israel would not accept any Iranian presence in Syria. ***Additionally,***

Tehran's objective to establish a permanent military presence in Syria from which it can support LH and threaten Israel is wholly unacceptable to Jerusalem. Furthermore, Israeli attacks thus far have not deterred Iran, setting up an escalation logic that could be difficult to curtail.

US should keep troops in Syria and keep up pressure on Iran to deter conflict

Baffa and Vest 2018 (Richard Baffa is a senior international/defense policy researcher at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation. Nathan Vest is a research assistant and Middle East specialist at RAND, “The Growing Risk of a New Middle East War”, RAND Corporation, August 21st 2018,

<https://www.rand.org/blog/2018/08/the-growing-risk-of-a-new-middle-east-war.html>.

DOA: February 5th 2019) TG

To achieve a lasting defeat of ISIS, which might still have more than 12,000 fighters across Syria, the United States should continue coordinating with its SDF partner to maintain military pressure on the group. Moreover, U.S. entities such as USAID could continue working to foster vital societal reconciliation in liberated majority Arab areas by buttressing nascent local governance and

empowering Arab communities. ***However, stabilization and governance initiatives might not be possible without direct U.S. engagement in post-ISIS areas. Continuing to entertain the possibility of exchanging a withdrawal of U.S. forces for a near-term peace deal and a tentative agreement to limit the Iranian presence in Syria could be a mistake. The United States would be better off reaffirming its presence in Syria and maintaining its hard and soft power efforts to constrain Iran and reduce the risk of another large-scale and disastrous war in the Middle East.***

The Syrian civil war has killed over 200,000 people

Specia 18 (Megan Specia, Story Editor for International Desk of the New York Times. Published 4-13-18. “How Syria’s Death Toll is Lost in the fog of war”, *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/13/world/middleeast/syria-death-toll.html>. DOA January 17 2019) JG

In seven years, the casualties of Syria’s civil war have grown from the first handful of protesters shot by government forces to hundreds of thousands of dead. But as the war has dragged on, growing more diffuse and complex, many international monitoring groups have essentially stopped counting. Even **the United Nations, which released regular reports on the death toll during the first years of the war, gave its last estimate in 2016 — when it relied on 2014 data, in part — and said that it was virtually impossible to verify how many had died.** At that time, **a United Nations official said 400,000 people had been killed.** But so many of the biggest moments of the war have happened since then. In the past two years, the government of President Bashar al-Assad, with Russia’s help, laid siege to residential areas of Aleppo, once the country’s second-largest city, and several other areas controlled by opposition groups, leveling entire neighborhoods. Last weekend, dozens of people died in a suspected chemical attack on a Damascus suburb, prompting the United States, Britain and France to launch retaliatory strikes against Syrian targets early Saturday. In addition, American-led forces have bombed the Islamic State in large patches of eastern Syria, in strikes believed to have left thousands dead. And dozens of armed groups, including fighters backed by Iran, have continued to clash, creating a humanitarian catastrophe that the world is struggling to measure. Historically, these numbers matter, experts say, because they can have a direct impact on policy, accountability and a global sense of urgency. The legacy of the Holocaust has become inextricably linked with the figure of six million Jews killed in Europe. The staggering death toll of the Rwandan genocide — one million Tutsis killed in 100 days — is seared into the framework of that nation’s reconciliation process.