



Who benefits from the US-supported, Saudi-led intervention into Yemen's civil war?

“By catering to the Saudis in Yemen, the United States has empowered al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, strengthened Iranian influence in Yemen, undermined Saudi security, and brought Yemen closer to the brink of collapse.”

– [Richard Sokolsky and Perry Cammack, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

US military support for Saudi Arabia in Yemen is emboldening Iran:

“As being played in Washington, the Yemen story is one of worsening famine caused at least in part by inaccurate Saudi bombing of pro-Iranian Houthi tribesmen. **The real story is about a cover-up of Saudi military embarrassment and the imminent risk of wider conflict from which Iran, at little cost to itself, will only profit.**” – [Simon Henderson, Washington Institute for Near East Policy](#)

“Even as Iran’s criticism of the Saudi-led coalition grows louder, Tehran has no desire to start a shooting war with Riyadh. Escalation could bring more direct involvement from the United States and further polarize the region against Iran.” – [J. Matthew McInnis, American Enterprise Institute](#)

“Saying the Houthis are simply an Iranian-backed group is misleading. Equally, if not more important, is the role played by former Yemeni President Saleh and his network.” – [Thomas Jocelyn, Foundation for the Defense of Democracies & Editor of the Long War Journal](#)

“Giving more bullets and bombs to the Saudis will make things worse, rather than better, in Yemen, which is now facing a mammoth humanitarian crisis a la Syria. **Moreover, it is likely to drive Yemeni rebel factions even further under Iranian control**, and enable the Saudis to continue to ignore a growing threat in Yemen from ISIS and al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).” – [Katie Zimmerman, American Enterprise Institute](#)

“Saudi Arabia's rival Iran, too, benefits from the prolonged conflict. Iran has provided some support to the Houthis, but far less than Saudi Arabia and its partners have claimed. **Iran seems to see the war as a low-cost way to mire Saudi Arabia and its allies in a quagmire in which each day brings fresh military, financial and reputational costs.**” – [Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, former chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, George W. Bush Administration](#)

“The al Houthis are more complicated, as their isolation from the international community helped foster the bond with Iran. They now test the bounds of American and Saudi patience with probing ballistic missile strikes at Saudi Arabia’s capital... **Establishing a path for key members of the al Houthi movement back into the Yemeni political scene and away from Iran could segregate moderates from those attached to Tehran at any cost.**” – [Katie Zimmerman, American Enterprise Institute](#)

“The continuation of Yemen’s civil war and its increasing interactions with regional conflict, such as the Iranian-Saudi conflict, will **perpetuate conditions that enable AQAP to expand its support base and that encourage the growth of Iranian influence within the al Houthi movement**. The U.S. must use its leverage over the Saudi-led coalition to pursue a negotiated political solution.” – [Maher Farrukh, American Enterprise Institute](#)

US military support for Saudi Arabia in Yemen is inadvertently aiding AQAP:

“Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has been a beneficiary of the war... **As long as the war continues, AQAP will find plenty of ungoverned space to thrive in and plenty of angry Yemeni recruits.**” – [Bruce Riedel, Brookings Institution & former CIA](#)

Unfortunately, **AQAP is thriving these days**, while the Saudi-led coalition focuses exclusively on defeating the Houthis, who the government in Riyadh argues are nothing more than the tip of the Iranian spear in the Arabian Peninsula, which must be blunted. **Meanwhile, AQAP conducts attacks against Yemeni targets, seizes and controls territory, and presumably continues to plan more external attacks with seeming impunity, the occasional US drone strike notwithstanding.**” – [Stephen Seche, former US Ambassador to Yemen under George W. Bush and Barack Obama & The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington](#)

“Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) remains well-funded despite a sharp decrease in revenue following the loss of the Yemeni port city of Mukalla. It is also likely **to see its income rise by exploiting the instability and sectarianism brought by Yemen’s civil war.**” – [Yaya Fanusie and Alex Entz, Foundation for Defense of Democracies](#)

“In their fight against Yemen’s Houthi rebels, the government of Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi, and its Saudi backers, have worked with local actors with suspected ties to al Qaeda. **Sometimes this means the targets being tracked by the US are actually cutting deals and getting their hands on weapons thanks to connections they have with the Hadi government and the Saudi-led coalition, to which the US provides support.**” – [Kate Brannen, Atlantic Council](#)

“**AQAP has emerged as an increasingly influential actor amidst the bloody turmoil and humanitarian crises that have spiraled out of control since the Saudi-led coalition began ...** By positioning itself as a disciplined Sunni force capable of effectively countering the Houthi insurgents, **AQAP has unquestionably established itself as a de facto partner of the U.S.-backed Saudi-led campaign in Yemen**, despite being the primary impetus for Washington’s ongoing drone campaign there.” – [Giorgio Cafiero, CEO of Gulf State Analytics](#)