

# West Asia Brief

January, 2023

**Resolved:** The United States Federal Government should increase its diplomatic efforts to peacefully resolve internal armed conflicts in West Asia.



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# Affirmative Case

## Carded AFF

Contention One: Competition and strategic benefits.

### **The U.S.'s many security interests in West Asia demand focus.**

Shelly Culbertson 22, RAND, 2022.

Shelly Culbertson. "Renewing U.S. Security Policy in the Middle East." RAND. December 2022.

[https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA904-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA904-1.html)

"The authors contend that the United States should not deprioritize or disengage from the Middle East but should instead manage the full range of its interests there. **These include the traditional goals of preventing terrorism, protecting global energy markets, and dealing with Iranian nuclear proliferation and other malign activities, as well as additional interests related to addressing great power competition, regional conflicts, the human and financial costs of conflict, civilian displacement, climate change, the well-being of allies, and chronic instability.**"

"To safeguard its interests, **the United States should rely less on military operations and more on diplomacy, economic development, and technical assistance. A reshaped U.S. strategy that both maintains the Middle East as a priority and rebalances military and civilian tools can help steer the region** from one where costs to the United States prevail to one where benefits to the American people—as well as people in the Middle East—accrue."

### **Expanded U.S. diplomacy can successfully counterbalance Russian influence and is succeeding despite Russian opposition.**

Adham Sahloul 21, War On The Rocks, 10-27-2021.

Adham Sahloul. "Ending America's Diplomacy-Last Syria Policy", War on the Rocks. October 2021.

<https://warontherocks.com/2021/10/ending-americas-diplomacy-last-syria-policy/>

"No one can accuse the Biden administration of having done nothing in Syria. **On the diplomatic front, America's UN mission has supported justice and accountability and worked to ensure the continuation of cross-border humanitarian aid.** Most notably, the Biden administration navigated a UN Security Council showdown, in which Russia threatened to veto **an extension of cross-border aid to northern Syria via Turkey, and** secured **a nominally year-long, cross-border aid extension for nearly 4.5 million Syrians.** In June, the Biden administration announced **an additional \$436 million in Syria aid,** atop more than \$13 billion in U.S. taxpayer dollars that already represent the lion's share of global humanitarian aid to Syrians."

## **U.S. diplomacy can do more.**

Brian **Katulis 18**, American Progress, 7-19-2018.

Brian Katulis. "Seizing the Diplomatic Initiative in Syria." 2018. The Center for American Progress.  
<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/seizing-diplomatic-initiative-syria/>

"The United States has an opportunity to shape this emerging landscape in a way that advances American interests and values. Meeting these goals will require a new policy approach that better matches U.S. goals to U.S. resources and better mobilizes U.S. partnerships throughout the region. This **policy should prioritize de-escalating the conflict, stabilizing Syria's periphery, and establishing a new diplomatic framework that tables Assad's fate in favor of an intermediate agreement to separate forces on the ground.** As a key part of this strategy, **the United States should** preserve the American-led military presence and **accelerate stabilization efforts in the northeast. It should also leverage a firm commitment to defend this zone to engage Russia and Turkey in a new, U.N.-backed plan to end the fighting. This approach** is not without risks, but it offers key advantages over the course the United States is on today: It **would allow the United States to responsibly conclude the campaign against IS (Isil/ISIS). By freezing the conflict in place, it would prevent a murderous regime from exercising control over an entire population** as well as halt the expansion of Russian and Iranian influence in the Middle East. And it would buy time for Syrians and the international community to seek a more durable national political settlement."

## **Impact: Counterbalancing Russia.**

Robert **Cekuta 22**, The Hill, 2-25-2022.

Cekuta, Robert F. "U.S. has to up diplomacy in Central Asia and the South Caucasus now." The Hill. 2/25/22.

<https://thehill.com/opinion/international/595840-us-has-to-up-diplomacy-in-central-asia-and-the-south-caucasus-now/>

**"Sanctions will not be enough to halt** Russian President Vladimir **Putin's aggression.** With Russia's assault on Ukraine **and** Putin's broader **ambitions, U.S. sanctions have to be accompanied by** tough, more creative and persistent **U.S. diplomacy to build a stronger international coalition and reinforce support for a rules-based international order.** Nowhere is such diplomacy needed more and needed now than in Central Asia and the Caucasus — countries that like Ukraine were also once part of the Soviet Union, but they likely wonder if there is anyone out there standing with them in the face of the threats coming out of Moscow. The U.S., along with the U.K. and EU, Japan and Australia, have been clear that Putin's actions against Ukraine are not acceptable, for example in imposing a growing set of sanctions, sending military aid to Ukraine, and bolstering troop and equipment levels in NATO countries. These countries will not compromise on key principles and will take further measures in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The United States and others are rightly clear in our support of Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Europe and the U.S. are clear that threats to Ukraine are threats to the security of Europe and to the rules-based system that has brought peace and the means to realize tremendous prosperity to around a billion Americans, Europeans and Russians since 1945. However, **the United States needs to energize its diplomatic approach** to the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, **taking into account Russia's pressure on those countries also to accede to**

**becoming part of a Neo-Russian empire.** News articles and media discussions in the United States have tended to ignore or gloss over an important set of facts: **the threats to Ukraine are also being made, perhaps more subtly, but still quite clearly to the countries of the Caucasus** as well as those of Central Asia. **They, too, were once part of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union, all but one (Georgia) incorporated by force of Russian arms."**

### **Impact: Russian aggression is marked by war crimes.**

Sereda, Sofia. War Crimes Are Part Of Russia's War Culture, Says Ukrainian Nobel Peace Prize Winner November 24, 2022

<https://www.rferl.org/a/war-crimes-russia-culture-ukrainian-nobel-prize-winner/32147415.htm>  
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**"For decades, Russia has used war as a method of achieving its geopolitical interests and war crimes as a way to win these wars,"** Matviychuk, who heads the Center for Civil Liberties, told RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service in an expansive interview. **"They learned that they can do whatever they want because they weren't punished for war crimes in Chechnya, Moldova, Georgia, Mali, or in Syria.** Therefore, until we can bring justice, there will be no sustainable peace in our region."

Matviychuk, a lawyer by trade, says she wants to use the organization's elevated stature to call for international action against human rights violations and the growing list of evidence pointing toward war crimes committed by Russian forces since the Kremlin's February 24 invasion of Ukraine.

"We see that all these crimes have a systemic nature," she said. "It's clear that this is not done by any specific unit of the Russian armed forces but that **it is part of the culture of how Russia conducts war.**"

## Contention Two: Conflict Resolution & De-Escalation

### **Seeking diplomatic solutions to conflict enhances Biden's foreign policy.**

James **Ryan 22**, Foreign Policy Research Institute, 10-24-2022.

Ryan, James. "Biden's National Security Strategy: America's Search for Order in the Middle East." Foreign Policy Research Institute. 10/24/22.

<https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/10/bidens-national-security-strategy-americas-search-for-order-in-the-middle-east/>

**"President Joe Biden's National Security Strategy (NSS) addresses two trends in America's Middle East policy** that have been apparent over his tenure: **military de-escalation and regional integration.** A year after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, **the NSS emphasizes** what was implied in that decision—**that U.S. military involvement cannot effectively promote stability, and by extension, the goal of democratization, through efforts at regime change.** The statement exclaims that, **"it is time to eschew grand designs in favor of more practical goals,"** namely regional stability and the advancement of U.S. interests such as countering Russian and Chinese aggression, and shoring up domestic industry."

## **Biden's foreign policy is aimed at creating stability with Iran and Israel.**

Harsh **Pant 22**, Observer Research Foundation, 7-27-2022.

Pant, Harsh V. "The U.S. search for a new role in West Asia." Observer Research Foundation. 7/27/22.  
<https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-u-s-search-for-a-new-role-in-west-asia/>

"With the first leaders' meet of the I2U2 group (comprising India, Israel, the UAE, and the U.S.), sometimes referred to as the West Asian Quad, the Biden administration may have found a new toehold in West Asia. The I2U2, beyond its promises of integration, is of strategic value to the U.S. on the back of troop pull-out from Afghanistan, a not-so-favorable relationship with Saudi Arabia, and a hostile relationship with Iran. The group's limited focus in this meeting on food security and energy security is understandable given its recent launch, but its agenda of tying the West Asian region with South Asia through innovation, private sector investments, initiatives in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and the promotion and development of critical emerging and green technologies depict an integrated inter-regional future for the two regions. Since the beginning of his term, Mr. **Biden has sought a reorientation in the U.S.'s West Asia policy. Resetting relations with Iran through a reworked Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action**, which would have the U.S. back in the agreement; troop pull-out from Afghanistan, which is having regional security ramifications; and principled support to democracies translating into a calibrated distancing from regional autocracies and dictatorships were all **part of the recalibration. Expectedly, one of the few continuities that Mr. Biden did not want to disturb was the U.S.' relations with Israel.**"

## **Impact: A nuclear war between Israel and Iran would be devastating.**

**CSIS 07**, Center for Strategic & International Studies, 11-19-2007.

Cordesman, Anthony H. Iran, Israel, and Nuclear War: An Illustrative Scenario Analysis. 19 Nov. 2007. Center for Strategic and International Studies, [www.csis.org/analysis/iran-israel-and-nuclear-war](http://www.csis.org/analysis/iran-israel-and-nuclear-war). Accessed 12 Jan. 2023.

**An estimated 16-20 million Iranians would die in a nuclear war with Israel, according to a report issued by a respected Washington think tank. CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies) also estimates that between 200,000 and 800,000 Israelis would be killed." These numbers alone prove why diplomatic intervention is required.**



# Paraphrased AFF

We affirm. (Resolved: The United States Federal Government should increase its diplomatic efforts to peacefully resolve internal armed conflicts in West Asia.)

Contention One: Competition & strategic benefits.

The U.S.'s many security interests in West Asia demand focus. **Culbertson 22** explains that "these include ... preventing terrorism, protecting global energy markets, and dealing with Iranian nuclear proliferation ..., as well as additional interests related to addressing great power competition, regional conflicts, the human and financial costs of conflict, civilian displacement, climate change, the well-being of allies, and chronic instability."

**Culbertson** continues explaining the need for diplomatic tools key to addressing these interests is diplomacy. "the U.S. should rely less on military operations and more on diplomacy, economic development, and technical assistance. A reshaped U.S. strategy that both maintains the Middle East as a priority and rebalances military and civilian tools can help steer the region"

Expanded U.S. diplomacy can successfully counterbalance Russian influence and is succeeding despite Russian opposition. **Sahloul 21** highlights recent achievements in Syria reporting that "On the diplomatic front, America's UN mission has supported justice and accountability and worked to ensure the continuation of cross-border humanitarian aid." This includes stopping a Russian Security Council Veto of "an extension of cross-border aid to northern Syria via Turkey, and securing a nominally year-long, cross-border aid extension for nearly 4.5 million Syrians ... [of] an additional \$436 million in Syria aid."

U.S. diplomacy can do more. **Katulis 18** explains that "policy should prioritize de-escalating the conflict, stabilizing Syria's periphery, and establishing a new diplomatic framework that tables Assad's fate in favor of an intermediate agreement to separate forces on the ground. ... the U.S. should ... accelerate stabilization efforts in the northeast. It should also leverage a firm commitment to defend this zone to engage Russia and Turkey in a new, U.N.-backed plan to end the fighting. This approach ... would allow the U.S. to responsibly conclude the campaign against IS. By freezing the conflict in place, it would prevent a murderous regime from exercising control over an entire population."

Impact: Counterbalancing Russia. **Cekuta 22** states that "Sanctions will not be enough to halt [Putin's] aggression ... and .. ambitions. ..., U.S. sanctions have to be accompanied by ... U.S. diplomacy to build a stronger international coalition and reinforce support for a rules-based international order." Cekuta further identifies energized US diplomacy in the region should take "into account Russia's pressure on those countries also to accede to becoming part of a Neo-Russian empire. ... the threats to Ukraine are also being made, perhaps more subtly, but still quite clearly to the countries of the Caucasus... They, too, were once part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, all but one (Georgia) incorporated by force of Russian arms."

Impact: Russian aggression is marked by war crimes. **Sereda '22** reports that "For decades, Russia has used war as a method of achieving its geopolitical interests and war crimes as a way to win these wars,...



They learned that they can do whatever they want because they weren't punished for war crimes in Chechnya, Moldova, Georgia, Mali, or in Syria.... it is part of the culture of how Russia conducts war."

#### Contention Two: Conflict Resolution & De-Escalation

Seeking diplomatic solutions to conflict enhances Biden's foreign policy. **Ryan 22** states that "Biden's National Security Strategy (NSS) addresses two trends in America's Middle East policy...: military de-escalation and regional integration. The NSS emphasizes that U.S. military involvement cannot effectively promote stability through efforts at regime change and that it is time to eschew grand designs in favor of more practical goals,"

Biden's foreign policy is aimed at creating stability with Iran and Israel. **Pant 22** states that "Biden has sought a reorientation in the U.S.'s West Asia policy. Resetting relations with Iran through a reworked Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action ... [was] part of the recalibration. Expectedly, one of the few continuities that Mr. Biden did not want to disturb the U.S.' relations with Israel."

Impact: A nuclear war between Israel and Iran would be devastating.

CSIS 15 tells us that "An estimated 16-20 million Iranians would die in a nuclear war with Israel, according to a report issued by a respected Washington think tank. CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies) also estimates that between 200,000 and 800,000 Israelis would be killed." These numbers alone prove why diplomatic intervention is required.

# Negative Case

## Carded NEG

Contention One: Yemen/Syria.

### **Diplomacy will not work in Yemen, and it is unlikely to improve the situation.**

Shuaib **Almosawa 23**, The Intercept, 1-1-2023.

Almosawa, Shuaib. "Biden's 'diplomacy' in Yemen Means Taking Saudi Arabia's Side — and Could Spark All-out War." The Intercept, 1 Jan. 2023, [theintercept.com/2023/01/01/biden-yemen-war-diplomacy/](https://theintercept.com/2023/01/01/biden-yemen-war-diplomacy/). Accessed 13 Jan. 2023.

**The White House's claims that its diplomacy is working**, however, are undercut by its own political moves and the reality on the ground. President Joe **Biden's envoy for the conflict has consistently sided with the Saudi coalition against the Houthi movement that controls much of the country**. And though a ceasefire during the spring and summer provided a respite in civilian casualties due to bombings, the ongoing Saudi blockade and economic warfare against Yemenis perpetuates the humanitarian crisis in the country — which the United Nations has deemed the worst in the world.

**Without taking an even-handed approach to the conflict in search of a political solution and the mitigation of the humanitarian crisis, the Biden administration's machinations can hardly be considered good-faith efforts at diplomacy**, critics of U.S. policy in the conflict said.

### **Iran spoils the peace process in Yemen.**

Fatima **Alasrar 22**, The National Interest, 4-21-2022.

Fatima Alasrar. "Iran Is Spoiling the Truce in Yemen.: The National Interest. 2022.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/iran-spoiling-truce-yemen-205286>

**"Yemenis have long been skeptical of the Houthis' commitment to the peace process based on their track record of rejecting negotiations. However, the recent Houthi rejection of the truce seems to have caught Western policymakers off guard, leaving the UN for answers in all the wrong places. The UN Envoy, Hans Grundberg, reportedly reached out to Houthis' Iranian backers to persuade the militia to abandon its maximalist positions. But it is more likely that Iran will push the Houthis to double down on their decision rather than cooperate. Iran's entire relationship with its proxies is based on the premise that it could leverage this connection to achieve political goals that would serve the Islamic Republic and keep it in power. Given the current domestic unrest in Iran due to the death of the twenty-two-year-old Mahsa Amini and the accumulative deaths of protestors at the hands of the regime, there is no better time for Iran to lean on the Houthis than now."**

### **Iran has no interest in peace.**

Fatima **Alasarar 22**, The National Interest, 4-21-2022.

Fatima Alasarar. "Iran Is Spoiling the Truce in Yemen.: The National Interest. 2022.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/iran-spoiling-truce-yemen-205286>

"Iran's role in Yemen has never been in pursuit of the country's stability. The Islamic Republic has maintained a singular focus on supporting the Houthi militia and empowering them militarily, strategically, and financially. This allowed Yemen's conflict to be prolonged for as long as possible to keep attention on Saudi and Emirati behavior as it denied any involvement or maleficence in the country. **In the past, Iran has hidden its support for the Houthis and vehemently denied backing the group.** The policy community has gone along with this farce, ignoring Iran's agenda in Yemen's affairs, **but accumulative evidence of its military and financial backing started to surface. From 2017 onwards, when the Houthis launched their first attack using ballistic missiles against Saudi Arabia, the Houthis' military arsenal has grown thanks to Iranian supply and assistance. Iran's influence in the country is real. Its official media establishment has repeatedly given unequivocal backing to the Houthis, touting them as "resistance" forces and belittling Yemen's government forces as "mercenaries."**"

### **The U.S. has no alternative to Assad in Syria, and Diplomacy is ineffective at addressing the conflict in Syria.**

Tom **Perry 15**, Reuters, 9-6-2015.

Tom Perry "Failure of Syria diplomacy exposes enduring divisions over Assad". Reuters. February 2015.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-assad-insight/failure-of-syria-diplomacy-exposes-enduring-divisions-over-assad-idUSKCN0R609B20150906>

""They think that **Assad's immediate departure would lead to a collapse of the regime. Washington also sees a rapid collapse of the regime as something that would be a boon for ISIS.** They are in a conundrum: **if Assad goes right away, it would help ISIS, but if he doesn't go at all, you have no hope of putting the pieces of Syria back together again.**" he said. "This recent outburst of diplomacy is because everyone was becoming concerned, and rightfully so. But **the results of that process were remarkably poor.** They **seem to cement the earlier political positions of the region when it comes to Syria.**"

### **The U.S. support for the PKK undermines peace in Syria.**

Melih **Altinok 23**, Daily Sabah, 1-12-2023.

Altinok, Melih. "Türkiye Holds the Key Solution to the Syrian Crisis." Daily Sabah, 12 Jan. 2023, [www.dailysabah.com/opinion/columns/turkiye-holds-the-key-solution-to-syrian-crisis](http://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/columns/turkiye-holds-the-key-solution-to-syrian-crisis) Accessed 13 Jan. 2023.

"In addition, **U.S. support for the PKK is a provocative factor that pushes Ankara to fear that "the PKK/YPG corridor is being established up to the Mediterranean" and to military interventions to create a safe zone against it. Assad is also aware that this element of tension, which does not benefit him, harms his relations with Türkiye, which hosts 4 million citizens, and threatens its territorial integrity.**"

Contention Two: Diplomacy is harmful, forced, and doesn't change the balance of power.

### **Negotiations rarely end conflicts.**

Audrey Kurth **Cronin 22**, United States Institute of Peace, 5-2010.

Audrey Kurth Cronin. "When should we talk to terrorists" May 2010. UNIP.

[https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR240Cronin\\_3a.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR240Cronin_3a.pdf)

**"Entering into negotiations does not necessarily end the violence, and it is a mistake to perpetuate the impression that it will. About half of the negotiating groups in our study have continued their attacks, though typically at a lower level of intensity and frequency. Still, among those 18 percent of groups that negotiated, the proportion of talks that clearly failed was small: about one in ten. On the other hand, in the remaining nine cases of talks that trundled on, very few groups actually achieved their ends through negotiations. The classic pattern is for groups either to cease to exist for other reasons, or to remain in periodic talks that drag on and on with interruptions and periodic setbacks, lacking either dramatic successes or outright failure."**

### **The most common strategies for negotiations are likely to fail.**

Niklas **Karlen 20**, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 3-26-2020.

Niklas Karlén (2020) Escalate to De-Escalate? External State Support and Governments' Willingness to Negotiate, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1835002>

"The most common objection to **negotiations** is that talks formally **recognize the rebels as worthy spokespersons**. Most of the time, governments would refuse to grant the insurgents legitimacy as a bargaining partner. **If negotiations are associated with a ceasefire the rebels could use the talks to rearm and reorganize, thus strengthening their capabilities. This would both increase their bargaining power and improve their chances of military success** if the talks break down. Furthermore, **negotiations may lead to the belief that groups that use violent methods will be rewarded. Talks can signal that the government has no resolve and is likely to make concessions**. This could open up for additional challengers. Another potential risk for the government, particularly in democracies, is that political opponents can use the negotiations to discredit the incumbent government and claim that it is weak on "terrorists""

### **Impact: Failed U.S. negotiations lead to more conflict.**

Niklas **Karlen 20**, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 3-26-2020.

Niklas Karlén (2020) Escalate to De-Escalate? External State Support and Governments' Willingness to Negotiate, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1835002>

**"It is imperative to understand what conditions are favorable in bringing the warring parties to the negotiation table as this is often seen as the crucial first step toward achieving other policy objectives such as a political settlement or a political transition. Moreover, it is also important to understand**

**when civil war negotiations occur as they frequently serve other strategic purposes. For example, warring parties often use negotiations instrumentally to rearm and reorganize and the initiation of talks legitimizes the rebel group.** Talks also increase the likelihood of rebel group fragmentation, foster temporary reductions in violence, and constitute an important transformation of the form of contestation. Taken together, this highlights the need to understand why negotiations take place.”

# Paraphrased NEG

We negate the resolution. (Resolved: The United States Federal Government should increase its diplomatic efforts to peacefully resolve internal armed conflicts in West Asia.)

Contention One: Yemen/Syria.

Diplomacy will not work in Yemen, and it is unlikely to improve the situation. **Almosawa 23** states that “The White House claims that its diplomacy is working. However, Biden’s envoy for the conflict has consistently sided with the Saudi coalition against the Houthi movement that controls much of the country. Without taking an even-handed approach to the conflict in search of a political solution and the mitigation of the humanitarian crisis, the Biden administration’s machinations can hardly be considered good-faith efforts at diplomacy.”

Iran spoils the peace process in Yemen. **Alasrar 22** states that “However, the recent Houthi rejection of the truce seems to have caught Western policymakers off guard, leaving the UN for answers in all the wrong places. Iran’s entire relationship with its proxies is based on the premise that it could leverage this connection to achieve political goals that would serve the Islamic Republic and keep it in power. ”

Iran has no interest in peace. **Alasrar 22** continues by stating that “In the past, Iran has hidden its support for the Houthis and vehemently denied backing the group, but accumulative evidence of its military and financial backing started to surface. From 2017 onwards, when the Houthis launched their first attack using ballistic missiles against Saudi Arabia, the Houthis’ military arsenal has grown thanks to Iranian supply and assistance. Iran’s influence in the country is real. Its official media establishment has repeatedly given unequivocal backing to the Houthis, touting them as “resistance” forces and belittling Yemen’s government forces as “mercenaries.”

The U.S. has no alternative to Assad in Syria, and Diplomacy is ineffective at addressing the conflict in Syria. **Perry 15** states that “The alternative to Assad is unclear. Assad’s immediate departure would lead to a collapse of the regime, something Washington sees as a boon for ISIS. If Assad doesn't go at all, there is no hope of putting the pieces of Syria back together again. The results of diplomacy were remarkably poor, and seem to cement the earlier political positions of the region when it comes to Syria.”

The U.S. support for the PKK undermines peace in Syria. **Altinok 23** states that “U.S. support for the PKK is a provocative factor that pushes Ankara to fear that “the PKK/YPG corridor is being established up to the Mediterranean” and to military interventions to create a safe zone against it. Assad is also aware that this element of tension, which does not benefit him, harms his relations with Türkiye, which hosts 4 million citizens, and threatens its territorial integrity.”

**Contention Two:** Diplomacy is harmful, forced, and doesn't change the balance of power.

Negotiations rarely end conflicts. **Cronin 22** states that "Entering into negotiations does not necessarily end the violence, and it is a mistake to perpetuate the impression that it will. About half of the negotiating groups in our study have continued their attacks... and very few groups actually achieved their ends through negotiations. The classic pattern is for groups either to cease to exist for other reasons or to remain in periodic talks that drag on and on with interruptions and periodic setbacks, lacking either dramatic successes or outright failure."

The most common strategies for negotiations are likely to fail. **Karlen 20** continues, "Negotiations recognize rebels as worthy spokespersons. If negotiations are associated with a ceasefire the rebels could use the talks to rearm and reorganize, thus strengthening their capabilities, increasing their bargaining power, and improving their chances of military success. Negotiations may lead to the belief that groups that use violent methods will be rewarded, and talks can signal that the government has no resolve and is likely to make concessions."

Impact: Failed U.S. negotiations lead to more conflict. **Karlen 20** states that "It is imperative to understand what conditions are favorable in bringing the warring parties to the negotiation table. Moreover, it is important to understand when civil war negotiations occur as they frequently serve other strategic purposes. For example, warring parties often use negotiations instrumentally to rearm and reorganize and the initiation of talks legitimizes the rebel group."



# Blocks to Affirmative (AT AFF)

## AT: Diplomacy can lead to peace in Turkey

The U.S. will not be able to resolve the conflict

1. **Turkey has resorted to shocking violence. “But there was no justification for the way in which it was done: with the use of heavy weaponry. The Turkish state responded with disproportionate force in southeastern Kurdish cities, prompting further violence and crippling the prospects of a political resolution.” Hoffman 19’** “Finally, the government’s security response in late 2015 was draconian and misguided. The Turkish government can legitimately argue that it had to reassert its authority over the areas that had unilaterally declared autonomy absent any democratic process. But there was no justification for the way in which it was done: with the use of heavy weaponry. The Turkish state responded with disproportionate force in southeastern Kurdish cities, prompting further violence and crippling the prospects of a political resolution.
2. **The Conflict in Syria has spillover harms to Turkey. “Kurdish gains in Syria increased the Turkish government’s fear of permanent Kurdish autonomy, undermining Ankara’s commitment to the ceasefire. Those same Kurdish gains also caused some Kurds to adopt maximalist demands or unrealistic expectations about their influence, losing sight of the fragility of the peace process” Hoffman 19’** the Syrian Civil War presented a crucial outside stressor on an already delicate process. As noted above, Kurdish gains in Syria increased the Turkish government’s fear of permanent Kurdish autonomy, undermining Ankara’s commitment to the ceasefire. Those same Kurdish gains also caused some Kurds to adopt maximalist demands or unrealistic expectations about their influence, losing sight of the fragility of the peace process and the asymmetry of power with the Turkish state.
3. **Erdogan has disclaimed the possibility of negotiation. “PKK have no option other than laying down their arms or surrendering to Turkey’s security forces,” President Erdoğan has said, dismissing any prospect of further “negotiations” with the group.” Staff 16’** “Militants of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) have no option other than laying down their arms or surrendering to Turkey’s security forces, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said, dismissing any prospect of further “negotiations” with the group.
4. **Turkey has suggested unilateral disarmament as a precondition for negotiation “There are now two paths for terrorists who target our citizens with bomb-laden vehicles: Either they surrender and accept the ruling delivered by the judiciary about them, or they are neutralized in the place where they are trapped,” Erdoğan said.” Staff 16’** ““With our government’s efforts, the region will witness a very different change. Those who are currently meeting with the terrorist organization speak of ‘negotiation.’ But there are no issues to be negotiated. There are now two paths for terrorists who target

our citizens with bomb-laden vehicles: Either they surrender and accept the ruling delivered by the judiciary about them, or they are neutralized in the place where they are trapped,” Erdoğan said. The president’s words came after recent remarks by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who suggested the PKK sending its armed components abroad as a condition for a restarted peace process.

Turkey has resorted to shocking violence

Max Hoffman. “The Failure of Diplomacy in Yemen”. Center for American Progress. October 2019. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/state-turkish-kurdishconflict/> “Finally, the government’s security response in late 2015 was draconian and misguided. The Turkish government can legitimately argue that it had to reassert its authority over the areas that had unilaterally declared autonomy absent any democratic process. But there was no justification for the way in which it was done: with the use of heavy weaponry. The Turkish state responded with disproportionate force in southeastern Kurdish cities, prompting further violence and crippling the prospects of a political resolution. It is possible that this was not entirely a top-down decision taken by Erdoğan himself; there are indeed factions within the state security apparatus, and many soldiers and gendarmes displayed ultranationalist symbols and slogans in the campaign in the Southeast.”

The Conflict in Syria has spillover harms to Turkey

Max Hoffman. “The Failure of Diplomacy in Yemen”. Center for American Progress. October 2019. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/state-turkish-kurdishconflict/> “Fifth, the Syrian Civil War presented a crucial outside stressor on an already delicate process. As noted above, Kurdish gains in Syria increased the Turkish government’s fear of permanent Kurdish autonomy, undermining Ankara’s commitment to the ceasefire. Those same Kurdish gains also caused some Kurds to adopt maximalist demands or unrealistic expectations about their influence, losing sight of the fragility of the peace process and the asymmetry of power with the Turkish state. But what is often forgotten is the role of IS in deliberately sabotaging the peace. In the early years of the Syrian war, Erdoğan and then-Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, both for humanitarian reasons and to support the rebellion against Assad, had adopted a handoff border security policy, allowing people and goods to move freely.”

Erdogan has disclaimed the possibility of negotiation

Staff. “Turkish President Erdoğan rules out ‘negotiation’ with PKK” The Daily News. March 2016. <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-president-erdoganrules-out-negotiation-with-pkk-97312> “Militants of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) have no option other than laying down their arms or surrendering to Turkey’s security forces, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said, dismissing any prospect of further “negotiations” with the group. “We will continue fighting until the last weapon is silenced. People say, ‘Please Mr. President, don’t break [operations against the PKK]. But how could we take a break? You see that they have made bombs using teapots while laughing,” Erdoğan said on April 4, referring to recent release of images and video recordings of PKK militants allegedly showing them preparing hand-made explosives using kitchen teapots.”

Turkey has suggested unilateral disarmament as a precondition for negotiation

Staff. “Turkish President Erdoğan rules out ‘negotiation’ with PKK” The Daily News. March 2016. <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-president-erdoganrules-out-negotiation-with-pkk-97312> ““With our government’s efforts, the region will witness a very different change. Those who are currently meeting with the terrorist organization speak of ‘negotiation.’ But there are no issues to be negotiated. There are now two paths for terrorists who target our citizens with bomb-laden vehicles: Either they surrender and accept the ruling delivered by the judiciary about them, or they are neutralized in the place where they are trapped,” Erdoğan said. The president’s words came after recent remarks by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who suggested the PKK sending its armed components abroad as a condition for a restarted peace process. “We didn’t end the peace process. The ones who set up barricades, dug holes and called for a civil war ended it,” Davutoğlu said, according to daily Habertürk. “What the public expects from the peace process is the complete abandonment of arms. If that happens and we go back to May 2013, and if the PKK sends all of its armed components abroad, leaving no armed element in Turkey, then everything can be talked about. The PKK has to lay down arms, there is no other way. Why wouldn’t talks take place in peaceful conditions after guns are laid down?” he added.”



# AT: Diplomacy is the only hope for Syria

The U.S. doesn't have a clear path to a diplomatic resolution of the conflict.

- 1. Perry 15 finds Russia and America too divided over Assad with Russia providing weapons and considering Assad the legitimate leader** “Russia’s foreign minister in recent days reiterated the Russian view that Assad is a legitimate leader, slammed the U.S. position to the contrary as “counterproductive”, and likened the west’s approach to Syria to its failures in Iraq and Libya. Russia meanwhile continues to supply Assad with weapons.” **Perry 15’** “Russia’s foreign minister in recent days reiterated the Russian view that Assad is a legitimate leader, slammed the U.S. position to the contrary as “counterproductive”, and likened the west’s approach to Syria to its failures in Iraq and Libya. Russia meanwhile continues to supply Assad with weapons. A Syrian military official told Reuters there has recently been a “big shift” in Russian military support, including new weapons and training. “Our ties are always developing but in these days a qualitative shift has happened. We call it a qualitative shift in Arabic, which means big,” the Syrian official said.
- 2. The alternative to Assad is unclear. “They are in a conundrum: if Assad goes right away, it would help ISIS, but if he doesn’t go at all, you have no hope of putting the pieces of Syria back together again,” Perry 15’** “They think that Assad’s immediate departure would lead to a collapse of the regime. Washington also sees a rapid collapse of the regime as something that would be a boon for ISIS. They are in a conundrum: if Assad goes right away, it would help ISIS, but if he doesn’t go at all, you have no hope of putting the pieces of Syria back together again,” he said. “This recent outburst of diplomacy is because everyone was becoming concerned, and rightfully so. But the results of that process were remarkably poor. They seem to cement the earlier political positions of the region when it comes to Syria.”
- 3. Diplomacy has been tried and fails “The continuing war represents a profound failure of diplomacy,” While upholding the need for a political solution, some have deepened their military involvement, accentuating the internationalization of the conflict.” Staff 15’** ““The continuing war represents a profound failure of diplomacy,” Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro told the Human Rights Council in Geneva earlier this morning. “Influential States have acted with equivocation in their efforts to extinguish the conflict in Syria. While upholding the need for a political solution, some have deepened their military involvement, accentuating the internationalization of the conflict.”
- 4. Despite efforts, the situation in Syria has deteriorated. Groups terrorized men, women and children living in localities held by the Government. “Sending a message that they are a force to be reckoned with, these attacks also appear to be launched with the intention of punishing civilians for their perceived support of the Government,” Staff 15’** “According to Mr. Pinheiro, shelling of civilian-inhabited areas by non-State armed groups – including but not limited to the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant (ISIL), Jabhat Al-Nusra, and Jaysh Al-Islam – has terrorized men, women and children living in localities held by the Government. “Sending a message that they are a force to be reckoned with,

these attacks also appear to be launched with the intention of punishing civilians for their perceived support of the Government,” he continued, adding that were these attacks are launched on areas with minority communities, they create further divisions within Syrian society and risk inflaming sectarian tensions

Russia and America too divided over Assad

Tom Perry “Failure of Syria diplomacy exposes enduring divisions over Assad”. Reuters. February 2015.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-assadinsight/failure-of-syria-diplomacy-exposes-enduring-divisions-over-assadidUSKCN0R609B20150906>

“Russia’s foreign minister in recent days reiterated the Russian view that Assad is a legitimate leader, slammed the U.S. position to the contrary as “counterproductive”, and likened the west’s approach to Syria to its failures in Iraq and Libya. Russia meanwhile continues to supply Assad with weapons. A Syrian military official told Reuters there has recently been a “big shift” in Russian military support, including new weapons and training. “Our ties are always developing but in these days a qualitative shift has happened. We call it a qualitative shift in Arabic, which means big,” the Syrian official said. Such assertions are difficult to verify, but U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry expressed his concern over reports of increased Russian involvement in a telephone call with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday. The New York Times said Russia had sent a military advance team to Syria, citing American intelligence analysts.”

The alternative to Assad is unclear

Tom Perry “Failure of Syria diplomacy exposes enduring divisions over Assad”. Reuters. February 2015. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-assad-insight/failure-of-syria-diplomacy-exposes-enduring-divisions-over-assadidUSKCN0R609B20150906>

““They think that Assad’s immediate departure would lead to a collapse of the regime. Washington also sees a rapid collapse of the regime as something that would be a boon for ISIS. They are in a conundrum: if Assad goes right away, it would help ISIS, but if he doesn’t go at all, you have no hope of putting the pieces of Syria back together again,” he said. “This recent outburst of diplomacy is because everyone was becoming concerned, and rightfully so. But the results of that process were remarkably poor. They seem to cement the earlier political positions of the region when it comes to Syria.” The recent flurry of diplomatic activity followed the conclusion of Iran’s nuclear deal with world powers and included high-level meetings between states with a stake in the conflict, with Russia taking the lead.”

Diplomacy has been tried and fails

Staff. “UN rights expert deploras ‘profound failure of diplomacy’ as Syria conflict escalates.” United Nations. March 2015.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2015/06/502402-un-rights-expert-deploresprofound-failure-diplomacy-syria-conflict-escalates>

““The continuing war represents a profound failure of diplomacy,” Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro told the Human Rights Council in Geneva earlier this morning. “Influential States have acted with equivocation in their efforts to extinguish the conflict in Syria. While upholding the need for a political solution, some have deepened their military involvement, accentuating the internationalization of the conflict.” Mr. Pinheiro’s remarks come as the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, which he chairs, released its latest paper on the situation on the ground in the Middle Eastern country noting that amid Government bombardments and the violence inflicted by armed groups, Syrian civilians were leading an increasingly precarious existence.”

Despite efforts, the situation in Syria has deteriorated

Staff. “UN rights expert deploras ‘profound failure of diplomacy’ as Syria conflict escalates.” United Nations. March 2015.

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“According to Mr. Pinheiro, shelling of civilian-inhabited areas by non-State armed groups – including but not limited to the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant (ISIL), Jabhat Al-Nusra, and Jaysh Al-Islam – has terrorized men, women and children living in localities held by the Government. “Sending a message that they are a force to be reckoned with, these attacks also appear to be launched with the intention of punishing civilians for their perceived support of the Government,” he continued, adding that were these attacks are launched on areas with minority communities, they create further divisions within Syrian society and risk inflaming sectarian tensions. In its latest situation report, OCHA warned that some 12 million people in the Middle Eastern country today remain in need of humanitarian assistance – a twelve-fold increase since 2011. The figures include 5.6 million children. Meanwhile, 7.6 million people have been displaced by the conflict and another 4.8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in hard to reach and besieged locations.”



# AT: Diplomacy is a preferable solution to military intervention in Syria

The U.S. can't succeed with diplomacy alone in Syria.

- 1. Negotiations rarely end conflicts. “efforts to negotiate a political settlement have lurched along, with nothing to show for years of United Nations-led mediation between the Assad regime and the opposition. the so-called Geneva process has become little more than zombie diplomacy, kept alive not by any expectation that it will produce a result but by the absence of alternatives and the reluctance of the United States and European Union to let go of the only negotiating framework accepted by all members of the U.N. Security Council. We have made no progress, but opportunities remain to be explored.” Heydemann & Sharr 22** “Even as the military balance on the ground has shifted, efforts to negotiate a political settlement have lurched along, with nothing to show for years of United Nations-led mediation between the Assad regime and the opposition. Undermined by the recalcitrance and obstructionism of the Assad regime, the so-called Geneva process has become little more than zombie diplomacy, kept alive not by any expectation that it will produce a result but by the absence of alternatives and the reluctance of the United States and European Union to let go of the only negotiating framework accepted by all members of the U.N. Security Council. Every month, the U.N. special envoy for Syria, currently veteran Norwegian diplomat Geir Pedersen, updates the Council in terms that have become as repetitive as they are predictable: We have made no progress, but opportunities remain to be explored.
- 2. Assad is totally uninterested in Diplomacy. Assad, however, was never interested in any part of the political process. He once described Syria’s membership in the U.N. as “a game we play.” As the impact of Russia’s military intervention became more apparent, regime negotiators turned the process into a farce. Heydemann & Sharr 22** Assad, however, was never interested in any part of the political process. He once described Syria’s membership in the U.N. as “a game we play.” As the impact of Russia’s military intervention became more apparent, regime negotiators turned the process into a farce. Nor did Russia’s military support for Assad translate into political leverage. Even as Russia committed itself to the survival of Assad and his regime, it invested political capital in a diplomatic process it viewed as the pathway to an internationally accepted political settlement that would, in turn, make possible an easing of sanctions and access to funds for reconstruction.
- 3. Russia does not want a diplomatic solution Karlén 20** The Kremlin seeks to thwart any Western effort to replace Assad and to instead reach a superficial political settlement that legitimizes his regime and neutralizes his opposition. Buying into Russian-driven efforts thus empowers Russia to undermine American interests. Russia cannot deliver Assad to the negotiating table, moreover. Assad depends on Russian (and Iranian) military help but is not controlled by them. A fragile power balance exists between them



in which Assad often gains an upper hand. Russia has limited bandwidth and resources to commit to Syria, which Assad knows and exploits.

**4. Negotiations with bad faith actors like Assad are counterproductive** Karlén 20 The West's current diplomatic framework in Syria, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254, may do more harm than good under current circumstances. UNSCR 2254 calls for a ceasefire and the drafting of a new Syrian Constitution followed by UN-monitored elections. These fall far short of the opposition's initial demands, which included Assad's departure and a transitional government, and thus represent a major compromise to Assad's backers. The implementation of UNSCR 2254 will likely alienate opposition communities and empower Salafi-Jihadist Groups. Assad will manipulate it to allow his further consolidation."

### **Analysis: Negotiating with Russia and Assad is counterproductive and does nothing to actually benefit the people of Syria.**

Negotiations rarely end conflicts

Steven Heydemann and Karam Shaar. "Zombie diplomacy and the fate of Syria's constitutional committee" May 2022. Brookings.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/01/24/zombiediplomacy-and-the-fate-of-syrias-constitutional-committee/> "Even as the military balance on the ground has shifted, efforts to negotiate a political settlement have lurched along, with nothing to show for years of United Nations-led mediation between the Assad regime and the opposition. Undermined by the recalcitrance and obstructionism of the Assad regime, the so-called Geneva process has become little more than zombie diplomacy, kept alive not by any expectation that it will produce a result but by the absence of alternatives and the reluctance of the United States and European Union to let go of the only negotiating framework accepted by all members of the U.N. Security Council. Every month, the U.N. special envoy for Syria, currently veteran Norwegian diplomat Geir Pedersen, updates the Council in terms that have become as repetitive as they are predictable: We have made no progress, but opportunities remain to be explored. Pedersen's cautious optimism is laudable. Yet however modest his aspirations, there is no longer any meaningful opportunity to salvage the Geneva process. Russian officials have expressed frustration that they have not been able to wring a more accommodating posture out of their client in Damascus. Simultaneously, regional states have begun a gradual process of normalization — establishing diplomatic ties to the Assad regime and initiating discussions about bolstering trade and investment — that has further diminished whatever incentives might have existed to prod Assad into taking the Geneva process seriously."

Assad is totally uninterested in Diplomacy

Steven Heydemann and Karam Shaar. "Zombie diplomacy and the fate of Syria's constitutional committee" May 2022. Brookings.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/01/24/zombiediplomacy-and-the-fate-of-syrias-constitutional-committee/> "Despite reservations, opponents of the Assad regime agreed to de Mistura's framework and participated in the talks in good faith. Assad, however, was never interested in any part of the political process. He once described Syria's membership in the U.N. as "a game we play." As the impact of Russia's military intervention became more apparent, regime negotiators turned the process into a farce. Nor did Russia's military support for Assad translate into political leverage. Even as Russia committed itself to the survival of Assad and his regime, it invested political capital in a diplomatic process it viewed as the pathway to an internationally accepted political settlement that would, in turn, make possible an easing of sanctions and access to funds for reconstruction. Yet Assad's dependence on Russia notwithstanding, he has consistently treated the Geneva process with derision, refusing to play along — an object lesson in the ability of weak clients to resist pressure from influential patrons. De Mistura labored on, but as the regime's military position improved, Assad and his Russian backers lost interest in negotiating the meaty issues of political transition and early elections, narrowing the Geneva process to the matter of constitutional reform. Even so, it took 18 months after the establishment of a "constitutional committee" before talks once again got underway, with Pedersen as the U.N.'s special envoy."

Russia does not want a diplomatic solution

Niklas Karlén (2020) Escalate to De-Escalate? External State Support and Governments'

Willingness to Negotiate, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, DOI:

10.1080/1057610X.2020.1835002

"Syrian President Bashar al-Assad remains the primary obstacle to peace in Syria. He has consistently spoiled any diplomatic process. His actions show that he will accept only the full defeat of his opponents. Even then, he will punish those who previously defied him, as he has done in former pro-opposition communities including in Aleppo and Dera'a Provinces. Yet he cannot win the war, so the West cannot resign itself to accepting his "victory" for the sake of stability. He does not have the resources to reconquer and reintegrate all of Syria. U.S. Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump mistakenly expected Russia to compel Assad to accept a diplomatic process. The Kremlin seeks to thwart any Western effort to replace Assad and to instead reach a superficial political settlement that legitimizes his regime and neutralizes his opposition. Buying into Russian-driven efforts thus empowers Russia to undermine American interests. Russia cannot deliver Assad to the negotiating table, moreover. Assad depends on Russian (and Iranian) military help but is not controlled by them. A fragile power balance exists between them in which Assad often gains an upper hand. Russia has limited bandwidth and resources to commit to Syria, which Assad knows and exploits."

Negotiations with bad faith actors like Assad are counterproductive

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"Russia has waged a sophisticated campaign of linked military and diplomatic efforts to shape the trajectory of the war in accord with its interests since 2015. Russia has strengthened Assad's military position, shaped inter-national negotiations, and gained recognition as a diplomatic arbiter. The U.S. still has an

opportunity to displace Russia from the center of Syrian diplomacy, however. Russia's inability to persuade or compel Assad to respect the terms it brokers is costing it influence within opposition communities. The West's current diplomatic framework in Syria, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254, may do more harm than good under current circumstances. UNSCR 2254 calls for a ceasefire and the drafting of a new Syrian Constitution followed by UN-monitored elections. These fall far short of the opposition's initial demands, which included Assad's departure and a transitional government, and thus represent a major compromise to Assad's backers. The implementation of UNSCR 2254 will likely alienate opposition communities and empower Salafi-Jihadist Groups. Assad will manipulate it to allow his further consolidation."

## AT: The U.S. can challenge Iran in Yemen

Iran will continue fighting the civil war in Yemen as a proxy conflict against Saudi Arabia.

- 1. Iran is involved in Yemen in a proxy conflict with Saudi Arabia Motamedi 22.** As Saudi Arabia continues to play a key role in influencing neighbouring Yemen's political future, the kingdom's main regional rival, Iran, has maintained its place on the other side of the equation. In Yemen's devastating seven-year war, Iran has supported the Houthi rebels, who took parts of the country in 2014 and began fighting a Saudi-led coalition in 2015. Tehran denies arming the Houthis, despite claims from the United Nations and others, while the Houthis say their drones and missiles are domestically made. A new, eight-member Yemeni presidential council was inaugurated on Tuesday with Saudi support, after former president Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi handed over power. The council assumes leadership of the internationally recognised Yemeni government, which has been at war with the Houthis, at a time when a two-month truce negotiated by the United Nations is in place.
- 2. Iran has the upper hand Motamedi 22** Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said in a speech last week, directly addressing Saudi leaders. "Why do you continue a war in which you know you have no chance of success? Find a way to get yourself out of this fight." If the truce is truly implemented, Khamenei added, it can be extended and the people of Yemen can prevail through the "efforts, bravery and initiative of themselves and their leaders" Meanwhile, the Iranian foreign ministry has described its proposal for putting an end to the war as an immediate stop to all fighting, an end to any restrictions on the flow of humanitarian aid, and "YemeniYemeni talks" bringing the various sides in the conflict together. According to Diako Hosseini, a Tehran-based foreign policy analyst, that last part means that the war can only be ended by Yemeni stakeholders without the intervention of any other parties, including Saudi Arabia
- 3. Iran spoils the peace process in Yemen Alasrar 22** . However, the recent Houthi rejection of the truce seems to have caught Western policymakers off guard, leaving the UN for answers in all the wrong places. The UN Envoy, Hans Grundberg, reportedly reached out to Houthis' Iranian backers to persuade the militia to abandon its maximalist positions. But it is more likely that Iran will push the Houthis to double down on their decision rather than cooperate. Iran's entire relationship with its proxies is based on the premise that it could leverage this connection to achieve political goals that would serve the Islamic Republic and keep it in power.
- 4. Iran has no interest in peace Alasrar 22** y. In the past, Iran has hidden its support for the Houthis and vehemently denied backing the group. The policy community has gone along with this farce, ignoring Iran's agenda in Yemen's affairs, but accumulative evidence of its

military and financial backing started to surface. From 2017 onwards, when the Houthis launched their first attack using ballistic missiles against Saudi Arabia, the Houthis' military arsenal has grown thanks to Iranian supply and assistance. Iran's influence in the country is real. Its official media establishment has repeatedly given unequivocal backing to the Houthis, touting them as "resistance" forces and belittling Yemen's government forces as "mercenaries."

**Analysis: Iran has no interest in ending the conflict in Yemen because they want to prevent Saudi Arabia from gaining any ground. The U.S. can't serve as a peacemaker so long as Iran prevents them.**

Iran is involved in Yemen in a proxy conflict with Saudi Arabia.

Maziar Motamedi. "What role will Iran play in shaping Yemen's future?" May 2022. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/21/what-role-will-iran-playin-shaping-yemens-future>

"As Saudi Arabia continues to play a key role in influencing neighbouring Yemen's political future, the kingdom's main regional rival, Iran, has maintained its place on the other side of the equation. In Yemen's devastating seven-year war, Iran has supported the Houthi rebels, who took parts of the country in 2014 and began fighting a Saudi-led coalition in 2015. Tehran denies arming the Houthis, despite claims from the United Nations and others, while the Houthis say their drones and missiles are domestically made. A new, eight-member Yemeni presidential council was inaugurated on Tuesday with Saudi support, after former president Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi handed over power. The council assumes leadership of the internationally recognised Yemeni government, which has been at war with the Houthis, at a time when a two-month truce negotiated by the United Nations is in place. Fighting, however, has not stopped in the northern city of Marib. And the Houthis have claimed that fuel tankers have not had free access to the port of Hodeidah, and that flights have not fully resumed from Sanaa airport – conditions agreed to by the Saudi-led coalition and the Yemeni government."

Iran has the upper hand

Maziar Motamedi. "What role will Iran play in shaping Yemen's future?" May 2022. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/21/what-role-will-iran-playin-shaping-yemens-future>

"But it appears Iran believes that the Houthis, and by extension itself, have the upper hand in the war. "I say this out of compassion," Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said in a speech last week, directly addressing Saudi leaders. "Why do you continue a war in which you know you have no chance of success? Find a way to get yourself out of this fight." If the truce is truly implemented, Khamenei added, it can be extended and the people of Yemen can prevail through the "efforts, bravery and initiative of themselves and their leaders" Meanwhile, the Iranian foreign ministry has described its proposal for putting an end to the war as an immediate stop to all fighting, an end to any restrictions on the flow of humanitarian aid, and "YemeniYemeni talks" bringing the various sides in the conflict together. According to Diako

Hosseini, a Tehran-based foreign policy analyst, that last part means that the war can only be ended by Yemeni stakeholders without the intervention of any other parties, including Saudi Arabia. "Efforts by Saudi Arabia and its allies to intervene in the peace process and create proxy groups is one of Iran's concerns," he told Al Jazeera. "Iran understands Saudi concerns, but believes these concerns must become incentives to find sustainable and fair solutions to help Yemenis to rely on themselves, and find a way out of this crisis by accepting facts."

Iran spoils the peace process in Yemen

Fatima Alasrar. "Iran Is Spoiling the Truce in Yemen.: The National Interest. 2022. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/iran-spoiling-truce-yemen205286>

"Yemenis have long been skeptical of the Houthis' commitment to the peace process based on their track record of rejecting negotiations. However, the recent Houthi rejection of the truce seems to have caught Western policymakers off guard, leaving the UN for answers in all the wrong places. The UN Envoy, Hans Grundberg, reportedly reached out to Houthis' Iranian backers to persuade the militia to abandon its maximalist positions. But it is more likely that Iran will push the Houthis to double down on their decision rather than cooperate. Iran's entire relationship with its proxies is based on the premise that it could leverage this connection to achieve political goals that would serve the Islamic Republic and keep it in power. Given the current domestic unrest in Iran due to the death of the twenty-two-year-old Mahsa Amini and the accumulative deaths of protestors at the hands of the regime, there is no better time for Iran to lean on the Houthis than now."

Iran has no interest in peace

Fatima Alasrar. "Iran Is Spoiling the Truce in Yemen.: The National Interest. 2022. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/iran-spoiling-truce-yemen205286>

"Iran's role in Yemen has never been in pursuit of the country's stability. The Islamic Republic has maintained a singular focus on supporting the Houthi militia and empowering them militarily, strategically, and financially. This allowed Yemen's conflict to be prolonged for as long as possible to keep attention on Saudi and Emirati behavior as it denied any involvement or maleficence in the country. In the past, Iran has hidden its support for the Houthis and vehemently denied backing the group. The policy community has gone along with this farce, ignoring Iran's agenda in Yemen's affairs, but accumulative evidence of its military and financial backing started to surface. From 2017 onwards, when the Houthis launched their first attack using ballistic missiles against Saudi Arabia, the Houthis' military arsenal has grown thanks to Iranian supply and assistance. Iran's influence in the country is real. Its official media establishment has repeatedly given unequivocal backing to the Houthis, touting them as "resistance" forces and belittling Yemen's government forces as "mercenaries." Moreover, the Houthi received strategic combat training from the terrorist-designated Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which has been working to improve the Houthis' missile capabilities, by its own admission, as they have enabled Iran to turn North Yemen into a "testing ground for Hezbollah and Iranian missiles."

## AT: The U.S. can put an end to the civil war in Yemen

## AT: The U.S. can put an end to the civil war in Yemen.

**Diplomacy has proven ineffective in resolving the Yemeni civil war.**

[Young '22](#) reports,

- 1. Diplomacy has failed before.** → "In early October, a United Nations-brokered truce in Yemen that had held for six months, having been extended twice, collapsed when the two main warring sides, the Houthis and the Yemeni government, failed to agree on conditions for another extension."
- 2. Diplomacy just gives the warring factions a chance to regroup.** → "During the truce, the Houthis regrouped, recruited more fighters, and reinforced their positions on all frontlines. They came to feel that they had significantly enhanced their military preparedness, and even held a series of military parades to demonstrate their increased power."

[UN '15](#) reports,

- 3. The Houthis have placed conditions on their willingness to negotiate.** → "The Houthis continue to make the opening of Hudaydah ports and Sana'a airport, as well as on the ending of what they call the "aggression and occupation", conditions of their renewed participation in the political process."
- 4. Parties remain focused on military victory.** → "Meanwhile, military activity continues to ebb and flow, said Mr. Khiari, with sporadic fighting observed in Al Jawf and Taiz. Ma'rib remains the key strategic focus. In Al Bayda, gains made by Yemeni forces supported by the Saudi-led coalition were reversed by the Houthis, who have moved towards the border between Ma'rib and Shabwa governorates, threatening the main arterial routes."

# AT: Diplomacy is key to solving the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

**The U.S. is not a neutral negotiator, which leads diplomatic efforts to fail.**

[PBS '06](#) reports,

- 1. The U.S. has criticized Palestine, historically siding with Israel.** → “In 2001, President Bush continued high-level U.S. engagement when he sent his Secretary of State to the Middle East to meet the Israeli Prime Minister and Palestinian President. Bush became the first U.S. president to publicly call for two states, Israel and Palestine, existing side by side. But violence had already begun to return, with an Israeli reoccupation of West Bank and Gaza towns and villages, in response to Palestinian attacks. A major byproduct of the renewed strife was a significant shift in U.S. policy toward the Palestinians, specifically their leader. Their President, one of the most frequent visitors to the Clinton White House, became unwelcome in Washington, perceived by the Bush administration as the Israelis saw him — a terrorist. President Bush went a step further, calling on Palestinians “to elect new leaders, leaders not compromised by terror,” a thinly veiled call for Arafat’s ouster.”
- 2. U.S. efforts are perceived as pressuring Palestinians for Israeli benefit.** → “Bush’s statements led to changes, with Palestinians naming a new prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, one of the top Oslo negotiators, paving the way to a major summit of Palestinian, Israeli, U.S., and Jordanian leaders in the Jordanian port city of Aqaba. But the hope that accompanied those events faded quickly, and the plans became the target of Palestinian criticism, perceived as yet another U.S. effort that pressured Palestinians for Israeli benefit. By September 2003, Abbas had resigned, a victim partly of clashes over the control of Palestinian security forces. But Palestinians also saw in him a leader handicapped, therefore unable to improve daily Palestinian life. It would not be until early 2004 that any real energy was injected back into the quest for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When it did come, it took the form of a U.S.-backed plan to withdraw all Israeli settlers and supporting military personnel from Gaza and four West Bank villages. With little direct U.S. involvement or Israeli coordination with Palestinians, Palestinians ultimately judged it to be a unilateral effort by Israel to force a settlement on Israeli terms. Palestinians interpreted it as U.S. sanctioning of an Israeli annexation of parts of the West Bank.”

[Telesur '22](#) states,

### 3. Palestinians will reject U.S. efforts, and do not trust the U.S. government. →

“Palestinians demonstrated in the West Bank city of Bethlehem against President Biden's visit over the long-time unfair U.S. diplomacy in dealing with the Palestinian-Israeli issue.

"We all know that Biden came here to politically, economically, and militarily support

Israel, not to help the Palestinian people. For decades, U.S. diplomacy has turned its

back on the Palestinians, whereas Israel has received much of U.S. support," said

Antoine Issa, a 39-year-old man. "I have heard repeatedly from U.S. presidents, from Bill

Clinton to Biden, that they support a two-state solution that would end the conflict, but

the reality is completely different," he added. In a bid to express their dissatisfaction

against the unfair U.S. diplomacy toward Palestinians, Issa was among dozens of

protesters who raised black banners and waved Palestinian flags against Biden's visit.”

#### Young '22:

Michael Young. “The Failure of Diplomacy in Yemen”. Carnegie Endowment. October 2022. <https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/88180>

In early October, a United Nations-brokered truce in Yemen that had been held for six months, having been extended twice, collapsed when the two main warring sides, the Houthis and the Yemeni government, failed to agree on conditions for another extension. Diwan interviewed Ahmed Nagi, whose research as a nonresident scholar at the Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut focuses on Yemen, about the reasons for the truce's demise and the possible ramifications for the war-torn country and its neighbors. During the truce, the Houthis regrouped, recruited more fighters, and reinforced their positions on all frontlines. They came to feel that they had significantly enhanced their military preparedness and even held a series of military parades to demonstrate their increased power. On the other side, however, the situation was different. Saudi Arabia and the UAE managed to bring together several anti-Houthi factions under a newly formed Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) that they hoped would govern Yemen. With time, however, some of these groups began fighting each other. In Shabwa, heavy clashes took place between PLC factions backed by Saudi Arabia and those supported by the UAE. Aware of all this, the Houthis raised their ceiling during negotiations over the truce's renewal, setting new conditions.

#### United Nations '15:

United Nations. March 2015. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2015/06/502402-un-rights-expert-deplores-profound-failure-diplomacy-syria-conflict-escalates>

“It is imperative to resume an inclusive, Yemeni-led political process to reach a negotiated solution to the conflict,” said Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific, referring to a 2015 peace plan, which called for a nationwide ceasefire, the reopening of Sana'a airport, the easing of restrictions on fuel and goods flowing through Hudaydah port, and the resumption of face-to-face political negotiations. Mr. Khiari said that the Houthis continue to make the opening of Hudaydah ports and Sana'a airport, as well as the ending of what they call the “aggression and occupation”, conditions of their renewed participation in the political process. Meanwhile, military activity continues to ebb and flow, said Mr. Khiari, with sporadic fighting observed in Al Jawf and Taiz. Ma'rib remains the key strategic focus. In Al Bayda, gains made by Yemeni forces supported by the Saudi-led coalition were reversed by the Houthis, who have moved towards the border between Ma'rib and Shabwa governorates, threatening the main arterial routes. Mr. Khiari called on all parties to “completely and immediately” cease such attempts to achieve territorial gains by force.

#### PBS News Hour '06:

“U.S. Role in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.” PBS News Hour. 5/11/06. [https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/middle\\_east-jan-june06-us\\_05-11](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/middle_east-jan-june06-us_05-11)

Indeed, in February 2001 President Bush signaled continued high-level U.S. engagement when he sent his top diplomat, Secretary of State Colin Powell, to the Middle East to meet another new leader, the freshly anointed Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. By November of that year, President Bush became the first U.S. president to publicly call for two states, Israel and Palestine, existing side by side. But violence had already begun to creep back into the landscape of the Palestinian-Israeli relationship, and by early 2002 it had grown such that it had a name — the second intifada. It witnessed an Israeli reoccupation of Palestinian West Bank and Gaza towns and villages, in response to attacks by Palestinians on Israeli targets, and the deaths of dozens of civilians on both sides. A major byproduct of the renewed strife was a significant shift in U.S. policy toward the Palestinians, specifically their leader. Arafat, one of the most frequent visitors among foreign leaders to the Clinton White House, became unwelcome in Washington, perceived by the Bush administration as the Israelis saw him — a terrorist. On June 24, 2002, President Bush went a step further, calling on Palestinians “to elect new leaders, leaders not compromised by terror,” a thinly veiled call for Arafat's ouster. The president also detailed steps he saw necessary for a return to peace between the two parties — chief among them a Palestinian renunciation and cessation of terrorism, and the end to Israeli settlement expansion. Those steps were codified in the so-called road map to peace, released as a formal plan in April 2003. Within a month, the Palestinians had named a new prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, or Abu Mazen, one of the top Oslo negotiators, paving the way to a major summit of Palestinian, Israeli, U.S., and Jordanian leaders in the Jordanian port city of Aqaba. But the hope that accompanied those events faded quickly, and the road map became the target of Palestinian criticism, perceived as yet another U.S. effort that pressured Palestinians for Israeli benefit. By September 2003, Abbas had resigned, a victim partly of clashes with Arafat over the control of Palestinian security forces. But Palestinians also saw in him a leader handicapped by and unable to counter the strong Bush-Sharon relationship, therefore unable to improve daily Palestinian life. It would not be until early 2004 that any real energy was injected back into the quest for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When it did come, it took the form of a U.S.-backed plan announced by Sharon to withdraw all Israeli settlers and supporting military personnel from Gaza and four West Bank villages. The plan had undergone public debate for months. But with little direct U.S. involvement or Israeli coordination with Palestinians, Palestinians ultimately judged it to be a unilateral effort by Israel to force a settlement on Israeli terms. When President Bush wrote Sharon in support of the plan in April 2004, he urged all parties to consider that “in light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli populations centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of the final status negotiations will be a full and complete return” to the borders before 1967. Palestinians interpreted that as U.S. sanctioning of an Israeli annexation of parts of the West Bank.

#### Telesur '22:

“U.S. Role in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.” PBS News Hour. 5/11/06. [https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/middle\\_east-jan-june06-us\\_05-11](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/middle_east-jan-june06-us_05-11)

On Friday, Palestinians demonstrated in the West Bank city of Bethlehem against U.S. President Joe Biden's visit over the long-time unfair U.S. diplomacy in dealing with the Palestinian-Israeli issue. “We all know that Biden came here to politically, economically, and militarily support Israel, not to help the Palestinian people. For decades, U.S. diplomacy has turned its back on the Palestinians, whereas Israel has received much of U.S. support,” said Antoine Issa, a 39-year-old man. “I have heard repeatedly from U.S. presidents, from Bill Clinton to Biden, that they support a two-state solution that would end the conflict, but the reality is completely different,” he added. On Friday, Biden said at a joint news conference following a meeting with his Palestinian

counterpart Mahmoud Abbas that "the U.S. commitment to the goal of a two-state solution has not changed," but added that "the goal of the two-state solution may seem unattainable." In a bid to express their dissatisfaction against the unfair U.S. diplomacy toward Palestinians, Issa was among dozens of protesters who raised black banners and waved Palestinian flags against Biden's visit.

## AT: The U.S. has made significant diplomatic progress with Armenia and Azerbaijan

**Russia will not allow the United States to play a key role in this negotiation.**

Maghakyan 22:

**1. The U.S. is siding with Armenia, trying to contend with Russia.**

→ "It was the U.S., not the regional hegemon Russia, that played the key role in halting Azerbaijan's Sept. 13-14 aggression. Since then, the Biden Administration has initiated numerous meetings for and with Armenian and Azerbaijani officials, both in person and on the phone, despite threats by Azerbaijan's authoritarian president—who has made Armenophobia his power-consolidation formula since inheriting the presidency in 2003—that 'no one and nothing can stop us.'"

Lister 22:

**1. The war in Ukraine has ended hopes of diplomacy with Russia.**

→ "The international community thus finds itself in a distinctly new strategic environment, where long-standing multilateral institutions and mechanisms traditionally relied on to mediate and de-escalate are more or less impotent. The United Nations Security Council had little value before the invasion of Ukraine, but it is now worthless."

Karlén 20:

**1. Syria proves that Russia is not looking for diplomatic solutions.**

→ "The Kremlin seeks to thwart any Western effort to replace Assad and to instead reach a superficial political settlement that legitimizes his regime and neutralizes his opposition. Buying into Russian-driven efforts thus empowers Russia to undermine American interests. Russia cannot deliver Assad to the negotiating table, moreover. Assad depends on Russian (and Iranian) military help but is not controlled by them. A fragile power balance exists between them in which Assad often gains an upper hand. Russia has limited bandwidth and resources to commit to Syria, which Assad knows and exploits."

## AT: Diplomacy is a key foreign policy tool in West Asia

**Diplomacy is ineffective at stopping wars.**

Staff 21:



### **1. Diplomacy failed to stop Russia from attacking Ukraine**

→ “As missiles rained down Thursday on Ukraine's cities and Russian forces were reportedly making a blitz-like thrust for the capital, Kyiv, one thing was painfully clear: Weeks of marathon diplomatic efforts led by the U.S. had come to nothing. After days of speculation about whether Russian President Vladimir Putin had made a final decision to invade, events earlier in the week left little room for doubt. Putin signed agreements on Monday acknowledging the independence of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics — carved out of eastern Ukraine as a result of a years-long separatist insurgency backed by Russia.”

### **2. The leadup to the war was full of diplomacy**

→ “In December, Biden met virtually with Putin in what the White House described as a ‘moment of crisis.’ European leaders, including France's Emmanuel Macron, also met with Putin in an effort to defuse tensions. Earlier this month, Biden spoke directly with Putin again in an hourlong call, during which the U.S. leader warned of a decisive response to an invasion, that nonetheless resulted in no ‘fundamental change,’ according to a senior administration official.”

Koch 21:

### **1. Diplomacy cannot produce a lasting settlement.**

→ “Negotiated settlements, however, cannot guarantee that all sides abide to the agreement over the long term. Intergroup strife tends not to disappear just because the fighting does.”

### **2. Victory is necessary to produce a lasting peace.**

→ “Military victories, on the other hand, tend to produce longer lasting peace than negotiated settlements — specifically rebel victories. Toft explains: ‘The reason is that when rebels win, they are in a position not only to harm (or threaten to harm) their populations but also to benefit them.’”

## **AT: Diplomacy is the only way to end armed conflict**

**Diplomacy does not fix the underlying imbalances of power.**

Cronin 10:

### **1. Negotiations rarely end conflicts.**

→ “Entering into negotiations does not necessarily end the violence, and it is a mistake to perpetuate the impression that it will. About half of the negotiating groups in our study have continued their attacks, though typically at a lower level of intensity and frequency. Still, among those 18 percent of groups that negotiated, the proportion of talks that clearly failed was small: about one in ten. On the other hand, in the remaining nine

cases of talks that trundled on, very few groups actually achieved their ends through negotiations. The classic pattern is for groups either to cease to exist for other reasons, or to remain in periodic talks that drag on and on with interruptions and periodic setbacks, lacking either dramatic successes or outright failure.”

**2. For negotiations to be effective, the government has to be winning militarily.**

→ “Negotiations with terrorist groups occur most easily in situations where the group perceives itself to be losing ground in the conflict. This may occur for a number of reasons. There may be competition for support with other groups, as was the case with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the rise of competitors in the intifada. Or there may be infiltration by government agents, as was the case in the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) throughout the 1990s. Or the group may perceive an undercutting of popular support, as did the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers) in the wake of the September 11 attacks.”

Karlén 20:

**1. Negotiations can be counterproductive.**

→ “It is imperative to understand what conditions are favorable in bringing the warring parties to the negotiation table as this is often seen as the crucial first step toward achieving other policy objectives such as a political settlement or a political transition. Moreover, it is also important to understand when civil war negotiations occur as they frequently serve other strategic purposes. For example, warring parties often use negotiations instrumentally to rearm and reorganize 10 and the initiation of talks legitimizes the rebel group 11 .”

**2. The most common strategies for negotiations are likely to fail.**

→ “The most common objection to negotiations is that talks formally recognize the rebels as worthy spokespersons. Most of the time, governments would refuse to grant the insurgents legitimacy as a bargaining partner. 37 If negotiations are associated with a ceasefire the rebels could use the talks to rearm and reorganize, thus strengthening their capabilities. This would both increase their bargaining power and improve their chances of military success if the talks break down. Furthermore, negotiations may lead to the belief that groups that use violent methods will be rewarded. Talks can signal that the government has no resolve and is likely to make concessions.”

## AT: U.S. diplomatic efforts fight terrorism

**U.S. interference is seen as meddling, which causes anti-American sentiment, which leads to radicalization.**

Mogelson 20:

**1. The U.S. abandoned Syrians, “stood by and watched” ethnic cleansing.**

→ “The White House issued a press release stating that President Donald Trump and Erdoğan had spoken on the phone. While the details of the conversation have not been made public, it was a triumph for Erdoğan. “Turkey will soon be moving forward with its long-planned operation into northern Syria,” the press release explained, adding that American troops “will no longer be in the immediate area.” Reports of war crimes, such as summary executions, followed the advance. Later, the senior American diplomat in Syria, William V. Roebuck, wrote an internal memo lamenting that U.S. personnel had “stood by and watched” an “intention-laced effort at ethnic cleansing.”

**2. Many believe the U.S. abandoned the Kurds.**

→ The disaster that subsequently befell northern Syria has been widely attributed to Trump’s capitulation to Erdoğan, which many people view as a gross betrayal of the Kurds. Senator Mitt Romney, raising the prospect of a congressional investigation into Trump’s decision, called it “a bloodstain on the annals of American history.” Such criticism hinges on the seemingly self-evident notion that the Kurds, after defeating ISIS at great cost, had earned a debt of loyalty from the U.S. Imparting a false sense of security to the Kurds that ultimately harmed them. Mazloum told me that last summer, when he agreed to pull back his forces from the Turkish border, the Americans on the ground in Syria assured him, “As long as we’re here, Turkey will not attack you.”

Saine 19:

**1. U.S. failures have caused anti-American sentiment.**

→ While announcing the death of the Islamic State (IS) leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi during a raid in Syria's northwestern governorate of Idlib near the Turkish border, Trump suggested that he could employ a U.S. company such as ExxonMobil to modernize the productive capacity of the oilfields and "spread out the wealth." The remarks from the U.S. President are a "strategic messaging disaster" that could effectively play into the hands of American adversaries who argue the U.S. intervention in the region lacks legal basis, said Nicholas Heras, a Middle East researcher at the Center for a New American Security in Washington.”

Lindsay 01:

**1. Anti-American sentiment causes terrorism.**

→ “Terrorists need anti-American sentiment. It provides them with recruits, and more important, it provides them with people willing to give aid and comfort. But how can the United States cut off oxygen to the fires of anti-Americanism, especially when the justifiable military operation in Afghanistan and the support it has received from ruling elites in the Arab and Islamic world is likely to feed them? One strategy is to redouble United States efforts to limit and resolve conflicts around the world, especially the one between Israel and the Palestinians.”

## Maghakyan 22:

Maghakyan, Simon. "The U.S. might be the surprising determining factor in the future of Armenia." Time. 10/6/22. <https://time.com/6219263/armenia-azerbaijan-us-involvement/>  
Jackie Speier, one of the two Armenian-American Congresswomen to accompany Speaker Pelosi, recalled at a large Armenian-American gathering in Los Angeles on Sept. 25 that in Armenia she told their dinner host, the Prime Minister, that she didn't want another girl to feel the way she did growing up: reluctant to identify as Armenian because her homeland, then part of the USSR, did not appear on a world's map. As the Congresswoman announced at the gathering, she is introducing a resolution in condemnation of and accountability for Azerbaijan's war crimes and aggression, following a similar motion by prominent House Democrat Adam Schiff, and a bipartisan Senate resolution introduced by key Senators Bob Menendez and Marco Rubio. But this is not about internal electoral politics. More significantly—especially as Congress has been historically attentive to Armenian American constituency concerns—the White House has now transformed its traditionally "both-sidist" rhetoric on the conflict. **It was the U.S., not the regional hegemon Russia, that played the key role in halting Azerbaijan's Sept. 13-14 aggression. Since then, the Biden Administration has initiated numerous meetings for and with Armenian and Azerbaijani officials, both in person and on the phone, despite threats by Azerbaijan's authoritarian president—who has made Armenophobia his power-consolidation formula since inheriting the presidency in 2003—that "no one and nothing can stop us."**

## Lister 22:

Lister, Charles. "Putin's war killed Syrian diplomacy." Foreign Policy. 3/15/22. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/15/russia-ukraine-syria-war-diplomacy-assad-putin/>  
Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resulting collapse of U.S. and European diplomatic relations with Moscow mean Syria diplomacy is now all but dead. Small signs that diplomacy may have been poised for renewed investment in early 2022 now feel like a distant memory. **The international community thus finds itself in a distinctly new strategic environment, where long-standing multilateral institutions and mechanisms traditionally relied on to mediate and de-escalate are more or less impotent. The United Nations Security Council had little value before the invasion of Ukraine, but it is now worthless.** To make matters worse, Russia's war on Ukraine looks set to trigger a humanitarian crisis in Syria that will far surpass anything witnessed over the past 11 years. While the world focuses on the escalating suffering in Ukraine, Syria's collapse into even deeper misery risks being ignored, catalyzing another wave of destabilizing effects across the Middle East, Europe, and beyond.

## Karlén 20:

Niklas Karlén (2020) Escalate to De-Escalate? External State Support and Governments' Willingness to Negotiate, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2020.1835002  
"Syrian President Bashar al-Assad remains the primary obstacle to peace in Syria. He has consistently spoiled any diplomatic process. His actions show that he will accept only the full defeat of his opponents. Even then, he will punish those who previously defied him, as he has done in former pro-opposition communities including in Aleppo and Dera'a Provinces. Yet he cannot win the war, so the West cannot resign itself to accepting his "victory" for the sake of stability. He does not have the resources to reconquer and reintegrate all of Syria. U.S. Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump mistakenly expected Russia to compel Assad to accept a diplomatic process. **The Kremlin seeks to thwart any Western effort to replace Assad and to instead reach a superficial political settlement that legitimizes his regime and neutralizes his opposition. Buying into Russian-driven efforts thus empowers Russia to undermine American interests. Russia cannot deliver Assad to the negotiating table, moreover. Assad depends on Russian (and Iranian) military help but is not controlled by them. A fragile power balance exists between them in which Assad often gains an upper hand. Russia has limited bandwidth and resources to commit to Syria, which Assad knows and exploits.**"

"It is imperative to understand what conditions are favorable in bringing the warring parties to the negotiation table as this is often seen as the crucial first step toward achieving other policy objectives such as a political settlement or a political transition. Moreover, it is also important to understand when civil war negotiations occur as they frequently serve other strategic purposes. For example, warring parties often use negotiations instrumentally to rearm and reorganize 10 and the initiation of talks legitimizes the rebel group 11. Talks also increase the likelihood of rebel group fragmentation 12, foster temporary reductions in violence 13 and constitute an important transformation of the form of contestation 14. Taken together, this highlights the need to understand why negotiations take place."

"The most common objection to negotiations is that talks formally recognize the rebels as worthy spokespersons. Most of the time, governments would refuse to grant the insurgents legitimacy as a bargaining partner. 37 If negotiations are associated with a ceasefire the rebels could use the talks to rearm and reorganize, thus strengthening their capabilities. This would both increase their bargaining power and improve their chances of military success if the talks break down. Furthermore, negotiations may lead to the belief that groups that use violent methods will be rewarded. Talks can signal that the government has no resolve and is likely to make concessions. 38 This could open up for additional challengers. Another potential risk for the government, particularly in democracies, is that political opponents can use the negotiations to discredit the incumbent government and claim that it is weak on "terrorists". 39 Because of these reasons, I assume that in most cases, the government is the party that needs to alter perspective in order for negotiations to take place."

## Staff 21:

Staff. "In Ukraine, the road to war was paved by the failure of diplomacy". NPR. February 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/24/1073015013/ukraine-russia-invasion-war-diplomacy>  
"As missiles rained down Thursday on Ukraine's cities and Russian forces were reportedly making a blitz-like thrust for the capital, Kyiv, one thing was painfully clear: Weeks of marathon diplomatic efforts led by the U.S. had come to nothing. After days of speculation about whether Russian President Vladimir Putin had made a final decision to invade, events earlier in the week left little room for doubt. Putin signed agreements on Monday acknowledging the independence of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics — carved out of eastern Ukraine as a result of a years-long separatist insurgency backed by Russia. In an hourlong speech that followed, Putin sat at his desk in the Kremlin delivering a version of history in which democratic Ukraine was not a sovereign country, but a mere extension of Russia."

"In December, Biden met virtually with Putin in what the White House described as a "moment of crisis." European leaders, including France's Emmanuel Macron, also met with Putin in an effort to defuse tensions. Earlier this month, Biden spoke directly with Putin again in an hourlong call, during which the U.S. leader warned of a decisive response to an invasion, that nonetheless resulted in no "fundamental change," according to a senior administration official. Days later, the Kremlin claimed to be pulling troops back from the border regions in eastern Ukraine, even as the U.S. insisted that Russian troop strength in those areas was actually building significantly and that an invasion was imminent."

## Koch 21:

Charles Koch Foundation Staff. "To End Foreign Civil Wars, Should the U.S. Intervene?" BigThink. March 2021. <https://bigthink.com/the-present/civil-wars-end-in-several-ways-but-only-one-brings-lasting-peace/>  
"Negotiated settlements, however, cannot guarantee that all sides abide to the agreement over the long term. Intergroup strife tends not to disappear just because the fighting does. Toft argues that surviving military groups must come to represent the nation's broader interests. Failing this, peacekeepers may be installed—as in the former Yugoslavia and in Cyprus—but the

international community isn't always willing to involve itself in civil wars (as the killing of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar indicates.) Toft elaborates in her paper Ending Civil Wars: A Case for Rebel Victory?"

**"Military victories, on the other hand, tend to produce longer lasting peace than negotiated settlements — specifically rebel victories. Toft explains: "The reason is that when rebels win, they are in a position not only to harm (or threaten to harm) their populations but also to benefit them. In winning, a rebel military organization remains capable of containing moves against its government. But because it is a rebel organization, it has to appeal not only to a portion of its domestic audience for approval but also to an international community not predisposed to the overthrow of national governments. This is also consistent with the move toward the greatest level of democratization following rebel victories."**

## Cronin 10:

Audrey Kurth Cronin. "When should we talk to terrorists" May 2010. UNIP.

[https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR240Cronin\\_3a.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR240Cronin_3a.pdf)

**"Entering into negotiations does not necessarily end the violence, and it is a mistake to perpetuate the impression that it will. About half of the negotiating groups in our study have continued their attacks, though typically at a lower level of intensity and frequency. Still, among those 18 percent of groups that negotiated, the proportion of talks that clearly failed was small: about one in ten. On the other hand, in the remaining nine cases of talks that trundled on, very few groups actually achieved their ends through negotiations. The classic pattern is for groups either to cease to exist for other reasons, or to remain in periodic talks that drag on and on with interruptions and periodic setbacks, lacking either dramatic successes or outright failure. Thus, for governments, talks function best as essential elements of a wider policy driving toward the decline and ending of a group or its violence. The statistical analyses, historical survey, and comparative case studies that I examined in my study together all indicate that negotiations with terrorist groups are best approached as long-term, managed processes demanding patience, resilience, extensive intelligence, and steady determination, rather than the kinds of intensive meetings and well-publicized signing ceremonies that follow civil war cease-fires or the endings of conventional wars. The good news is that groups rarely get what they want and usually either die out or stop engaging in terrorism in the process."**

**"Negotiations with terrorist groups occur most easily in situations where the group perceives itself to be losing ground in the conflict. This may occur for a number of reasons. There may be competition for support with other groups, as was the case with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the rise of competitors in the intifada. Or there may be infiltration by government agents, as was the case in the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) throughout the 1990s. Or the group may perceive an undercutting of popular support, as did the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers) in the wake of the September 11 attacks. Quite often the erosion of support is the result of the group's own miscalculations, leading to a backlash by its own actual (or intended) constituency. Public opinion may be passionately repulsed by targeting errors—as was the case with the Real IRA following the Omagh bombings, the Red Brigades following the killing of Aldo Moro, and the Egyptian Islamist group al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya following the killing of sixty-two Western tourists"**

## Mogelson 20:

Mogelson, Luke. "America's Abandonment of Syria." The New Yorker. 4/20/20.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/04/27/americas-abandonment-of-syria>

After the S.D.F. withdrew from the border, Turkish and American forces began conducting patrols and aerial surveillance together. Though no Kurds crossed into Turkey, Erdoğan soon dismissed the buffer zone as inadequate, and insisted on expanding it. In September, before the United Nations General Assembly, in New York, he announced his intention to annex more than five thousand square miles of Kurdish land, creating a "peace corridor" where two million Syrian refugees living in Turkey could be resettled. The refugees would be overwhelmingly Arab and from other parts of Syria. The southern edge of the corridor would encompass Ain Issa, Khairi's refugee camp, and the Lafarge Cement Factory. International observers denounced the scheme as a flagrant attempt at demographic engineering that was certain to produce conflict and humanitarian disaster. Two weeks later, **the White House issued a press release stating that President Donald Trump and Erdoğan had spoken on the phone. While the details of the conversation have not been made public, it was a triumph for Erdoğan. "Turkey will soon be moving forward with its long-planned operation into northern Syria," the press release explained, adding that American troops "will no longer be in the immediate area."** After the U.S. vacated the buffer zone, Turkish jets, drones, and artillery pummelled Tell Abyad and other border cities. The S.D.F., which has no air assets, petitioned the U.S. to impose a no-fly zone, but the Americans refused. Turkey's ground forces consisted mostly of Syrian Arab mercenaries, many of whom had previously belonged to jihadist groups with a profound animosity toward the Kurds. As these militias pushed south, in armored vehicles, nearly two hundred thousand civilians fled from their path. **Reports of war crimes, such as summary executions, followed the advance. Later, the senior American diplomat in Syria, William V. Roebuck, wrote an internal memo lamenting that U.S. personnel had "stood by and watched" an "intention-laced effort at ethnic cleansing."**

When I asked Mazloum if U.S. military and civilian leaders had begun preparing him for their departure after Trump's announcement, he said absolutely not. "Basically, they told us it wasn't going to happen," Mazloum said. The first official warning he received to the contrary came in October, when the ranking U.S. general for the Middle East called to inform him—on the same day the rest of the world found out—that a Turkish incursion was imminent and that the U.S. would do nothing to impede it. (A U.S. Army spokesman said, "We decline specific comment on prior conversations between senior leaders.") **The disaster that subsequently befell northern Syria has been widely attributed to Trump's capitulation to Erdoğan, which many people view as a gross betrayal of the Kurds. Senator Mitt Romney, raising the prospect of a congressional investigation into Trump's decision, called it "a bloodstain on the annals of American history." Such criticism hinges on the seemingly self-evident notion that the Kurds, after defeating Isis at great cost, had earned a debt of loyalty from the U.S. Certainly, this was Mazloum's understanding. Trump, however, never suggested that it was his understanding. Rather, it appears that U.S. commanders and diplomats made commitments that contradicted his explicit statements—imparting a false sense of security to the Kurds that ultimately harmed them. Mazloum told me that last summer, when he agreed to pull back his forces from the Turkish border, the Americans on the ground in Syria assured him, "As long as we're here, Turkey will not attack you."**

## Saine 19:

Hussein, Rikar; Saine, Cindy. "Comments on Seizing Syria Oil Reinforces Anti-American Sentiment, Experts Warn." 10/29/19.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/extremism-watch-comments-seizing-syria-oil-reinforces-anti-american-sentiment-experts-warn/6178496.html>

**"We are leaving soldiers to secure the oil," Trump said on Sunday, while announcing the death of the Islamic State (IS) leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi during a raid in Syria's northwestern governorate of Idlib near the Turkish border. "And we may have to fight for the oil. It is OK. Maybe somebody else wants the oil, in which case they have a hell of a fight. But there's massive amounts of oil." Trump further suggested that he could employ a U.S. company such as ExxonMobil to modernize the productive capacity of the oilfields and "spread out the wealth." The remarks from the U.S. President are a "strategic messaging disaster" that could effectively play into the hands of American adversaries who argue the U.S. intervention in the region lacks legal basis, said Nicholas Heras, a Middle East researcher at the Center for a New American Security in Washington."**

## Lindsay 01:

Lindsay, James M. "Nasty, Brutish, and Long: America's War on Terrorism." Brookings.

12/1/01. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/nasty-brutish-and-long-americas-war-on-terrorism/>

The campaign against terrorism must also address the sources of the intense anti-Americanism that now roils the Arab and Islamic world and forms the backdrop for Al Qaeda attacks. Hatred of the United States is not peculiar to the Middle East, nor does it translate directly into a desire to launch terrorist attacks. The relationship between the two is more complicated and indirect, akin in many ways to that between oxygen and fire. Oxygen does not cause fires—the spark must come from somewhere else—but fire requires oxygen to rage. In the same fashion, **terrorists need anti-American sentiment. It provides them with recruits, and more important, it provides them with people willing to give aid and comfort. But how can the United States cut off oxygen to the fires of anti-Americanism, especially when the justifiable military operation in Afghanistan and the support it has received from ruling elites in the Arab and Islamic world is likely to feed them? One strategy is to redouble United States efforts to limit and resolve conflicts around the world, especially the one between Israel and the Palestinians. Again, these conflicts did not cause the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. They do, however, contribute to the anger that terrorists manipulate to their own, despicable ends.**



## AT: U.S. influence de-escalates tension

The US' reputation will cause US presence to increase tension

1) The U.S. abandoned Syrians, “stood by and watched” ethnic cleansing. The New Yorker '20→After the S.D.F. withdrew from the border, Turkish and American forces began conducting patrols and aerial surveillance together. Though no Kurds crossed into Turkey, Erdoğan soon dismissed the buffer zone as inadequate, and insisted on expanding it. In September, before the United Nations General Assembly, in New York, he announced his intention to annex more than five thousand square miles of Kurdish land, creating a “peace corridor” where two million Syrian refugees living in Turkey could be resettled. The refugees would be overwhelmingly Arab and from other parts of Syria. The southern edge of the corridor would encompass Ain Issa, Khairi’s refugee camp, and the Lafarge Cement Factory. International observers denounced the scheme as a flagrant attempt at demographic engineering that was certain to produce conflict and humanitarian disaster. Two weeks later, the White House issued a press release stating that President Donald Trump and Erdoğan had spoken on the phone. While the details of the conversation have not been made public, it was a triumph for Erdoğan. “Turkey will soon be moving forward with its long-planned operation into northern Syria,” the press release explained, adding that American troops “will no longer be in the immediate area.” After the U.S. vacated the buffer zone, Turkish jets, drones, and artillery pummelled Tell Abyad and other border cities. The S.D.F., which has no air assets, petitioned the U.S. to impose a no-fly zone, but the Americans refused. Later, the senior American diplomat in Syria, William V. Roebuck, wrote an internal memo lamenting that U.S. personnel had “stood by and watched” an “intention-laced effort at ethnic cleansing.”

2) U.S. failures have caused anti-American sentiment. VOA '19

"We are leaving soldiers to secure the oil," Trump said on Sunday, while announcing the death of the Islamic State (IS) leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi during a raid in Syria's

northwestern governorate of Idlib near the Turkish border. "And we may have to fight for the oil. It is OK. Maybe somebody else wants the oil. But there's massive amounts of oil." Trump further suggested that he could employ a U.S. company such as ExxonMobil to modernize the productive capacity of the oilfields and "spread out the wealth." The remarks from the U.S. President are a "strategic messaging disaster" that could effectively play into the hands of American adversaries who argue the U.S. intervention in the region lacks legal basis, said Nicholas Heras, a Middle East researcher at the Center for a New American Security in Washington.

Impact: Failed U.S. negotiations lead to more conflict. Karlén '20

"It is imperative to understand what conditions are favorable in bringing the warring parties to the negotiation table as this is often seen as the crucial first step toward achieving other policy objectives such as a political settlement or a political transition. Moreover, it is also important to understand when civil war negotiations occur as they frequently serve other strategic purposes. For example, warring parties often use negotiations instrumentally to rearm and reorganize 10 and the initiation of talks legitimizes the rebel group 11 . Talks also increase the likelihood of rebel group fragmentation 12 , foster temporary reductions in violence 13 and constitute an important transformation of the form of contestation 14 . Taken together, this highlights the need to understand why negotiations take place."

Analysis: Diplomatic efforts cannot succeed if countries do not trust the United States to be an impartial intermediary.

New Yorker '20

Mogelson, Luke. "America's Abandonment of Syria." The New Yorker. 4/20/20.  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/04/27/americas-abandonment-of-syria>

After the S.D.F. withdrew from the border, Turkish and American forces began conducting patrols and aerial surveillance together. Though no Kurds crossed into Turkey, Erdogan soon declared the buffer zone as inadequate, and insisted on expanding it. In September, before the United Nations General Assembly, in New York, he announced his intention to annex more than five thousand square miles of Kurdish land, creating a "service corridor" where two million Syrian refugees living in Turkey could be resettled. The refugees would be overwhelmingly Arab and from other parts of Syria. The southern edge of the corridor would encompass the town of Khan Yablugh camp, and the Latakia General Factory. International observers denounced the scheme as a flagrant attempt at demographic engineering that was certain to produce conflict and humanitarian disaster. Two weeks later, the White House issued a press release stating that President Donald Trump and Erdogan had spoken on the phone. While the details of the conversation have not been made public, it was a triumph for Erdogan. "Turkey will soon be moving forward with its long-planned operation into northern Syria," the press release explained, adding that American troops "will no longer be in the immediate area." After the U.S. vacated the buffer zone, Turkish jets, drones, and artillery pounded Tell Abyad and other border cities. The S.D.F., which has no air assets, petitioned the U.S. to impose a no-fly zone, but the Americans refused. Turkey's ground forces consisted mostly of Syrian Arab mercenaries, many of whom had previously belonged to jihadist groups with a professed animosity toward the Kurds. As these militias pushed south, in armored vehicles, nearly two hundred thousand civilians fled from their paths. Reports of war crimes, such as summary executions, followed the advance. Later the senior American diplomat in Syria, William H. Koebnick, wrote an internal memo lamenting that U.S. personnel had "passed by and watched" an "intentional bloodbath of ethnic cleansing."

VOA '19

Hussein, Rikar; Saine, Cindy. "Comments on Seizing Syria Oil Reinforces Anti-American Sentiment, Experts Warn." 10/29/19.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/extremism-watch-comments-seizing-syria-oil-reinforces-anti-american-sentiment-experts-warn/6178496.html>

"We are having trouble to secure the oil." Trump said on Sunday, while denouncing the death of the rebels. Days (1) under the rule of Assad during a visit to Syria's northeastern governorate of Idlib near the Turkish border. "And we may have to fight for the oil." It is OK. Maybe somebody else wants the oil. In which case there have a lot of fight. But there's massive amounts of oil." Trump further suggested that he could employ a U.S. company such as ExxonMobil to modernize the productive capacity of the oilfields and "spread out the wealth." The remarks from the U.S. President are a "strategic messaging disaster" that could effectively play into the hands of American adversaries who argue the U.S. intervention in the region lacks legal basis, said Nicholas Heras, a Middle East researcher at the Center for a New American Security in Washington.

Karlén '20

Niklas Karlén (2020) Escalate to De-Escalate? External State Support and Governments' Willingness to Negotiate, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, DOI:

"It is imperative to understand what conditions are favorable in bringing the warring parties to the negotiation table as this is often seen as the crucial first step toward achieving other policy objectives such as a political settlement. Moreover, it is also important to understand when civil war negotiations occur as they frequently serve other strategic purposes. For example, warring parties often use negotiations instrumentally to rearm and reorganize 10 and the initiation of talks legitimizes the rebel group 11. Talks also increase the likelihood of rebel group fragmentation 12, foster temporary reductions in violence 13 and constitute an important transformation of the form of contestation 14. Taken together, this highlights the need to understand why negotiations take place."



# AT: U.S. diplomacy can challenge Iran's influence in West Asia

## **Iran will prevent U.S. diplomatic success in West Asia.**

1) Iran is extending its influence across the region, for example in Yemen. Al Jazeera '22

→“As Saudi Arabia continues to play a key role in influencing neighbouring Yemen's political future, the kingdom's main regional rival, Iran, has maintained its place on the other side of the equation. In Yemen's devastating seven-year war, Iran has supported the Houthi rebels, who took parts of the country in 2014 and began fighting a Saudi-led coalition in 2015. Tehran denies arming the Houthis, despite claims from the United Nations and others, while the Houthis say their drones and missiles are domestically made. A new, eight-member Yemeni presidential council was inaugurated on Tuesday with Saudi support, after former president Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi handed over power. The council assumes leadership of the internationally recognised Yemeni government, which has been at war with the Houthis, at a time when a two-month truce negotiated by the United Nations is in place. Fighting, however, has not stopped in the northern city of Marib. And the Houthis have claimed that fuel tankers have not had free access to the port of Hodeidah, and that flights have not fully resumed from Sanaa airport – conditions agreed to by the Saudi-led coalition and the Yemeni government.”

2) Iran will not allow peace in Yemen. National Interest '22

→“However, the recent Houthi rejection of the truce seems to have caught Western policymakers off guard, leaving the UN for answers in all the wrong places. The UN Envoy, Hans Grundberg, reportedly reached out to Houthis' Iranian backers to persuade the militia to abandon its maximalist positions. But it is more likely that Iran will push the Houthis to double down on their decision rather than cooperate. Iran's entire relationship with its proxies is based on the premise that it could leverage this connection to achieve political goals that would serve the Islamic Republic and keep it in power. Given the current domestic unrest in Iran due to the death of the twenty-two-year-old Mahsa Amini and the accumulative deaths of protestors at the hands of the regime, there is no better time for Iran to lean on the Houthis than now.”

**Impact:** Iran is already responding to U.S. policy shifts in West Asia.

MEI '21

The reaction to Biden's Yemen announcement in Tehran was ambivalent. Saeed Khatibzadeh, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, stated that "stopping support for the Saudi coalition, if not a political maneuver, could be a step towards correcting past mistakes." A Feb. 4 article in Mashregh warned that Biden's policy shift on Yemen was simply aimed at expanding U.S. leverage over Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and that U.S.-Saudi Arabia cooperation, which "activated terrorism in the region," would continue unabated.

The Marib offensive to capitalize on Biden's policy shift on Yemen and increase its future diplomatic leverage, Iran is encouraging the Houthis to step up their offensive in northern Yemen's Marib Governorate.

**Impact:** Iran will prevent successful negotiations.

National interest '22→"Iran's role in Yemen has never been in pursuit of the country's stability. The Islamic Republic has maintained a singular focus on supporting the Houthi militia and empowering them militarily, strategically, and financially. This allowed Yemen's conflict to be prolonged for as long as possible to keep attention on Saudi and Emirati behavior as it denied any involvement or maleficence in the country. In the past, Iran has hidden its support for the Houthis and vehemently denied backing the group. The policy community has gone along with this farce, ignoring Iran's agenda in Yemen's affairs, but accumulative evidence of its military and financial backing started to surface. From 2017 onwards, when the Houthis launched their first attack using ballistic missiles against Saudi Arabia, the Houthis' military arsenal has grown thanks to Iranian supply and assistance. Iran's influence in the country is real."

Analysis: Iran does not want the U.S. extending its diplomatic presence into its sphere of influence. Iran is fighting a proxy war in Yemen because it wants more control, and the U.S.'s efforts in the region will only lead to escalation from Iran.

Al Jazeera '22

Maziar Motamedi. "What role will Iran play in shaping Yemen's future?" May 2022. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/21/what-role-will-iran-play-in-shaping-yemens-future>

"As Saudi Arabia continues to play a key role in influencing neighbouring Yemen's political future, the Kingdom's main regional rival, Iran, has maintained its place on the other side of the equation. In Yemen's devastating seven-year war, Iran has supported the Houthi rebels, who took parts of the country in 2014 and began fighting a Saudi-led coalition in 2015. Tehran denies arming the Houthis, despite claims from the United Nations and others, while the Houthis say their drones and missiles are domestically made. A new, eight-member Yemeni presidential council was inaugurated on Tuesday with Saudi support, after former president Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi handed over power. The council assumes leadership of the internationally recognised Yemeni government, which has been at war with the Houthis, at a time when a two-month truce negotiated by the United Nations is in place. Fighting, however, has not stopped in the northern city of Marib. And the Houthis have claimed that fuel tankers have not had free access to the port of Hodeidah, and that flights have not fully resumed from Sanaa airport – conditions agreed to by the Saudi-led coalition and the Yemeni government."

National Interest '22

Fatima Alasrar. "Iran Is Spoiling the Truce in Yemen.: The National Interest. 2022.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/iran-spoiling-truce-yemen-205286>

The reaction to Biden's Yemen announcement in Tehran was ambivalent. Saeed

Khatibzadeh, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, stated that "stopping support for the Saudi coalition, if not a political maneuver, could be a step towards correcting past mistakes." Iranian media outlets presented a variety of perspectives on Biden's cessation of offensive support for the Saudi-led coalition. Citing Yemeni analyst Talib al-Hassani, a Feb. 10 Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) article argued that Biden's decision marked the end of the "U.S. strategy to dominate Yemen" and noted that U.S. policy toward Yemen would take three to five months to appreciably change. Other assessments were more pessimistic. A Feb. 6 Mehr News article contended that Biden's decision

was not motivated by humanitarian goals, but instead reflected his desire to deprive arms manufacturers aligned with former President Donald Trump of contracts. A Feb. 4 article in Mashregh warned that Biden's policy shift on Yemen was simply aimed at expanding U.S. leverage over Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and that U.S.-Saudi Arabia cooperation, which "activated terrorism in the region," would continue unabated.

The Marib offensive

To capitalize on Biden's policy shift on Yemen and increase its future diplomatic

leverage, Iran is encouraging the Houthis to step up their offensive in northern Yemen's Marib Governorate. Even though they have repeatedly failed to capture the oil-rich Marib Governorate since the Saudi-led military intervention began in March 2015, the Houthis resumed their offensive on Feb. 8. Casualty levels continue to soar in Marib, as more than 60 troops were killed on Feb. 26 alone. Nasr al-Deen Amer, the secretary of the Houthi Ministry of Information, called the battle of Marib "one of the hottest war fronts since the beginning of the aggression on Yemen." The Houthis have fired ballistic missiles on Marib and on critical targets in Saudi Arabia, such as Abha Airport, Jeddah, Riyadh, and, most recently, the Saudi Aramco facility at Ras Tanura, while Houthi news organization Al-Masirah continues to report regular airstrikes from the Saudi-led coalition.

MEI '21

Ramani, Samuel. "How is Iran responding to Biden's policy shift on Yemen?" MEI.3/9/21. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/how-iran-responding-bidens-policy-shift-yemen>

Shift-yemen

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Iran's role in Yemen has never been in pursuit of the country's stability. The Islamic Republic has maintained a singular focus on supporting the Houthi militia and empowering them militarily, strategically, and financially. This allowed Yemen's conflict to be prolonged for as long as possible to keep attention on Saudi and Emirati behavior as it denied any involvement or maleficence in the country. In the past, Iran has hidden its support for the Houthis and vehemently denied backing the group. The policy community has gone along with this farce, ignoring Iran's agenda in Yemen's affairs, but accumulative evidence of its military and financial backing started to surface. From 2017 onwards, when the Houthis launched their first attack using ballistic missiles against Saudi Arabia, the Houthis' military arsenal has grown thanks to Iranian supply and assistance. Iran's influence in the country is real. Its official media establishment has repeatedly given unequivocal backing to the Houthis, touting them as "resistance" forces and belittling Yemen's government forces as "mercenaries."

Moreover, the Houthis received strategic combat training from the terrorist-designated Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which has been working to improve the Houthis' missile capabilities, by its own admission, as they have enabled Iran to turn North Yemen into a "testing ground for Hezbollah and Iranian missiles."

## AT: U.S. diplomacy can challenge Russia's influence in West Asia

Russia will prevent U.S. diplomatic interference

1) The war in Ukraine has ended hopes of diplomacy with Russia in Syria and across West Asia. Foreign Policy '22→Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resulting collapse of U.S. and European diplomatic relations with Moscow mean Syria diplomacy is now all but dead. Small signs that diplomacy may have been poised for renewed investment in early 2022 now feel like a distant memory. The international community thus finds itself in a distinctly new strategic environment, where long-standing multilateral institutions and mechanisms traditionally relied on to mediate and de-escalate are more or less impotent. The United Nations Security Council had little value before the invasion of Ukraine, but it is now worthless. To make matters worse, Russia's war on Ukraine looks set to trigger a humanitarian crisis in Syria that will far surpass anything witnessed over the past 11 years. While the world focuses on the escalating suffering in Ukraine, Syria's collapse into even deeper misery risks being ignored, catalyzing another wave of destabilizing effects across the Middle East, Europe, and beyond.

2) Russia does not want a diplomatic solution Karlén '20

Niklas Karlén (2020) Escalate to De-Escalate? External State Support and Governments' Willingness to Negotiate, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2020.1835002

→“The Kremlin seeks to thwart any Western effort to replace Assad and to instead reach a superficial political settlement that legitimizes his regime and neutralizes his opposition. Buying into Russian-driven efforts thus empowers Russia to undermine American interests. Russia cannot deliver Assad to the negotiating table, moreover. Assad depends on Russian (and Iranian) military help but is not controlled by them. A fragile power balance exists between them in which Assad often gains an upper hand. Russia has limited bandwidth and resources to commit to Syria, which Assad knows and exploits.”

Impact: U.S. failures cause a trust vacuum, increasing Russia's influence in the region.

**MEI '21**→In all three cases, surprising or inadequate policy planning put local partners and other actors at risk. From a global perspective, local partners are central to the pursuit of political and strategic objectives. During conflicts or disasters, non-state organizations have also delivered humanitarian aid in places where the state cannot reach, fought alongside U.S. troops, or agreed to processes that ensure regional stability. The absence of trusting local partners, or the presence of local partners who limit their cooperation with the U.S., raises the costs of achieving policy goals. But for these local partners, working with the United States is not a just a small component of a broader global agenda. Where Americans might evacuate in the wake of failure, that option is seldom available to local partners. Abandoning local partners can also imperil persons who have made sacrifices to support the U.S., or who wish to work towards shared goals. There is also a global strategic impact. Russia already has a strong military presence in the Middle East, and China is increasing its economic expansion through the Belt and Road Initiative. Ultimately, a trust vacuum could lead to greater influence for these global powers — at the expense of the U.S.

Analysis: Russia has no interest in good faith negotiations in West Asia, and increased tensions with the U.S. resulting from the war in Ukraine make that even less likely. If anything, Russia will sabotage U.S. efforts in West Asia in order to maintain control.

Foreign Policy '22

Lister, Charles. "Putin's war killed Syrian diplomacy." Foreign Policy. 3/15/22.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/15/russia-ukraine-syria-war-diplomacy-assad-putin/>

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Niklas Karlén (2020) Escalate to De-Escalate? External State Support and Governments' Willingness to Negotiate, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, DOI:

10.1080/1057610X.2020.1835002

"Syrian President Bashar al-Assad remains the primary obstacle to peace in Syria. He has consistently spoiled any diplomatic process. His actions show that he will accept only the full defeat of his opponents. Even then, he will punish those who previously defied him, as he has done in former pro-opposition communities including in Aleppo and Dera'a Provinces. Yet he cannot win the war, so the West cannot resign itself to accepting his "victory" for the sake of stability. He does not have the resources to reconquer and reintegrate all of Syria. U.S. Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump mistakenly expected Assad to accept a diplomatic process. The Kremlin seeks to thwart any Western effort to replace Assad and to instead reach a superficial political settlement that legitimizes his regime and neutralizes his opposition. Buying into Russian-driven efforts thus empowers Russia to undermine American interests. Russia cannot deliver Assad to the negotiating table, moreover. Assad depends on Russian (and Iranian) military help but is not controlled by them. A fragile power balance exists between them in which Assad often gains an upper hand. Russia has limited bandwidth and resources to commit to Syria, which Assad knows and exploits."

MEI '21

Stewart, Megan A. "America's reputation and local actors in a trust vacuum." MEI.10/20/21.

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/americas-reputation-and-local-actors-trust-vacuum>

In all three cases, surprising or inadequate policy planning put local partners and other actors at risk. From a global perspective, local partners are central to the pursuit of political and strategic objectives. During conflicts or disasters, non-state organizations have also delivered humanitarian aid in places where the state cannot reach, fought alongside U.S. troops, or agreed to processes that ensure regional stability. The absence of trusting local partners, or the presence of local partners who limit their cooperation with the U.S., raises the costs of achieving policy goals. But for these local partners, working with the United States is not just a small component of a broader global agenda. Rather, what's at stake is often their lives and livelihoods, as well as those of their families. Where Americans might evacuate in the wake of failure, that option is seldom available to local partners. These three recent decisions and poor planning by the face of U.S. values. If working with local partners can mitigate conflicts and disasters, then the inability to work with them will have the opposite effect. Abandoning local partners can also imperil persons who have made sacrifices to support the U.S., or who wish to work towards shared goals. There is also a global strategic impact. Russia already has a strong military presence in the Middle East, and China is increasing its economic expansion through the Belt and Road Initiative. Ultimately, a trust vacuum could lead to greater influence for these global powers — at the expense of the U.S.

## AT: Diplomacy in West Asia is key to the U.S.'s strategy across Asia

With the rise of China and return of great power competition, the United States needs to focus on East Asia, not West Asia

1) The United States is in the middle of a diplomatic reorientation towards East Asia to focus on a rising China. **Brookings '22**→“President Biden made his first trip to East Asia beginning late last week, visiting South Korea and Japan, where he participated in a leader’s summit of the so-called Quad, which includes Australia, Japan and India. The president’s visit is part of a flurry of Asia-focused diplomatic initiatives in recent weeks including the U.S.-ASEAN summit, the U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue and an upcoming speech from Secretary of State Blinken, which is expected to lay out the contours of the administration’s China Policy. While the war in Ukraine has dominated Washington’s attention this year, these efforts are intended to demonstrate the United States’ prioritization of the Indo-Pacific region. President Biden and new Republic of Korea (ROK) President Yoon Suk-yeol shared four main goals as part of the U.S. leader’s visit to Seoul from May 20-22: build personal rapport, strengthen deterrence against North Korea, enhance mutual economic security and expand South Korea’s role as a pivotal global country. They appear to have achieved these goals without major hitches.

## 2) China poses an increasingly acute threat to U.S. interests Institute for Peace '22

→“President Biden’s trip did not include China or Taiwan, but U.S. relations with both loomed large. A key purpose of the trip was to reorient the administration’s foreign policy toward a focus on China and showcase the administration’s “Indo-Pacific Strategy” of revitalizing ties with regional partners. Since the beginning of the Biden administration, the withdrawal from Afghanistan and then the war in Ukraine have dominated the U.S. foreign policy agenda. The trip was meant to show that the United States can walk and chew gum at the same time, addressing challenges with both Russia and China simultaneously. A key moment of the trip came when President Biden rankled China with comments that the United States would come to Taiwan’s defense if invaded by China. Asked in Tokyo by a reporter if he “was willing to get involved militarily to defend Taiwan,” Biden said, “Yes, that’s the commitment we made.” The statement appeared to defy the long-standing U.S. policy of “strategic ambiguity,” or avoiding any open commitment to Taiwan’s defense. The fact that it was not the first time Biden made such a comment fueled speculation even further. A White House official later walked back the remark, saying it did not reflect a policy shift. Asked the next day if there had been any change in U.S. policy on Taiwan, President Biden said no.”

## 3) West Asia is simply not as important to American Interests Carnegie Endowment '20

→“While it is essential for the United States to restore U.S. leadership and credibility on issues that are vital to national security and prosperity—most notably, global health cooperation, combating global warming and pushing back on China’s predatory trade practices—there is one region that simply isn’t as important as it used to be: the Middle East. No matter who wins the White House in November, it is important to recognize that in recent years, the turbulent Middle East—where more often than not American ideas go to die—has become decidedly less important to American foreign policy and to our interests. The change reflects not only new regional dynamics and U.S. domestic priorities but the changing nature of American interests there. American leadership and exceptionalism cannot fix a broken Middle East or play a major role in

leading it to a better future. The U.S. still has interests there to protect but America needs to be realistic, prudent and disciplined in how it secures them. If we can learn to act with restraint, we'll avoid the overreach, arrogance and self-inflicted wounds that have caused us and many others so much unnecessary misery and trouble.”

#### 4) Spending time on West Asia trades off with other more important commitments Carnegie Endowment '20

→“A glance at the daily headlines underscores just how much U.S. strategic priorities have shifted away from the Middle East over the past few years: The coronavirus pandemic wreaking havoc on American lives and livelihoods and our credibility around the world; extreme weather events—raging forest fires in California, Hurricane Laura ripping into the Gulf Coast, a summer of unusually repressive heat—linked to climate change; an adversarial China flexing its muscles throughout the Asia-Pacific region and an intensifying U.S.-China rivalry for military, economic and technological supremacy; Russia’s continued rogue behavior (see: the recent poisoning of Putin’s chief domestic opponent Alexei Navalny) and the Kremlin’s continued interference in the U.S. presidential election; and the rise of homegrown white-nationalist terrorism. All these challenges have assumed far greater significance than the declining terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland emanating from the Middle East. The last thing this country needs is to throw good money after bad in a futile search for opportunities to reform, let alone transform, the dysfunctional Middle East..”

Analysis: Make the argument that America has limited resources and should focus them on the most important issues. Force your opponent to justify why West Asia is more important than other theatres of conflict.

##### Brookings '22

Steven Heydemann and Karam Shaar. “Zombie diplomacy and the fate of Syria’s constitutional committee” May 2022. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/01/24/zombie-diplomacy-and-the-fate-of-syrias-constitutional-committee/>

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South Korea and Japan, where he participated in a leader’s summit of the so-called Quad, which includes Australia, Japan and India. The president’s visit is part of a flurry of Asia-focused diplomatic initiatives in recent weeks including the U.S.-ASEAN summit, the U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue and an upcoming speech from Secretary of State Blinken, which is expected to lay out the contours of the administration’s China Policy. While the war in Ukraine has dominated Washington’s attention this year, these efforts are intended to demonstrate the United States’ prioritization of the Indo-Pacific region. President Biden and new Republic of Korea (ROK) President Yoon Suk-yeol shared four main goals as part of the U.S. leader’s visit to Seoul from May 20-22: build personal rapport, strengthen deterrence against North Korea, enhance mutual economic security and expand South Korea’s role as a pivotal global country. They appear to have achieved these goals without major hitches.  
Institute for Peace '22

Mirna Gale. “Biden’s Asia Trip Seeks to Revitalize Alliances, Focus on China” May 2022. Institute for Peace. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/05/bidens-asia-trip-seeks-revitalize-alliances-focus-china>

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Carnegie Endowment '20

Aaron Miller. “The Middle East Just Doesn’t Matter as Much Any Longer”, Carnegie Endowment. 2020. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/09/03/middle-east-just-doesn-t-matter-as-much-any-longer-pub-82653>

“While it is essential for the United States to restore U.S. leadership and credibility on issues that are vital to national security and prosperity—most notably, global health cooperation, combating global warming and pushing back on China’s predatory trade practices—there is one region that simply isn’t as important as it used to be: the Middle East. No matter who wins the White House in November, it is important to recognize that in recent years, the turbulent Middle East—where more often than not American ideas go to die—has become decidedly less important to American foreign policy and to our interests. The change reflects not only new regional dynamics and U.S. domestic priorities but the changing nature of American interests there. American leadership and exceptionalism cannot fix a broken Middle East or play a major role in leading it to a better future. The U.S. still has interests there to protect but America needs to be realistic, prudent and disciplined in how it secures them. If we can learn to act with restraint, we’ll avoid the overreach, arrogance and self-inflicted wounds that have caused us and many others so much unnecessary misery and trouble.”

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“A glance at the daily headlines underscores just how much U.S. strategic priorities have shifted away from the Middle East over the past few years: The coronavirus pandemic wreaking havoc on American lives and livelihoods and our credibility around the world; extreme weather events—raging forest fires in California, Hurricane Laura ripping into the Gulf Coast, a summer of unusually repressive heat—linked to climate change; an adversarial China flexing its muscles throughout the Asia-Pacific region and an intensifying U.S.-China rivalry for military, economic and technological supremacy; Russia’s continued rogue behavior (see: the recent poisoning of Putin’s chief domestic opponent Alexei Navalny) and the Kremlin’s continued interference in the U.S. presidential election; and the rise of homegrown white-nationalist terrorism. All these challenges have assumed far greater significance than the declining terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland emanating from the Middle East. The last thing this country needs is to throw good money after bad in a futile search for opportunities to reform, let alone transform, the dysfunctional Middle East.”



## AT: The Biden Administration is engaging West Asia through new policies

**The U.S.'s diplomatic efforts in West Asia will fail because it's not trusted in the region.**

- 1. The U.S. isn't trusted because it's weakened its credibility.** Stewart '21 says that the US's curr“Over the past few years, the U.S. government has made some decisions or poorly implemented policies that together have weakened its credibility and reputation among local partners. In Afghanistan, reports indicate that the U.S. embassy was slow to process visa applications from Afghan local partners, and President Joe Biden raised the annual cap on refugee admissions to 125,000 just recently. The lack of support for processing visas has meant that thousands of Afghans, who were critical to the U.S. mission, remain trapped in Afghanistan. Many already have much to lose in the wake of a Taliban takeover (e.g., some women), but this baseline risk could intensify as a result of partnering with the U.S.”
- 2. The U.S.'s interference has been unsuccessful, causing a trust vacuum.** Stewart '21 says that, “In all three cases, surprising or inadequate policy planning put local partners and other actors at risk. From a global perspective, local partners are central to the pursuit of political and strategic objectives. During conflicts or disasters, non-state organizations have also delivered humanitarian aid in places where the state cannot reach, fought alongside U.S. troops, or agreed to processes that ensure regional stability. But for these local partners, working with the United States is not a just a small component of a broader global agenda. Rather, what's at stake is often their lives and livelihoods, as well as those of their families. Where Americans might evacuate in the wake of failure, that option is seldom available to local partners. There is also a global strategic impact. Russia already has a strong military presence in the Middle East, and China is increasing its economic expansion through the Belt and Road Initiative. Ultimately, a trust vacuum could lead to greater influence for these global powers — at the expense of the U.S.”
- 3. Impact: Chances of peace have increased as the U.S.'s presence has diminished.** Business Standard '21 says that, “The humiliating retreat of the United States from Afghanistan and the perceived disengagement of the U.S. from the West Asia or at least the reduced emphasis Joe Biden gives to the region has led the Gulf States and other countries to reassess their positions and try to mend relations with old rivals. This resulted in some rather surprising foreign policy shifts among several West Asian states and perhaps has increased prospects for stability in the Gulf.”

### Stewart '21

Stewart, Megan A. “America's reputation and local actors in a trust vacuum.” MEI.

10/20/21. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/americas-reputation-and-local-actors-trust-vacuum>

To achieve strategic and political objectives around the world, the U.S. government and military work with local partners who can be individuals, such as translators, or non-

state groups, such as the Syrian Kurds. Stronger ties between the U.S. and local partners

facilitate progress toward shared goals, whereas weaker ties raise the costs of implementing policy, limit the degree to which certain objectives are achieved, or even lead local partners to collaborate with rival states.

Over the past few years, the U.S. government has made some decisions or poorly implemented policies that together have weakened its credibility and reputation among local partners. In Afghanistan, reports indicate that the U.S. embassy was slow to process visa applications from Afghan local partners, and President Joe Biden raised the annual cap on refugee admissions to 125,000 just recently. The lack of support for processing visas has meant that thousands of Afghans, who were critical to the U.S. mission, remain trapped in Afghanistan. Many already have much to lose in the wake of a Taliban takeover (e.g., some women), but this baseline risk could intensify as a result of partnering with the U.S.

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In all three cases, surprising or inadequate policy planning put local partners and other actors at risk. From a global perspective, local partners are central to the pursuit of political and strategic objectives. During conflicts or disasters, non-state organizations have also delivered humanitarian aid in places where the state cannot reach, fought alongside U.S. troops, or agreed to processes that ensure regional stability. The absence of trusting local partners, or the presence of local partners who limit their cooperation with the U.S., raises the costs of achieving policy goals.

But for these local partners, working with the United States is not a just a small component of a broader global agenda. Rather, what's at stake is often their lives and livelihoods, as well as those of their families. Where Americans might evacuate in the wake of failure, that option is seldom available to local partners. These three recent decisions and poor planning fly in the face of U.S. values. If working with local partners can mitigate conflicts and disasters, then the inability to work with them will have the opposite effect. Abandoning local partners can also imperil persons who have made sacrifices to support the U.S., or who wish to work towards shared goals. There is also a global strategic impact. Russia already has a strong military presence in the Middle East, and China is increasing its economic expansion through the Belt and Road Initiative. Ultimately, a trust vacuum could lead to greater influence for these global powers — at the expense of the U.S.

## Business Standard '21

Staff. "Peace prospects rise in West Asia after U.S.' perceived retreat from region."

Business Standard. 12/20/21. [https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/us-perceived-disengagement-from-the-middle-east-triggers-strategic-shifts-in-the-region-121122000184\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/us-perceived-disengagement-from-the-middle-east-triggers-strategic-shifts-in-the-region-121122000184_1.html)

The humiliating retreat of the United States from Afghanistan and the perceived disengagement of the U.S. from the West Asia or at least the reduced emphasis Joe Biden gives to the region has led the Gulf States and other countries to reassess their positions and try to mend relations with old rivals.

This resulted in some rather surprising foreign policy shifts among several West Asian states and perhaps has increased prospects for stability in the Gulf.

Although the U.S. Administration says that it is still engaged in the West Asia, there is no doubt that much more attention in the U.S. foreign policy is now given to China, Russia, and the far east. As a result, Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other Gulf Cooperation Council states wonder how reliable the United States as a security provider is.

Gonul Tol, Director of the M.E. Institute's Centre for Turkish Studies says: "Signs of a U.S. retreat from the region, highlighted by the hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan shattered faith in Washington's regional role".

# AT Regionalism

It's already working.

- Algeria with Fatah/Hamas
- Jordan negotiations with Syria

US can't find a balance—either too much or too less.

- Light hand = not enough pressure
- Heavy hand = personal biases
  - Similar to IMF or World Bank

The region is too divided.

- Religious, political, too many countries involved

## AT: The US should give food aid to West Asia

1. **Food aid can hinder local economic prosperity. U.S. food aid is lauded as a humanitarian service, but it often inhibits local economies' prosperity. The influx of free food through the form of donations would reduce food demand and lower farmers' selling price. Without a stable, active economy, countries cannot feed their populations and will instead rely on the perpetual provision of food donations** [Joshi 22'](#) U.S. food aid is lauded as a humanitarian service, but it often inhibits local economies' prosperity. The influx of free food through the form of donations would reduce food demand and lower farmers' selling price. Thus, domestic food costs would decrease and the local economy falters [3]. Without a stable, active economy, countries cannot feed their populations and will instead rely on the perpetual provision of food donations, as has happened in the past. data suggests that food aid has stagnated per capita food production in recipient countries, thus inducing food aid dependency.
2. **Food Aid gives countries another asset to fight over, “food aid to 134 developing countries strongly correlated consistent American food aid with an increased likelihood and duration of civil war. “Food aid simply becomes another resource to fight over,” Qian said.”** [Gami 12'](#) An analysis of 35 years of data about food aid to 134 developing countries strongly correlated consistent American food aid with an increased likelihood and duration of civil war. The paper cited examples of anecdotal evidence of food aid causing internal conflict from Afghanistan, Western Sahara, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Israel, Iraq, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and the former Yugoslavia. “Food aid simply becomes another resource to fight over,” Qian said.

# AT Foreign Aid

1. **Foreign aid doesn't cater to the needs of countries and instead is based on self interest.** [Bundock & Atkinson 15](#) "They find little evidence that levels of foreign aid correlate with the social and economic needs of recipient countries. In contrast, they find strong support for the idea that the diplomatic interests—such as economic and security concerns— of donor countries influence aid disbursement decisions"
2. An analysis by [Finkenstein 21](#) references conflict in Lebanon and how "a dependency on foreign aid for the stabilization of the Lebanese economy"

## AT: Regionalism is not effective

1. **GCC has been successful. Since its inception in May 1981, the GCC has undoubtedly accomplished a lot of what it set out to do four decades ago. Today, combined GCC GDP is about \$1.6 trillion – representing eightfold growth.** [Aluwaisheg 21](#) Since its inception in May 1981, the GCC has undoubtedly accomplished a lot of what it set out to do four decades ago. In 1981, the combined gross domestic product (GDP) of the six member states was just shy of \$200 billion, and most GCC states were performing poorly in terms of economic and social indicators. Today, combined GCC GDP is about \$1.6 trillion – representing eightfold growth. Other achievements include the establishment of the Unified Military Command in November 2018 and the GCC Police in 2014.
2. **GCC has slowed terrorism. "Several factors help explain the GCC's success in limiting terrorist violence within its borders. Regimes throughout the GCC have enhanced official punishments for praising and supporting extremist groups or ideology, further deterring deviant behavior by their citizens."** [GIF 21'](#) Several factors help explain the GCC's success in limiting terrorist violence within its borders. The first is the strength of state surveillance systems. Each GCC state is ruled by a wealthy, centralized ruling family well-versed in monitoring the citizenry and crushing dissent. The GCC states are therefore highly capable of sniffing out extremist elements and crushing them. Movement in and out of the Gulf monarchies is tightly regulated. The Gulf monarchies stifle the spread of extremist content on social media through tight controls on the internet. Regimes throughout the GCC have enhanced official punishments for praising and supporting extremist groups or ideology, further deterring deviant behavior by their citizens.
3. **GCC diversity can be used to solve conflicts. These differences can be turned into an advantage if the GCC states cooperate to resolve the region's conflicts. Their political potential is no less important than their economic and financial power. What's more, they are favorably disposed to play a mediating role and have historically leaned toward promoting stability and resolving conflicts.** [Shehadi 21'](#)

These differences can be turned into an advantage if the GCC states cooperate to resolve the region's conflicts. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar collectively have connections that extend from Afghanistan and Pakistan to Morocco. Their political potential is no less important than their economic and financial power. What's more, they are favorably disposed to play a mediating role and have historically leaned toward promoting stability and resolving conflicts.

4. **Regionalism can work. "While some worry that increased regional interconnectivity can be a threat to the central power of national governments, both regionalism and globalism can act as moderating forces on politics and drive much needed economic development across entire societies."** [Kols 19'](#) The success of regionalism in Europe can be an important example for the nations of Asia, who remain hesitant about regional cooperation despite their shared economic, cultural, and geopolitical characteristics, and need for greater internal cohesion. While some worry that increased regional interconnectivity can be a threat to the central power of national governments, both regionalism and globalism can act as moderating forces on politics and drive much needed economic development across entire societies.

## EV on Internal Conflicts

Intl Committee Red Cross defines internal conflicts: A non-international (or "internal") armed conflict refers to a situation of violence involving protracted armed confrontations between government forces and one or more organized armed groups, or between such groups themselves, arising on the territory of a State.

# Blocks to Negative (AT NEG)

## AT: Diplomacy cannot stop conflict

Diplomacy is a practical and helpful tool in alleviating and ending intrastate armed conflicts.

- 1. Diplomatic Conferences can provide conflict breakthroughs. “Peace conferences have many assets as part of the diplomatic toolbox. It allows focused attention to the issue at hand, brings together all relevant actors—ideally in a neutral setting and by a trusted convener—and fosters both momentum as well as a clear deadline for action.”** **Williams 14’** diplomacy “For those seized with the imperative of preventing deadly conflict, the “peace conference” has many assets as part of the diplomatic toolbox. It allows focused attention to the issue at hand, brings together all relevant actors—ideally in a neutral setting and by a trusted convener—and fosters both momentum as well as a clear deadline for action. Yet as we mark the bicentennial of the Congress of Vienna, we are reminded of previous attempts to maintain order (if not to promote justice) by an “international community.”
- 2. Conference diplomacy allows for all the affected parties to get a seat at the table. “Increasingly, when conferences are convened, they ought to take account of the variety of actors involved in contemporary conflict, or with a stake in it, including nonstate armed groups and civil society organizations”** **Williams 14’** The number of non-state conflicts has risen from approximately 15 recorded instances in 1989 to 38 in 2011,<sup>13</sup> and battle deaths in these types of conflict increased more than threefold between 2007 and 2011, from approximately 2,000 to more than 6,000 reported deaths per year. Increasingly, when conferences are convened, they ought to take account of the variety of actors involved in contemporary conflict, or with a stake in it, including nonstate armed groups (which may be proscribed terrorist organizations) and civil society organizations (which are often given the opportunity to observe international peace conferences but are seldom able to participate).
- 3. Diplomatic organs have been deployed in many circumstances in the past. “In deploying and threatening force to address and possibly resolve conflicts, there has been increased emphasis during the post-Cold War period on multilateral action”** **NASEM 2000’** The traditional diplomatic strategies of influence were refined and elaborated greatly during the Cold War period. They continue to be relevant in the post-Cold War world, although their application is sometimes a bit different now (see Chapters 3 through 6). In deploying and threatening force to address and possibly resolve conflicts, there has been increased emphasis during the post-Cold War period on multilateral action (e.g., NATO intervention in Kosovo; the alliance that reversed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait).

**4. Specific geopolitical conditions are ideal for diplomacy NASEM 2000'** “First is the critical importance of how much is demanded of the target. The greater the demand made, the greater the reluctance to comply. Thus, in six of seven cases of success the demand made was a relatively modest one—compliance was relatively easy. A second finding was that coupling threats with positive incentives for compliance increased success. A third important lesson concerned the degree of public support for the policy in the United States. Potent threats are harder to sustain because they imply greater risks, triggering the U.S. public’s aversion to suffering combat casualties.

Diplomatic Conferences can provide conflict breakthroughs

Abiodun Williams. “The Use of Conference Diplomacy in Conflict Prevention.” December 2014. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/use-conferencediplomacy-conflict-prevention>

“For those seized with the imperative of preventing deadly conflict, the “peace conference” has many assets as part of the diplomatic toolbox. It allows focused attention to the issue at hand, brings together all relevant actors—ideally in a neutral setting and by a trusted convener—and fosters both momentum as well as a clear deadline for action. “Conference diplomacy” may strike us as a relatively recent innovation, coterminous with the development of modern multilateralism and the growing recognition of global interconnectedness. Yet as we mark the bicentennial of the Congress of Vienna, we are reminded of previous attempts to maintain order (if not to promote justice) by an “international community.” Moreover, a lack of historical perspective would be reminiscent of Prince Klemens von Metternich’s right-hand man, Friedrich von Gentz, who in proclaiming that the 1815 Congress was “a phenomenon without precedent in the history of the world”,<sup>1</sup> ignored the many peace conferences convened by the city-states of Renaissance Italy, and in the intervening centuries.”

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“To be effective as an instrument in the coming decades, conference diplomacy must take into account the nature of contemporary conflict. The number of non-state conflicts has risen from approximately 15 recorded instances in 1989 to 38 in 2011,<sup>13</sup> and battle deaths in these types of conflict increased more than threefold between 2007 and 2011, from approximately 2,000 to more than 6,000 reported deaths per year. Increasingly, when conferences are convened, they ought to take account of the variety of actors involved in contemporary conflict, or with a stake in it, including nonstate armed groups (which may be proscribed terrorist organizations) and civil society organizations (which are often given the opportunity to observe international peace conferences but are seldom able to participate). If the ambition of multilateral conference diplomacy is to serve as an effective tool for conflict prevention and to create and implement sustainable peace, it will be pivotal to involve all parties in multilateral peace conferences—both those driving conflict and those impacted by it. In the light of the multitude of challenges threatening international peace and security, Bertrand G. Ramcharan suggests that “the time might be opportune to convene an international peace conference to modernise the architecture of peace and security in the twenty-first century.”

Diplomatic organs have been deployed in many circumstances in the past National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2000. International Conflict Resolution After the Cold War. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/9897>.”

“For example, the negotiations to end the Cuban missile crisis and to develop confidence-building measures for avoiding accidental nuclear war were based on the common interest in reducing the risk of confrontations that might escalate to nuclear warfare. Such negotiations could proceed because it was possible to identify shared interests that cut across or partially overrode the conflicting ones. The traditional diplomatic strategies of influence were refined and elaborated greatly during the Cold War period. They continue to be relevant in the post-Cold War world, although their application is sometimes a bit different now (see Chapters 3 through 6). In deploying and threatening force to address and possibly resolve conflicts, there has been increased emphasis during the post-Cold War period on multilateral action (e.g., NATO intervention in Kosovo; the alliance that reversed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait). States have increasingly looked to regional international organizations to advance conflict resolution goals, especially where unilateral state action might create new kinds of



conflict and where influential nations within regions see merit in strengthening their regions' institutions. Thus, for example, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), begun in the 1970s, matured in the 1990s into a formal organization—the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)—that has intervened in various ways in conflicts across a broad region, although not by force

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## AT: Diplomacy makes conflicts worse

Simply, diplomacy works.

1. **Diplomacy is the key to civil war termination Doudou 20'** “Marcel Merle frames his definition of negotiation within the problematic of war: “Due to the very nature of international relations, which is characterized by the absence of a supranational authority competent to govern relations between states, negotiation offers the only means available, apart from war, of resolving inter-state disputes” (Merle, 1980).
2. **Diplomacy has succeeded in the past. ““The data suggest that most civil wars are ended by military victory but that negotiated settlements are regular phenomena. Of the 57 civil wars which have ended, one quarter (14) ended by negotiation,” Doudou 20'** “This is an important point in that some—for example Patrick Regan (1996)—think that the best way of bringing an end to a conflict is to opt for a military solution favoring the stronger of the two parties. For Roy Licklider: “The data suggest that most civil wars are ended by military victory but that negotiated settlements are regular phenomena. Of the 57 civil wars which have ended, one quarter (14) ended by negotiation,

**Negotiations are effective if they are pursued**

3. **Most wars today end in negotiation Howard 18'** After the Cold war, most ended in a negotiated settlement. Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, civil wars still tend to end in negotiation, but not when a terrorist group is involved. Why would the

nature of civil war termination vary by time period? Civil wars tend to end the way that external forces think they ought to end. In other words, norms—ideas of appropriate behavior—play a direct role in civil war outcomes. During the bipolar era of the Cold War, both sides believed that wars should end in military victory. Neither side was willing to negotiate compromise solutions. As a result, most civil wars ended in victory. With the end of the Cold War, and the rise of democratic unipolarity, the great powers (and a wide array of multilateral organizations) contended that civil wars should end in negotiation, as a path to democratization.

- 4. The success of negotiations is based on normative trends Howard 18'** The United Nations Security Council is the highest international authority that makes decisions about the legitimacy of the use of force. Most mediation efforts, and eventual negotiated settlements, enjoy the blessing of the Council's permanent five members—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It is therefore important to analyze normative trends in the Council, which reflect the preferences of its great-power permanent members..”

Diplomacy is the key to civil war termination

Sidibé, Doudou. “Negotiating peace agreements in internal conflicts: What Perspectives?”, *Négociations*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2020, pp. 41-56.

<https://www.cairn.info/revue-negociations-2020-1-page-41.htm>

“Marcel Merle frames his definition of negotiation within the problematic of war: “Due to the very nature of international relations, which is characterized by the absence of a supranational authority competent to govern relations between states, negotiation offers the only means available, apart from war, of resolving inter-state disputes” (Merle, 1980). Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Perez de Cuellar bases his views of the role of negotiation in conflict resolution on his experience of historical events: “History teaches us that most conflicts, whatever their size, scope, duration or level of violence, end in negotiations culminating in an agreement or a treaty”. [1]”

: Diplomacy has succeeded in the past

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“This is an important point in that some—for example Patrick Regan (1996)—think that the best way of bringing an end to a conflict is to opt for a military solution favoring the stronger of the two parties. For Roy Licklider: “The data suggest that most civil wars are ended by military victory but that negotiated settlements are regular

phenomena. Of the 57 civil wars which have ended, one quarter (14) ended by negotiation, while the remaining 43 ended in military victory” (Licklider, 1995). Jane E. Holl restates Licklider’s argument in the following terms: “Negotiated settlements of civil wars are more likely to break down than settlements based on military victories.” (Holl, 1993). The military solution makes it possible to annihilate the opposing party, thus ending the conflict forever.”

: Most wars today end in negotiation

Lisa Howard. “How Civil Wars End” *Political Violence at a Glance*. March 2018.

<https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2018/02/09/how-civil-wars-end/>

“In a recent article published in *International Security*, we find that civil war termination varies by time period. We identify three important shifts in recent history. During the Cold War, most civil wars ended with complete defeat for the losing side. After the Cold War, most ended in negotiated settlement. Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, civil wars still tend to end in negotiation, but not when a terrorist group is involved. Why would the nature of civil war termination vary by time period? Civil wars tend to end the way that external forces think they ought to end. In other words, norms—ideas of appropriate behavior—play a direct role in civil war outcomes. During the bi-polar era of the Cold War, both sides believed that wars should end in military victory. Neither side was willing to negotiate compromise solutions. As a result, most civil wars ended in victory. With the end of the Cold War, and the rise of democratic unipolarity, the great powers (and a wide array of multilateral organizations) contended that civil wars should end in negotiation, as a path to

democratization. And indeed, most civil wars after that point ended in negotiation. Since 9/11, although the norm of negotiation remains strong, a countervailing norm of non-negotiation with terrorists means that the appropriateness of military victory is once again ascendant. Instead of seeking democracy, the United States and others are promoting a new norm of “stabilization.””

The success of negotiations is based in normative trends

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“Norms are notoriously difficult to pin down empirically. A key measure is the extent to which great powers use words associated with those norms, followed by action. The United Nations Security Council is the highest international authority that makes decisions about the legitimacy of the use of force. Most mediation efforts, and eventual negotiated settlements, enjoy the blessing of the Council’s permanent five members—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It is therefore important to analyze normative trends in the Council, which reflect the preferences of its great-power permanent members.”

# AT: Diplomacy will empower warring factions in Yemen

Diplomacy would help resolve the ongoing civil war in Yemen

**1. Diplomacy is needed to stop the civil war in Yemen Stark 18** The kingdom's announcement was attributable at least in part to renewed U.S. diplomatic engagement.

There are also positive signs that negotiations between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis are slowly making progress, again linked to engagement from special envoys from both the United States and the United Nations. Oman, a trusted interlocutor, has also taken a more active role in these negotiations. Direct talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia have reportedly focused on Yemen.

**2. Diplomacy is necessary to stop the conflicting parties Stark 18** walking away from the U.S.-Saudi relationship entirely would mean giving up leverage that could be key to ending the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen. There is a real diplomatic logic at work here. The Biden administration seems to be betting that the United States is best positioned to prod the Saudis toward a face-saving deal in Yemen with a combination of carrots and sticks, and by advocating for Saudi Arabia's core security interests rather than acting as a dispassionate adjudicator among the parties

**3. There are diplomatic opportunities in Yemen Cambanis 15** Existing diplomatic outreach has reaped some benefits. The UN appointed a new envoy on April 25 and helped negotiate a humanitarian ceasefire in May.<sup>16</sup> The United States government has met with both sides of the conflict inside Yemen, and it has been adept at simultaneously managing multiple aspects of the diplomatic crisis. The aim would be to begin a diplomatic process that would include, even at a remove, both Saudi Arabia and Iran, and which would have at least a prospect of serving as an avenue to address the bedrock security concerns undermining regional security and driving the Yemen war.

**4. Solving the conflict in Yemen has an important impact Cambanis 15** "The Yemen crisis poses many dangers. The most obvious lie in Yemen itself, where starvation could become endemic and an avoidable escalation of civil war could lead to a mass humanitarian tragedy. Security blowback is an equally intense strategic concern. AQAP has been one of the most active groups plotting international terrorist attacks, including against the United States. The disruption of U.S.-allied counterterrorism efforts in Yemen, and now the collapse of any central state authority, directly empower AQAP and increase the threat to the United States.

**Analysis: This evidence shows that the United States has the capability and interest in ending one of the longest-running conflicts in the Middle East. Make the case that the war in Yemen has important humanitarian and political impacts that we cannot ignore.**

Diplomacy is needed to stop the civil war in Yemen

Alexandra Stark. "Giving Diplomacy a Chance in Yemen?" July 2018. Lawfare.

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/giving-diplomacy-chance-yemen>

"Since the February speech, U.S. diplomatic engagement around Yemen's war has made a few important advances. In March, Saudi Arabia announced a proposal that offered a

U.N.-monitored cease-fire in exchange for the reopening of the Sana'a airport and allowing food and fuel imports through Hodeidah port. While the statement wasn't a significant departure from terms that have been under discussion privately since spring of 2020, the fact that it was offered publicly and essentially endorsed the U.N. initiative was a step forward. The kingdom's announcement was attributable at least in part to renewed U.S. diplomatic engagement. There are also positive signs that negotiations between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis are slowly making progress, again linked to engagement from special envoys from both the United States and the United Nations. Oman, a trusted interlocutor, has also taken a more active role in these negotiations. Direct talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia have reportedly focused on Yemen. While Iran does not have command over the Houthis, missiles fired at Saudi Arabia by the group were made with components manufactured by Iran and assembled in Yemen, the U.N. Panel of Experts has concluded, and drones manufactured in Yemen have used Iranian design and components. Though Iran is unlikely to end the partnership entirely, such a deal could ease Saudi concerns about Houthi cross-border drone and missile strikes."

Diplomacy is necessary to stop the conflicting parties

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<https://www.lawfareblog.com/giving-diplomacy-chance-yemen>

"They're not wrong, but walking away from the U.S.-Saudi relationship entirely would mean giving up leverage that could be key to ending the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen. There is a real diplomatic logic at work here. The Biden administration seems to be betting that the United States is best positioned to prod the Saudis toward a face-saving deal in Yemen with a combination of carrots and sticks, and by advocating for Saudi Arabia's core security interests rather than acting as a dispassionate adjudicator among the parties. This approach has left Lenderking and the Biden administration open to charges that the United States is failing to act as a "neutral arbiter" in the conflict. The United States, of course, is not a "neutral" mediator. Yet a rich body of scholarly research shows that biased mediators can play conducive roles in negotiations to end civil wars, because they both take actions to ensure that "their" side's interests are represented in an agreement and can use their unique leverage and knowledge to get their side to negotiate in good faith and make costly Concessions."

There are diplomatic opportunities in Yemen.

Thanassis Cambanis. "Managing the War in Yemen: Diplomatic Opportunities in the Mayhem." 2015. The Century Foundation.

<https://tcf.org/content/commentary/managing-the-war-in-yemen-diplomaticopportunities-in-the-mayhem/>

"Existing diplomatic outreach has reaped some benefits. The UN appointed a new envoy on April 25 and helped negotiate a humanitarian ceasefire in May.16 The United States government has met with both sides of the conflict inside Yemen, and it has been adept at simultaneously managing multiple aspects of the diplomatic crisis. The talks in Geneva that begin on June 14 hold some basic promise but fail to include all the necessary actors.17 A concerted diplomatic push could be catalyzed by comparatively level-headed players, such as the United Arab Emirates, the United States, and the United Nations, and could make use of problematic but potentially useful forums such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Arab League. The aim would be to begin a diplomatic process that would include, even at a remove, both Saudi Arabia and Iran, and which would have at least a prospect of serving as an avenue to address the bedrock security concerns undermining regional security and driving the Yemen war. Any diplomatic effort to reduce tension between those two nations must take into account their stakes throughout the region."

Solving the conflict in Yemen has important impact

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"The Yemen crisis poses many dangers. The most obvious lie in Yemen itself, where starvation could become endemic and an avoidable escalation of civil war could lead to a mass humanitarian tragedy. Security blowback is an equally intense strategic concern. AQAP has been one of the most active groups plotting international terrorist attacks, including against the United States. The disruption of U.S.-allied counterterrorism efforts in Yemen, and now the collapse of any central state authority, directly empower AQAP and increase the threat to the United States.8 The coalition led by the Houthis, a group with a distinct tribal and sectarian identity inside Yemen, which is currently supported by Iran and by deposed president Ali Abdullah Saleh, has grievances mostly rooted in the local sharing of power and resources.9 It is impossible to assess whether Iran views the interests of the Houthi alliance as close to Iran's core interests, or whether it tactically views the Houthis as another chit to deploy in a region-wide strategy that seeks to maximize Iranian footholds that can be used to

# AT: Diplomacy will not work in Yemen

Iran is not the barrier to peace

- 1. The Yemen conflict is primarily a civil war Feierstein 18** This conflict is primarily a civil war. Other regional governments have interceded to protect their interests, but the conflict will only end through an agreement among the Yemenis themselves. In that context, Iran could play a constructive role in encouraging its Houthi partners to engage in a political process to end the fighting and return to the negotiating table. But neither the Saudis nor the Iranians can force an end to the conflict.”
- 2. Iran is interested in peace Feierstein 18** Zarif has repeatedly argued that Iran’s “four-point plan” is the only viable option for ending the Yemeni conflict. “We urge ceasefire, humanitarian assistance, intra-Yemeni dialogue and establishment of broad-based government,” he tweeted in 2015. In December 2018, Tehran announced support for the talks in Sweden. The Foreign Ministry urged “all Yemeni sides to adopt trust and confidence-building measures, preparing the ground for achieving a comprehensive agreement to put an end to the suffering of all Yemenis — including ending the brutal blockade that they are subjected to.”

The U.S. can address important issues in Yemen. The U.S. can address important issues in Yemen

- 1. America has options for addressing issues in Yemen Egel 22** The United States supports a diplomatic resolution to the conflict that will ensure that Yemen is unified, stable, and free from foreign influence. An enduring peace required addressing Yemen's most immediate needs while working in parallel to develop Yemen's economic, political, and security institutions. In addition to a continued commitment to humanitarian assistance, this approach suggests that Congress could focus its efforts in three ways to help build an enduring peace in Yemen.
- 2. Economic development is a key issue Egel 22** Alongside humanitarian assistance, commitments to support economic development could do much to address the economic grievances that have undermined stability in Yemen. Even a relatively modestly funded congressional program—such as the once-proposed (PDF) Palestinian Partnership Fund that would have committed the Department of State to deliver at least \$50 million per year for five years to the Palestinians

**Analysis: Use this evidence to show that even without resolving the entire conflict, the United States has various productive options in Yemen.**

The Yemen conflict is primarily a civil war  
Gerald Feierstein. “Iran’s Role in Yemen and Prospects for Peace”, Middle East Institute, October 2018. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/irans-role-yemen-andprospects-peace>  
“Restoring security and stability in Yemen is going to be a long-term process. Successful peace negotiations — including a ceasefire and confidence-building measures — can only be a first step toward that broader objective. Ending the fighting will require that all parties — the government backed by a Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis with their

Iranian supporters — recognize that there is ultimately no viable military solution. But in the run-up to U.N.-led peace talks scheduled in Sweden, in early December 2018, none of the parties has accepted that reality. This conflict is primarily a civil war. Other regional governments have interceded to protect their interests, but the conflict will only end through an agreement among the Yemenis themselves. In that context, Iran could play a constructive role in encouraging its Houthi partners to engage in a political process to end the fighting and return to the negotiating table. But neither the Saudis nor the Iranians can force an end to the conflict.”

Iran is interested in peace

Gerald Feierstein. “Iran’s Role in Yemen and Prospects for Peace”, Middle East Institute. October 2018. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/irans-role-yemen-andprospects-peace>  
“I had an opportunity to put this question directly to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in 2017. He insisted at the time that Iran would support an end to the conflict in Yemen. He said that Iran would endorse terms proposed in 2016 by former Secretary of State John Kerry, which the two men had discussed. The Kerry proposal would have required Yemeni President Abd Rabo Mansour Hadi to step down as a prelude to a Houthi military withdrawal from Sana’a. But the terms were rejected by the Saudi-backed Yemeni government. In public, Zarif has repeatedly argued that Iran’s “four-point plan” is the only viable option for ending the Yemeni conflict. “We urge ceasefire, humanitarian assistance, intra-Yemeni dialogue and establishment of broad-based government,” he tweeted in 2015. In December 2018, Tehran announced support for the talks in Sweden. The Foreign Ministry urged “all Yemeni sides to adopt trust and confidence-building measures, preparing the ground for achieving a comprehensive agreement to put an end to the suffering of all Yemenis — including ending the brutal blockade that they are subjected to.””

America has options for addressing issues in Yemen

Daniel Egel. “Congressional Options to Advance Peace in Yemen.” RAND. December 2022. <https://www.rand.org/blog/2021/03/congressional-options-to-advancepeace-in-yemen.html>  
“The Biden administration has committed to a Yemen policy broadly aligned with these objectives. In his recent call with the United Nations Special Envoy, Secretary of State Antony Blinken emphasized that the United States supports a diplomatic resolution to the conflict that will ensure that Yemen is unified, stable, and free from foreign influence. Our recently published RAND report provides insights that may be helpful for Congress as it considers options going forward. In our study, we concluded that an enduring peace required addressing Yemen’s most immediate needs while working in parallel to develop Yemen’s economic, political, and security institutions. In addition to a continued commitment to humanitarian assistance, this approach suggests that Congress could focus its efforts in three ways to help build an enduring peace in Yemen.”

Economic development is a key issue

Daniel Egel. “Congressional Options to Advance Peace in Yemen.” RAND. December 2022. <https://www.rand.org/blog/2021/03/congressional-options-to-advancepeace-in-yemen.html>  
“Economic reform and institution building. Alongside humanitarian assistance, commitments to support economic development could do much to address the economic grievances that have undermined stability in Yemen. Even a relatively modestly funded congressional program—such as the once-proposed (PDF) Palestinian Partnership Fund that would have committed the Department of State to deliver at least \$50 million per year for five years to the Palestinians—could be a potent tool for supporting these needed reforms.”

# AT: Syria is too fragmented for the U.S. to succeed.

## Diplomacy can work in Syria.

[Sahloul '21](#) reports,

- 1. The U.S. has leverage.** → “The United States has leverage, but this leverage has a shelf life. The Biden administration’s first term will likely be the only period in which Washington can obtain minimal concessions from Syria and its backers. The carrots and sticks at the administration’s disposal are the limited U.S. military presence in northeast Syria and existing and looming U.S. and E.U. sanctions, most notably those codified by the Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act of 2020 (Caesar Act). There is also diplomatic pressure, \$13.5 billion in humanitarian aid, and Turkey’s military occupation of northern Syria.”
- 2. Diplomacy has succeeded in a limited capacity.** → “No one can accuse the Biden administration of having done nothing in Syria. On the diplomatic front, America’s UN mission has supported justice and accountability and worked to ensure the continuation of cross-border humanitarian aid. Most notably, the Biden administration navigated a UN Security Council showdown, in which Russia threatened to veto an extension of cross-border aid to northern Syria via Turkey, and secured a nominally year-long, cross-border aid extension for nearly 4.5 million Syrians. In June, the Biden administration announced an additional \$436 million in Syria aid, atop more than \$13 billion in U.S. taxpayer dollars that already represent the lion’s share of global humanitarian aid to Syrians.”

## Negotiations are necessary for de-escalation.

[Gordon '15](#) reports,

- 1. De-escalation is needed, not regime change.** → “The United States should support a new course that consists of using the new diplomatic process in Vienna to de-escalate the conflict on the basis of a cease-fire between the regime and the opposition; devolving power to local representatives in areas the regime does not currently control; intensifying the campaign against the Islamic State; and establishing an internal political process that would ultimately determine Assad's fate but would not make the outcome of that process a prerequisite to ending the war.”
- 2. The alternatives are unworkable.** → “The difficulties are indeed considerable, but the primary alternative—military escalation in the form of the provision of more sophisticated weapons to the opposition, less strict vetting procedures for the recipients of U.S. and other allied military assistance to the opposition, or even direct U.S. strikes



against the forces of the Assad regime—is even less likely to work and would in many ways make things worse. Escalation would not likely lead to Assad's replacement by "moderates" but only to more killing and destruction as Russia and Iran respond with more support for the regime.”

## AT: The U.S. has no alternative to Assad in Syria.

### Diplomacy would help resolve the ongoing civil war in Syria.

[Bennis '12](#) says,

- 1. Diplomacy is needed to stop the civil war in Syria.** → “What is needed is serious diplomacy – not an army or air force action. U.S./NATO military intervention didn’t bring stability, democracy, or security to Libya, and it certainly is not going to do so in Syria. Despite his government’s history of brutal repression, Bashar al-Assad still enjoys support from parts of Syria’s business elites, especially in Damascus and Aleppo, and some in minority communities (Christian, Shi’a, others) whom the regime had long cultivated.”
- 2. Diplomacy should call for a ceasefire.** → “The impact of a military strike in Syria could be even worse. For ordinary Syrians, struggling to survive amid escalating fighting, with virtually no access to electricity, water, or medical assistance in more and more cities, the only hope starts with ending the fighting. The best thing outside powers can do is to move immediately towards serious new diplomacy, in which supporters of both the regime and the armed opposition participate, with the goal of imposing an immediate ceasefire.”

[Katulis '18](#) states,

- 3. Diplomacy offers the United States unique advantages.** → “This policy should prioritize de-escalating the conflict, stabilizing Syria’s periphery, and establishing a new diplomatic framework that tables Assad’s fate in favor of an intermediate agreement to separate forces on the ground. As a key part of this strategy, the United States should preserve the American-led military presence and accelerate stabilization efforts in the northeast. It should also leverage a firm commitment to defend this zone to engage Russia and Turkey in a new, U.N.-backed plan to end the fighting. This approach is not without risks, but it offers key advantages over the course the United States is on today: It would allow the United States to responsibly conclude the campaign against IS. By freezing the conflict in place, it would prevent a murderous regime from exercising control over an entire population.”
- 4. The United States can and should take a more active diplomatic stance.** → “The United States remains invested in the stagnant and now largely irrelevant diplomatic process in

Geneva that is focused on negotiations between the Assad regime and non-extremist opposition forces that have been all but wiped out. This U.S. approach is passive and reactive, and it cedes the diplomatic initiative to Russia—the one actor in Syria that diplomatically engages all parties. It also fails to leverage the United States’ indirect control over a significant proportion of Syria’s agricultural and energy resources to entice Russia to re-engage in talks leading to a broader political settlement. The immediate goal of a new U.S. diplomatic initiative would be to prevent wider geopolitical escalation by securing international recognition of zones of control on the ground in Syria and initiating a process to clearly demarcate their boundaries.”

## **Sahloul 21:**

Adham Sahloul. “Ending America’s Diplomacy-Last Syria Policy”, War on the Rocks. October 2021.

<https://warontherocks.com/2021/10/ending-americas-diplomacy-last-syria-policy/>

The United States has leverage, but this leverage has a shelf life. The Biden administration’s first term will likely be the only period in which Washington can obtain minimal concessions from Syria and its backers. The carrots and sticks at the administration’s disposal are the limited U.S. military presence in northeast Syria and existing and looming U.S. and E.U. sanctions, most notably those codified by the Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act of 2020 (Caesar Act). There is also diplomatic pressure, \$13.5 billion in humanitarian aid, and Turkey’s military occupation of northern Syria. These should be leveraged over time, in tandem with engagement and pressure by Washington’s regional allies, to test the regime and its backers’ willingness to make constrained compromises. U.S. objectives should include the safe return of any surviving American detainees in Syria, better burden-sharing on counter-terrorism, uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid, and the creation of conditions amenable for refugees to return. No one can accuse the Biden administration of having done nothing in Syria. On the diplomatic front, America’s UN mission has supported justice and accountability and worked to ensure the continuation of cross-border humanitarian aid. Most notably, the Biden administration navigated a UN Security Council showdown, in which Russia threatened to veto an extension of cross-border aid to northern Syria via Turkey, and secured a nominally year-long, cross-border aid extension for nearly 4.5 million Syrians. In June, the Biden administration announced an additional \$436 million in Syria aid, atop more than \$13 billion in U.S. taxpayer dollars that already represent the lion’s share of global humanitarian aid to Syrians. The State Department has issued more than 30 statements about Syria since Biden took office, and Blinken has chaired a ministerial meeting on Syria and held discussions on the sidelines of the Arctic Council with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Biden himself raised the topic of Syria with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the U.S.-Russian summit in Geneva in June. Biden’s first known military act was a strike on Iranian targets in eastern Syria. And in July, the administration issued new human rights sanctions on the Syrian regime and opposition actors.

## **Gordon ‘15:**

Philip Gordon. “Syria: The Need for Diplomacy and De-escalation.” Council on Foreign Relations. December 2015.

<https://www.cfr.org/report/syria-need-diplomacy-and-de-escalation>

There are no good policy options in Syria. But considering the dire consequences of the status quo or military escalation, the United States should support a new course that consists of using the new diplomatic process in Vienna to de-escalate the conflict on the basis of a cease-fire between the regime and the opposition; devolving power to local representatives in areas the regime does not currently control; intensifying the campaign against the Islamic State; and establishing an internal political process that would ultimately determine Assad’s fate but would not make the outcome of that process a prerequisite to ending the war. Even achieving this set of goals could take many months, and would leave some problems unresolved, but it is a far more realistic approach than the current one. Critics will be quick to point out the difficulty in making such an approach work, especially given the deep divisions among the outside actors, the inability of anyone to speak for or control an extraordinarily fractured opposition, and the determination of many in the opposition and the region to keep up the fight as long as Assad is in place. The difficulties are indeed considerable, but the primary alternative—military escalation in the form of the provision of more sophisticated weapons to the opposition, less strict vetting procedures for the recipients of U.S. and other allied military assistance to the opposition, or even direct U.S. strikes against the forces of the Assad regime—is even less likely to work and would in many ways make things worse. Escalation would not likely lead to Assad’s replacement by “moderates” but only to more killing and destruction as Russia and Iran respond with more support for the regime. It could foment the growth of the Islamic State, which would take advantage of the intensified fighting to attract new recruits. Reducing the violence on almost any terms would be better than that.

# AT: Syria is too fragmented for the U.S. to succeed.

## Diplomacy can work in Syria.

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- 2. Diplomacy should call for a ceasefire.** → “The impact of a military strike in Syria could be even worse. For ordinary Syrians, struggling to survive amid escalating fighting, with virtually no access to electricity, water, or medical assistance in more and more cities, the only hope starts with ending the fighting. The best thing outside powers can do is to move immediately towards serious new diplomacy, in which supporters of both the regime and the armed opposition participate, with the goal of imposing an immediate ceasefire.”

[Katulis '18](#) states,

- 3. Diplomacy offers the United States unique advantages.** → “This policy should prioritize de-escalating the conflict, stabilizing Syria’s periphery, and establishing a new diplomatic framework that tables Assad’s fate in favor of an intermediate agreement to separate forces on the ground. As a key part of this strategy, the United States should preserve the American-led military presence and accelerate stabilization efforts in the northeast. It should also leverage a firm commitment to defend this zone to engage Russia and Turkey in a new, U.N.-backed plan to end the fighting. This approach is not without risks, but it offers key advantages over the course the United States is on today: It would allow the United States to responsibly conclude the campaign against IS. By freezing the conflict in place, it would prevent a murderous regime from exercising control over an entire population.”
- 4. The United States can and should take a more active diplomatic stance.** → “The United States remains invested in the stagnant and now largely irrelevant diplomatic process in

Geneva that is focused on negotiations between the Assad regime and non-extremist opposition forces that have been all but wiped out. This U.S. approach is passive and reactive, and it cedes the diplomatic initiative to Russia—the one actor in Syria that diplomatically engages all parties. It also fails to leverage the United States’ indirect control over a significant proportion of Syria’s agricultural and energy resources to entice Russia to re-engage in talks leading to a broader political settlement. The immediate goal of a new U.S. diplomatic initiative would be to prevent wider geopolitical escalation by securing international recognition of zones of control on the ground in Syria and initiating a process to clearly demarcate their boundaries.”

**Sahloul '21:**

Adham Sahloul. “Ending America’s Diplomacy-Last Syria Policy”, War on the Rocks. October 2021. <https://warontherocks.com/2021/10/ending-americas-diplomacy-last-syria-policy/>

The United States has leverage, but this leverage has a shelf life. The Biden administration’s first term will likely be the only period in which Washington can obtain minimal concessions from Syria and its backers. The carrots and sticks at the administration’s disposal are the limited U.S. military presence in northeast Syria and existing and looming U.S. and E.U. sanctions, most notably those codified by the Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act of 2020 (Caesar Act). There is also diplomatic pressure, \$13.5 billion in humanitarian aid, and Turkey’s military occupation of northern Syria. These should be leveraged over time, in tandem with engagement and pressure by Washington’s regional allies, to test the regime and its backers’ willingness to make constrained compromises. U.S. objectives should include the safe return of any surviving American detainees in Syria, better burden-sharing on counter-terrorism, uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid, and the creation of conditions amenable for refugees to return. No one can accuse the Biden administration of having done nothing in Syria. On the diplomatic front, America’s UN mission has supported justice and accountability and worked to ensure the continuation of cross-border humanitarian aid. Most notably, the Biden administration navigated a UN Security Council showdown, in which Russia threatened to veto an extension of cross-border aid to northern Syria via Turkey, and secured a nominally year-long, cross-border aid extension for nearly 4.5 million Syrians. In June, the Biden administration announced an additional \$436 million in Syria aid, atop more than \$13 billion in U.S. taxpayer dollars that already represent the lion’s share of global humanitarian aid to Syrians. The State Department has issued more than 30 statements about Syria since Biden took office, and Blinken has chaired a ministerial meeting on Syria and held discussions on the sidelines of the Arctic Council with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Biden himself raised the topic of Syria with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the U.S.-Russian summit in Geneva in June. Biden’s first known military act was a strike on Iranian targets in eastern Syria. And in July, the administration issued new human rights sanctions on the Syrian regime and opposition actors.

**Gordon '15:**

Philip Gordon. “Syria: The Need for Diplomacy and De-escalation.” Council on Foreign Relations. December 2015. <https://www.cfr.org/report/syria-need-diplomacy-and-de-escalation>

There are no good policy options in Syria. But considering the dire consequences of the status quo or military escalation, the United States should support a new course that consists of using the new diplomatic process in Vienna to de-escalate the conflict on the basis of a cease-fire between the regime and the opposition; devolving power to local representatives in areas the regime does not currently control; intensifying the campaign against the Islamic State; and establishing an internal political process that would ultimately determine Assad’s fate but would not make the outcome of that process a prerequisite to ending the war. Even achieving this set of goals could take many months, and would leave some problems unresolved, but it is a far more realistic approach than the current one. Critics will be quick to point out the difficulty in making such an approach work, especially given the deep divisions among the outside actors, the inability of anyone to speak for or control an extraordinarily fractured opposition, and the determination of many in the opposition and the region to keep up the fight as long as Assad is in place. The difficulties are indeed considerable, but the primary alternative—military escalation in the form of more sophisticated weapons to the opposition, less strict vetting procedures for the recipients of U.S. and other allied military assistance to the opposition, or even direct U.S. strikes against the forces of the Assad regime—is even less likely to work and would in many ways make things worse. Escalation would not likely lead to Assad’s replacement by “moderates” but only to more killing and destruction as Russia and Iran respond with more support for the regime. It could foment the growth of the Islamic State, which would take advantage of the intensified fighting to attract new recruits. Reducing the violence on almost any terms would be better than that.

**Bennis '12:**

Phyllis Bennis. “Can We Stop a Civil War in Syria?.” July 2012. The Transnational Institute. <https://www.tni.org/es/node/12462>

Syria is close to a full-scale civil war. If the conflict escalates further, as former UN Secretary-General and current envoy of both the UN and the Arab League Kofi Annan noted, “Syria is not Libya, it will not implode; it will explode beyond its borders.” The human cost of this conflict is incalculably high. It’s not surprising that the normal human reaction is “we’ve got to do something!” But what is needed is serious diplomacy – not an army or air force action. U.S./NATO military intervention didn’t bring stability, democracy, or security to Libya, and it certainly is not going to do so in Syria. Despite his government’s history of brutal repression, Bashar al-Assad still enjoys support from parts of Syria’s business elites, especially in Damascus and Aleppo, and some in minority communities (Christian, Shi’a, others) whom the regime had long cultivated. The opposition was divided from the beginning over whether massive reform or the end of the regime was their goal. It divided further when part of the opposition took up arms and began calling for international military intervention. The non-violent opposition movement for freedom and democracy, which still rejects calls for military intervention, survives but is under extraordinary threat. The impact of a military strike in Syria could be even worse. For ordinary Syrians, struggling to survive amid escalating fighting, with virtually no access to electricity, water, or medical assistance in more and more cities, the only hope starts with ending the fighting. The best thing outside powers can do is to move immediately towards serious new diplomacy, in which supporters of both the regime and the armed opposition participate, with the goal of imposing an immediate ceasefire. Kofi Annan’s call for just such a diplomatic option could be the start if Washington could be pressured to accept it. Only with an end to the war, will the original home-grown opposition forces have a chance to remobilize public support for their internal, non-violent protest movement for real change, reclaiming the social movements for Syria’s own version of freedom and democracy, and reasserting Syria’s place in the Arab Spring.

**Katulis '18:**

Brian Katulis. “Seizing the Diplomatic Initiative in Syria.” 2018. The Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/seizing-diplomatic-initiative-syria/>

The United States has an opportunity to shape this emerging landscape in a way that advances American interests and values. Meeting these goals will require a new policy approach that better matches U.S. goals to U.S. resources and better mobilize U.S. partnerships throughout the region. This policy should prioritize de-escalating the conflict, stabilizing Syria’s periphery, and establishing a new diplomatic framework that tables Assad’s fate in favor of an intermediate agreement to separate forces on the ground. As a key part of this strategy, the United States should preserve the American-led military presence and accelerate stabilization efforts in the northeast. It should also leverage a firm commitment to defend this zone to engage Russia and Turkey in a new, U.N.-backed plan to end the fighting. This approach is not without risks, but it offers key advantages over the course the United States is on today: it would allow the United States to responsibly conclude the campaign against IS. By freezing the conflict in place, it would prevent a murderous regime from exercising control over an entire population as well as halt the expansion of Russian and Iranian influence in the Middle East. And it would buy time for Syrians and the international community to seek a more durable national political settlement. At present, U.S. diplomacy mirrors the balkanization of the conflict itself. Talks with Russia, Jordan, and Israel focus on the deteriorating situation in southern Syria, while those with Turkey focus primarily on that country’s dispute with the SDF. At the same time, the United States remains invested in the stagnant and now largely irrelevant diplomatic process in Geneva that is focused on negotiations between the Assad regime and non-extremist opposition forces that have been all but wiped out. This U.S. approach is passive and reactive, and it cedes the diplomatic initiative to Russia—the one actor in Syria that diplomatically engages all parties. It also fails to leverage the United States’ indirect control over a significant proportion of Syria’s agricultural and energy resources to entice Russia to re-engage in talks leading to a broader political settlement. The immediate goal of a new U.S. diplomatic initiative would be to prevent wider geopolitical escalation by securing international recognition of zones of control on the ground in Syria and initiating a process to clearly demarcate their boundaries. Mutual agreement on boundaries would lay the ground rules for the military operations of all parties in Syria, with Russia, Turkey, and the United States acting as guarantors. Joint military patrols or other mechanisms could then be established to reduce the risk of miscalculation and discourage cross-boundary attacks. Talks could also explore ways to ensure the delivery of humanitarian relief to areas in need throughout Syria.

## AT: Diplomacy will not solve the conflict in Turkey

Diplomacy would help resolve the ongoing conflict in Turkey between the government and the PKK

1) Diplomacy is needed to stop the civil war in Yemen

**International Crisis Group '22** → "In July 2015, a two-and-a-half year long ceasefire broke down, and the almost four-decade long conflict between Turkish security forces and militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) – recognised as a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the U.S. and the EU – entered one of its deadliest chapters in nearly four decades. Since that date, violence has devastated communities in Turkey's majority-Kurdish south east and – at times – struck into the heart of the country's largest metropolitan centres. An unprecedented flare-up of fighting and attacks in some south-eastern urban districts in the first half of 2016, was followed by a gradual shift of violence into rural areas."

2) Many have died in this conflict

**International Crisis Group '22** → "AT LEAST 6,366 people have been killed in clashes or terror attacks since 20 July 2015. This includes: 610 CIVILIANS, 1,399 STATE SECURITY FORCE MEMBERS, 226 INDIVIDUALS OF UNKNOWN AFFILIATION. 4,131 PKK MILITANTS Members of the PKK and affiliates active in Turkey."

2) Diplomacy is the only solution for Turkey

**OWP '16** → "Despite their reluctance, talking with the PKK and the PYG may be the only way to resolve the violence in Eastern Turkey. First, the PKK, having taken up arms, are also the only ones that can actually lay down their own weapons. Considering the conflict between the PKK and Turkey has been relatively continuous since 1984, it is unlikely that Turkey can militarily defeat the PKK, especially now that they are joined by their Syrian compatriots. Limited autonomy is the only way to a long-term settlement in the region. Also ironically, Erdogan himself has demonstrated why negotiations are the only solution. After extensive talks with the PKK, both sides in 2013 announced the end of their 30 year conflict and the PKK laid down their arms. Negotiating with the PKK and arranging both parliamentary representation to give the Kurds a stake in Turkey, and limited regional autonomy for Turkish Kurdistan, so far appear to be the best path towards peace in the region. Otherwise, Turkey will continue to experience unrest and international criticism well into the future."

### 3) Solving the conflict in Yemen has important impact

**OWP'16**→“For almost five years, Turkey has been a bulwark of stability in the turbulent Middle East. But that bulwark has become increasingly fractured as the conflict in Syria continues to drag on, pulling in increasingly larger numbers of global actors. Despite Erdogan’s triumphant return to presidency, Turkey’s international situation appears to have deteriorated considerably with recent events. Turkey’s fight against various Kurdish groups has evolved to become more complex and nuanced. Turkey continues to battle the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) and its Syrian allies the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the People’s Protection Units (YPG). As the Islamic State is being rolled back, Turkey appears to be increasingly concerned with the possibility of an expanded Kurdish territory on its borders. Turkey needs to formulate a new peace process with its Kurdish minority in order to stave off the prospect of an independent Kurdistan carved out of Turkish territory. The alternative would be continued fighting for an undeterminable time into the future and contributing to the already chaotic situation in the region.”

**Analysis:** This evidence shows that Turkey needs to diplomatically resolve its internal conflict, and that diplomacy has worked in similar instances in the past. Use this evidence to argue that a negotiated settlement is likely to be successful.

International Crisis Group

Staff. “Turkey’s PKK Conflict: A Visual Explainer” July 2022. International Crisis Group.

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/turkeys-pkk-conflict-visual-explainer>

\*In July 2015, a two-and-a-half year long ceasefire broke down, and the almost four-decade long conflict between Turkish security forces and militants of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) – recognised as a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the U.S. and the EU – entered one of its deadliest chapters in nearly four decades. Since that date, violence has devastated communities in Turkey’s majority Kurdish south east and – at times – struck into the heart of the country’s largest metropolitan centres. An unprecedented flare-up of fighting and attacks in some south-eastern urban districts in the first half of 2016, was followed by a gradual shift of violence into rural areas. International Crisis Group has assembled a database of fatalities caused by this conflict since 2011. Our data is based on information available in open sources, including reports from Turkish language media, the Turkish military, local Kurdish rights groups, and the PKK itself. This platform presents some of the information that can be gleaned from this data. For our latest detailed analysis that also draws on this data, click here.\*

International Crisis Group

Staff. “Turkey’s PKK Conflict: A Visual Explainer” July 2022. International Crisis Group.

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\*AT LEAST 6,366 people have been killed in clashes or terror attacks since 20 July 2015. This includes: 630 CIVILIANS Confirmed by Crisis Group as non-combatants, the overwhelming majority of these individuals have been killed in urban clashes in the south east or in PKK bomb attacks in metropolitan centres. (Crisis Group includes only named fatalities confirmed through its open source methodology). 5,099 STATE SECURITY FORCE MEMBERS: fatalities include soldiers, police officers and village guards (paramilitary groups comprised of ethnic Kurds, armed and paid by the Turkish state). For a detailed breakdown of state security force fatalities, see below. 226 INDIVIDUALS OF UNKNOWN AFFILIATION: individuals aged 16-25 killed in areas of clashes, overwhelmingly in urban curfew zones who cannot be confirmed as either civilians or combatants. These individuals cannot be positively identified as civilians or members of plainclothes PKK youth militias due to the blurred line between civilian and militant in an urban conflict setting. 4,133 PKK MILITANTS: Members of the PKK and affiliates active in Turkey. Crisis Group assumes that total PKK fatalities are higher than this public tally. Ankara says that more than ten thousand militants have been “neutralised” (either killed, captured or surrendered) since the resumption of hostilities in July 2015. Crisis Group figures should not be seen as a refutation of fatality claims made by the Turkish government.\*

OWP ‘16

Hanyu Huang. “For Turkey, a Negotiated Peace with the PKK is the Only Solution.” 2016. OWP.

<https://theowp.org/turkey-negotiated-peace-pkk-solution/>

\*Despite their reluctance, talking with the PKK and the YPG may be the only way to resolve the violence in Eastern Turkey. First, the PKK, having taken up arms, are also the only ones that can actually lay down their own weapons. Considering the conflict between the PKK and Turkey has been relatively continuous since 1984, it is unlikely that Turkey can militarily defeat the PKK, especially now that they are joined by their Syrian counterparts. Limited autonomy is the only way to a long-term settlement in this region. Erdogan may threaten “to bring the world down on those that seek to create a state within a state”<sup>[4]</sup>, but he is supporting Iraqi Kurdistan, which is a quasi-independent entity. While Iraqi Kurdistan is far from a perfect solution, it has at least prevented a breakdown of Iraq and sectarian violence post 2003. Also ironically, Erdogan himself has demonstrated why negotiations are the only solution. After extensive talks with the PKK, both sides in 2013 announced the end of their 20-year conflict and the PKK laid down their arms. Negotiating with the PKK and arranging both parliamentary representation to give the Kurds a stake in Turkey, and limited regional autonomy for Turkish Kurdistan, so far appear to be the best path towards peace in the region. Otherwise, strengthened by the battle-hardened Syrian Kurds with years of experience, Turkey will continue to experience unrest and international criticism well into the future.\*

OWP’16

Hanyu Huang. “For Turkey, a Negotiated Peace with the PKK is the Only Solution.” 2016. OWP.

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"For almost five years, Turkey has been a bulwark of stability in the turbulent Middle East. But that bulwark has become increasingly fractured as the conflict in Syria continues to drag on, pulling in increasingly larger numbers of global actors. Despite Erdogan's triumphant return to presidency, Turkey's international situation appears to have deteriorated considerably with recent events. Turkey's fight against various Kurdish groups has evolved to become more complex and nuanced. Turkey continues to battle the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its Syrian allies the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the People's Protection Units (YPG). However, Turkish officials reportedly enjoys good relations with the Iraqi Kurds and has assisted the Peshmerga's operations against the Islamic State. As the Islamic State is being rolled back, Turkey appears to be increasingly concerned with the possibility of an expanded Kurdish territory on its borders. Turkey needs to formulate a new peace process with its Kurdish minority in order to stave off the prospect of an independent Kurdistan carved out of Turkish territory. The alternative would be continued fighting for an undeterminable time into the future and contributing to the already chaotic situation in the region."

## AT: The US needs to focus on East Asia

### East Asia and West Asia are connected

#### 1) West Asia is important to China

**Tablet Magazine '20**→“In this context, the Middle East presents Beijing with a unique mix of threats and opportunities. On the threat side of the ledger is the fact that around half of China’s oil imports either originate in the Persian Gulf or flow through the Suez Canal. In addition to oil and gas, many of the other resources that feed China’s economy wind their way to ports such as Shanghai or Guangzhou only after passing through Middle Eastern choke points, where they are vulnerable to interdiction by the United States. In terms of population, Israel is miniscule, but it is a cyber superpower, a global leader in artificial intelligence, and a spectacular innovator of next-generation weaponry. What China’s heavily bureaucratized one-party state lacks in the capacity to innovate and solve real-world technical challenges quickly, Israel has in spades—along with a unique ability to see inside and understand the capacities of the American techno-military complex. Jerusalem could play an indispensable role in helping Beijing achieve both its “China 2025” goals and its military modernization efforts—if it were not sheltering under the protective umbrella of the United States military.”

#### 2) China is balancing the United States in West Asia

**Tablet Magazine '20**→“Last June, Rear Adm. Heidi Berg, director of intelligence at the U.S. Africa Command, drew public attention to the problem of the harassment of American forces at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti—the only permanent American base on the continent—by their new Chinese neighbors. The Chinese, she explained to reporters, were working to “constrain international airspace” by barring American aircraft from flying over the Chinese military base, deploying drones that were designed to interfere with U.S. flight operations, and flashing military-grade lasers at American pilots, causing minor injury to their eyes. On more than one occasion, Chinese soldiers have also attempted to infiltrate the American base.”



3) The U.S. has many security interests in West Asia so America needs to focus on West Asia. **Rand '22**→“The authors contend that the United States should not deprioritize or disengage from the Middle East but should instead manage the full range of its interests there. These include the traditional goals of preventing terrorism, protecting global energy markets, and dealing with Iranian nuclear proliferation and other malign activities, as well as additional interests related to addressing great power competition, regional conflicts, the human and financial costs of conflict, civilian displacement, climate change, the well-being of allies, and chronic instability.”

4) The key to addressing these interests is diplomacy

**Rand '22** →“To safeguard its interests, the United States should rely less on military operations and more on diplomacy, economic development, and technical assistance. A reshaped U.S. strategy that both maintains the Middle East as a priority and rebalances military and civilian tools can help steer the region from one where costs to the United States prevail to one where benefits to the American people—as well as people in the Middle East—accrue. Completed before Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the report has not been revised subsequently.”

Analysis: Use this evidence to demonstrate that the United States has important strategic interests in West Asia. Although East Asia is important, we cannot ignore the rest of the world.

Tablet Magazine '20

Michael Doran. “China’s Emerging Middle Eastern Kingdom”, Tablet Magazine.

October 2020. <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/israel-middle-east/articles/china-middle-eastern-kingdom>

“In this context, the Middle East presents Beijing with a unique mix of threats and opportunities. On the threat side of the ledger is the fact that around half of China’s oil imports either originate in the Persian Gulf or flow through the Suez Canal. In addition to oil and gas, many of the other resources that feed China’s economy wind their way to ports such as Shanghai or Guangzhou only after passing through Middle Eastern choke points, where they are vulnerable to interdiction by the United States. On the opportunity side for China, the Middle East is not only the source of much-needed oil, it is also home to the Jewish state. In terms of population, Israel is miniscule, but it is a cyber superpower, a global leader in artificial intelligence, and a spectacular innovator of next-generation weaponry. What China’s heavily bureaucratized one-party state lacks in the capacity to innovate and solve real-world technical challenges quickly, Israel has in spades—along with a unique ability to see inside and understand the capacities of the American techno-military complex. Jerusalem could play an indispensable role in helping Beijing achieve both its “China 2025” goals and its military modernization efforts—if it were not sheltering under the protective umbrella of the United States military.”

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Rand '22

Shelly Culbertson. “Renewing U.S. Security Policy in the Middle East.” RAND. December 2022.

[https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA904-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA904-1.html)

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“To safeguard its interests, the United States should rely less on military operations and more on diplomacy, economic development, and technical assistance. A reshaped U.S. strategy that both maintains the Middle East as a priority and rebalances military and civilian tools can help steer the region from one where costs to the United States prevail to one where benefits to the American people—as well as people in the Middle East—accrue. Completed before Russia’s February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the report has not been revised subsequently.”

## AT: The U.S. is not trusted in West Asia

The U.S. is improving its relations with West Asian nations through new policies.

1) Biden and the U.S. are searching for a new role in West Asia.

**Observer research foundation '22**→Mr. Biden welcomed Saudi Arabia's plan to strategically invest in projects aligning with U.S. Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) goals, all point to Washington's need more than Riyadh's.

However, two developments from Mr. Biden's visit could result in positive externalities for the region: one, the consensus to sustain an UN-mediated truce in Yemen and two, the opening of Saudi airspace for civilian aircraft flying to and from Israel. The aim of the former is to translate the truce, which has led to 15 weeks of peace, into a durable ceasefire and political process between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, creating conducive grounds for development and aid in war-ravaged Yemen. The latter emboldens the spirit and objectives of regional bonhomie, which the U.S. sought through the Abraham Accords. The Biden administration has tried to add a different hue to the Abraham Accords by establishing the Negev Forum, following up from the Negev Summit held in March 2022.

2) Biden administration has found a new toehold in West Asia.

**Observer Research Foundation '22**→With the first leaders' meet of the I2U2 group (comprising India, Israel, the UAE and the U.S.), sometimes referred to as the West Asian Quad, the Biden administration may have found a new toehold in West Asia. The I2U2, beyond its promises of integration, is of strategic value to the U.S. on the back of troop pull-out from Afghanistan, a not-so-favourable relationship with Saudi Arabia and a hostile relationship with Iran. The group's limited focus in this meeting on food security and energy security is understandable given its recent launch, but its agenda of tying the West Asian region with South Asia through innovation, private sector investments, initiatives in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and the promotion and development of critical emerging and green technologies depict an integrated inter-regional future for the two Regions. For now, realpolitik and the compulsions it has engendered for Washington may have trumped the Biden administration's rather vocal positions on principles. And it may well be a wise choice in the end if it translates into domestic political support in the U.S. and a more favourable West Asia for Biden.

**Impact:** Biden's recent West Asia visit signifies improving relations.

**Gupta '22**→The U.S. reaffirmed its support for Israel's regional military edge and "ability to defend itself". The Jewish country considers it an existential threat if Iran acquires a nuclear weapon. Israel's Prime Minister said in the signing ceremony that the only way to stop Iran is if Iran knows that the free world will use force.

On his second leg of the visit, Biden visited Saudi Arabia. In his first stopover, the focus of the visit remained enhancing the regional security architecture to counter Iran. In this light what needs to be understood is the relevance of the Abraham Accord, which is a set of normalisation agreements signed by Israel with the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco initiated by then President Donald Trump in 2020. These treaties call for promotion of peace and cooperation in the Middle-East and interestingly even the title of Abraham refers to the common patriarch of the three religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The relevance of these Accords can be understood from the fact that in the past as per the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative led by Saudi Arabia and agreed by the 22 member states of the Arab League, the normalisation of ties with Israel by an Arab country beyond Egypt and Jordan would be possible only if a peace agreement is reached between Palestine and Israel. It is in this context that this opening up of the Arab countries holds great significance. By normalising its relations with Israel, Sudan, at least symbolically, has agreed to negotiate with Israel, recognise it, and make peace with it.

**Analysis:** During Trump's tenure, relations between the U.S. and several West Asian countries floundered. Recently Biden has made efforts to improve those relationships, and those efforts are paying dividends already.

Observer research foundation '22

Pant, Harsh V. "The U.S. search for a new role in West Asia." Observer Research Foundation. 7/27/22. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-u-s-search-for-a-new-role-in-west-asia/>

Although Mr. Biden made a veiled attempt to criticise the Saudi leader, the meeting's focus on bilateral cooperation in 5G technology and integrated air defence, and the fact that Mr. Biden welcomed Saudi Arabia's plan to strategically invest in projects aligning with U.S. Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) goals, all point to Washington's need more than Riyadh's. Furthermore, the Crown Prince did not make any public commitment to increase oil production. With Saudi Arabia, Mr. Biden is perceived as having skirted critical issues in the bilateral relationship such as the release of political prisoners, clemency for opponents of the regime, and easing of travel restrictions, especially for those who hold dual citizenship in the two countries. However, two developments from Mr. Biden's visit could result in positive externalities for the region: one, the consensus to sustain an UN-mediated truce in Yemen and two, the opening of Saudi airspace for civilian aircraft flying to and from Israel. The aim of the former is to translate the truce, which has led to 15 weeks of peace, into a durable ceasefire and political process between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, creating conducive grounds for development and aid in war-ravaged Yemen. The latter embodies the spirit and objectives of regional bonhomie, which the U.S. sought through the Abraham Accords. The Biden administration has tried to add a different hue to the Abraham Accords by establishing the Negev Forum, following up from the Negev Summit held in March 2022.

Observer Research Foundation '22

Pant, Harsh V. "The U.S. search for a new role in West Asia." Observer Research Foundation. 7/27/22. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-u-s-search-for-a-new-role-in-west-asia/>

→ With the first leaders' meet of the I2U2 group (comprising India, Israel, the UAE and the U.S.), sometimes referred to as the West Asian Quad, the Biden administration may have found a new toehold in West Asia. The I2U2, beyond its promises of integration, is of strategic value to the U.S. on the back of troop pull-out from Afghanistan, a not-so-favourable relationship with Saudi Arabia and a hostile relationship with Iran. The group's limited focus in this meeting on food security and energy security is understandable given its recent launch, but its agenda of tying the West Asian region with South Asia through innovation, private sector investments, initiatives in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and the promotion and development of critical emerging and green technologies depict an integrated inter-regional future for the two Regions. Since the beginning of his term, Mr. Biden has sought a reorientation in the U.S.'s West Asia policy. Resetting relations with Iran through a reworked Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which would have the U.S. back in the agreement; troop pull-out from Afghanistan, which is having regional security ramifications; and a principled support to democracies translating into a calibrated distancing from regional autocracies and dictatorships were all part of the recalibration. Expectedly, one of the few countries that Mr. Biden did not want to disturb was the U.S.'s relations with Israel. The Russia-Ukraine war and its implications have shown that the U.S.'s somewhat tenuous relations with countries in the region will continue despite underlying concerns about human rights and political freedom. For now, realpolitik and the compulsions it has engendered for Washington may have trumped the Biden administration's rather vocal positions on principles. And it may well be a wise choice in the end if it translates into domestic political support in the U.S. and a more favourable West Asia for Biden.

News '18

Gupta, Biswanath. "Why U.S. president Joe Biden's West Asia visit remains significant." News 18.

<https://www.news18.com/news/opinion/opinion-why-us-president-joe-bidens-west-asia-visit-remains-significant-5794567.html>

The U.S. reaffirmed its support for Israel's regional military edge and "ability to defend itself". The Jewish country considers it an existential threat if Iran acquires a nuclear weapon. Israel's Prime Minister said in the signing ceremony that the only way to stop Iran is if Iran knows that the free world will use force. As the scope of fresh negotiations between the U.S. and Iran on the nuclear weapon deal is looming, the scope of uncertainty and conflict is rising. On his second leg of the visit, Biden visited Saudi Arabia. In his first stopover, the focus of the visit remained enhancing the regional security architecture to counter Iran. In this light what needs to be understood is the relevance of the Abraham Accord, which is a set of normalization agreements signed by Israel with the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco initiated by then President Donald Trump in 2020. These treaties call for promotion of peace and cooperation in the Middle East and interestingly even the title of Abraham refers to the common patriarch of the three religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The relevance of these Accords can be understood from the fact that in the past as per the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative led by Saudi Arabia and agreed by the 22 member states of the Arab League, the normalisation of ties with Israel by an Arab country beyond Egypt and Jordan would be possible only if a peace agreement is reached between Palestine and Israel. It is in this context that this opening up of the Arab countries holds great significance. To illustrate, the relations between Sudan and Israel were premised on the famous "three nos" relating to no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel and no negotiation with Israel resolutions that were adopted in the aftermath of the 1967 six-day War by the Arab League in their meeting in Sudan's capital of Khartoum. By normalising its relations with Israel, Sudan, at least symbolically, has agreed to negotiate with Israel, recognise it, and make peace with it.

## AT: U.S. diplomatic efforts lead to radicalization

U.S. diplomatic efforts reduce terrorism.

1) America needs to reemphasize counterterrorism.

**Rand '22**→“The authors contend that the United States should not deprioritize or disengage from the Middle East but should instead manage the full range of its interests there. These include the traditional goals of preventing terrorism, protecting global energy markets, and dealing with Iranian nuclear proliferation and other malign activities, as well as additional interests related to addressing great power competition, regional conflicts, the human and financial costs of conflict, civilian displacement, climate change, the well-being of allies, and chronic instability.”

2) Biden administration is committed to West Asia.

**Pant 22'**→With the first leaders' meet of the I2U2 group (comprising India, Israel, the UAE and the U.S.), sometimes referred to as the West Asian Quad, the Biden administration may have found a new toehold in West Asia. The I2U2, beyond its promises of integration, is of strategic value to the U.S. on the back of troop pull-out from Afghanistan, a not-so-favourable relationship with Saudi Arabia and a hostile relationship with Iran. The group's limited focus in this meeting on food security and energy security is understandable given its recent launch, but its agenda of tying the West Asian region with South Asia through innovation, private sector investments, initiatives in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and the promotion and development of critical emerging and green technologies depict an integrated inter-regional future for the two Regions. Since the beginning of his term, Mr. Biden has

sought a reorientation in the U.S.'s West Asia policy. For now, realpolitik and the compulsions it has engendered for Washington may have trumped the Biden administration's rather vocal positions on principles. And it may well be a wise choice in the end if it translates into domestic political support in the U.S. and a more favourable West Asia for Biden.

**Impact:** U.S. counterterror efforts in West Asia are crucial.

**The Century Foundation '15** → “The Yemen crisis poses many dangers. The most obvious lie in Yemen itself, where starvation could become endemic and an avoidable escalation of civil war could lead to a mass humanitarian tragedy. Security blowback is an equally intense strategic concern. AQAP has been one of the most active groups plotting international terrorist attacks, including against the United States. The disruption of U.S.-allied counterterrorism efforts in Yemen, and now the collapse of any central state authority, directly empower AQAP and increase the threat to the United States. The coalition led by the Houthis, a group with a distinct tribal and sectarian identity inside Yemen, which is currently supported by Iran and by deposed president Ali Abdullah Saleh, has grievances mostly rooted in the local sharing of power and resources. It is impossible to assess whether Iran views the interests of the Houthi alliance as close to Iran's core interests, or whether it tactically views the Houthis as another chit to deploy in a region-wide strategy that seeks to maximize Iranian footholds that can be used to project power or can be traded away in negotiations.”

**Analysis:** The U.S. is committing to counterterrorism in West Asia, and its efforts have proven to be essential in fighting insurgent groups across the region. Diplomatic efforts could help those measures, and reduce the spread of terrorist groups.

Rand '22

Shelly Culbertson. “Renewing U.S. Security Policy in the Middle East.” RAND. December 2022.

[https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA904-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA904-1.html)

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Observer Research Foundation '22

Pant, Harsh V. “The U.S. search for a new role in West Asia.” Observer Research

Foundation. 7/27/22. [https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-u-s-search-for-a-](https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-u-s-search-for-a-new-role-in-west-asia/)

[new-role-in-west-asia/](https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-u-s-search-for-a-new-role-in-west-asia/)

With the first leaders' meet of the OIC group (comprising India, Israel, the UAE and the U.S.), sometimes referred to as the West Asian Quad, the Biden administration may have found a new seabed in West Asia. The OIC, beyond its promises of integration, is of strategic value to the U.S. on the back of troop pull-out from Afghanistan, a not-so-favourable relationship with Saudi Arabia and a hostile relationship with Iran. The group's limited focus in this meeting on food security and energy security is understandable given its recent focus, but its agenda of tying the West Asian region with South Asia through innovation, private sector investments, education in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and the promotion and development of critical emerging and green technologies suggest an integrated inter-regional future for the two regions. Since the beginning of his term, Mr. Biden has sought a reorientation in the U.S.'s West Asia policy. Reaching relations with Iran through a renewed Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which would have the U.S. back in the agreement, troop pull-out from Afghanistan, and a principled support to democracies translating into a calibrated distancing from regional autocracies and dictatorships were all part of the reorientation. Especially, one of the few countries that Mr. Biden did not seem to disturb was the U.S.'s relations with Israel. The Russia-Ukraine war and its implications have shown that the U.S.'s conventional foreign relations with countries in the region will continue despite underlying concerns about human rights and political freedoms. For now, realpolitik and the compulsions it has engendered for Washington may have trumped the Biden administration's rather vocal positions on principles. And it may well be a wise choice in the end if it translates into domestic political support in the U.S. and a more favourable West Asia for Biden.

The Century Foundation '15

Thanassis Cambanis. “Managing the War in Yemen: Diplomatic Opportunities in the Mayhem.” 2015. The Century Foundation.

<https://tcf.org/content/commentary/managing-the-war-in-yemen-diplomatic-opportunities-in-the-mayhem/>

## AT: U.S. diplomatic efforts lead to escalation

### U.S. presence de-escalates tension.

1) Biden's national security strategy is emphasizing de-escalation.

**Foreign Policy Research Institute '22**→President Joe Biden's National Security Strategy (NSS) addresses two trends in America's Middle East policy that have been apparent over his tenure: military de-escalation and regional integration. A year after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, the NSS emphasizes what was implied in that decision—that U.S. military involvement cannot effectively promote stability, and by extension, the goal of democratization, through efforts at regime change. The statement exclaims that, "it is time to eschew grand designs in favor of more practical goals," namely regional stability and the advancement of U.S. interests such as countering Russian and Chinese aggression, and shoring up domestic industry. In addition to Afghanistan, the Trump-era Abraham Accords—the 2020 joint agreements between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain to normalize diplomatic relations—appear to be the second hinge point of this policy statement. Building on this mission statement, the framework expounds five principles to guide U.S. policy in the Middle East that build on the grander narrative of the NSS as a whole, including (1) the promotion of a rules-based order, (2) freedom of navigation in the Gulf and the protection of national sovereignty, (3) a commitment to solving conflicts with diplomacy, (4) promoting regional integration on political, economic, and security fronts, and (5) the promotion of a human rights agenda.

2) Biden is pushing for a more favorable relationship with West Asia.

**Observer Research Foundation '22**→With the first leaders' meet of the I2U2 group (comprising India, Israel, the UAE and the U.S.), sometimes referred to as the West Asian Quad, the Biden administration may have found a new toehold in West Asia. The I2U2, beyond its promises of integration, is of strategic value to the U.S. on the back of troop pull-out from Afghanistan, a not-so-favourable relationship with Saudi Arabia and a hostile relationship with Iran. The group's limited focus in this meeting on food security and energy security is understandable given its recent launch, but its agenda of tying the West Asian region with South Asia through innovation, private sector investments,

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**Impact:** Biden's strategy seeks stability and peace, not escalation.

**Foreign Policy Research Institute '22**→The administration faces difficult challenges across all of these points at present. Ahead of the release of the NSS, the administration and Congress have taken a great affront to the decision of OPEC+ to cut oil production. A transcript of a frank conversation between President Barack Obama and pool reporters before leaving office January 2017 was released recently in which the former president expressed exasperation that people do not understand the extent to which the U.S. underwrites the world order, particularly where human rights and democracy are concerned. It seems clear from this NSS that Biden is departing from this view as far as the Middle East is concerned, committing more energy to underwriting stability, however authoritarian, rather than rights.

Analysis: The U.S. is emphasizing de-escalation, so their presence will be more stabilizing moving forward. Specific to West Asia, the U.S. is doubling down on its commitment to the region, which will help to create peace in the long term.

Foreign Policy Research Institute '22

Ryan, James. "Biden's National Security Strategy: America's Search for Order in the Middle East." Foreign Policy Research Institute. 10/24/22. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/10/bidens-national-security-strategy-americas-search-for-order-in-the-middle-east/>

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Observer Research Foundation '22

Pant, Harsh V. "The U.S. search for a new role in West Asia." Observer Research Foundation. 7/27/22. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-u-s-search-for-a-new-role-in-west-asia/>

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Foreign Policy Research Institute '22

Ryan, James. "Biden's National Security Strategy: America's Search for Order in the Middle East." Foreign Policy Research Institute. 10/24/22.

<https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/10/bidens-national-security-strategy-americas-search-for-order-in-the-middle-east/>

The administration faces difficult challenges across all of these points at present. Ahead of the release of the NSS, the administration and Congress have taken a great affront to the decision of OPEC+ to cut oil production. Analysts are split on the decision—Marc Lynch reads the policy as a rejection of the administration's efforts to line up its allies against Russia with regards to the oil market, Omar Al-Ubaydi sees it as a natural reaction to the increase in American oil production (a policy that is itself consonant with the rest of the NSS's emphasis on industrial policy), and many commentators see it as a personal affront to Biden and an attempt to influence the midterm elections. Each of these reads has an element of truth to it, and generally point up a major conundrum inherent in the NSS—thus far, regional integration has largely been led by Gulf monarchies that compete with the United States in the oil market and who share relatively dim views of the NSS's commitments to rules-based orders, democratization, and human rights. Similar conundrums abound elsewhere in the region as the emphasis on stability and integration would seem to favor illiberal regimes in Turkey and Syria which have been weathering severe challenges in recent years, and which, in the case of Turkey, have been underwriting attacks on Armenian sovereignty carried out by Azerbaijan. In a similar vein, the NSS offers only muted support for anti-regime protests that are sweeping Iran this month, and a reiteration of support for a two-state solution in Israel/Palestine that few living in the country see much hope for at present, underscored by renewed violence between settlers and residents in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem this past week. A transcript of a frank conversation between President Barack Obama and pool reporters before leaving office January 2017 was released recently in which the former president expressed exasperation that people do not understand the extent to which the U.S. underwrites the world order, particularly where human rights and democracy are concerned. It seems clear from this NSS that Biden is departing from this view as far as the Middle East is concerned, committing more energy to underwriting stability, however authoritarian, rather than rights.

## AT: U.S. diplomatic efforts fail because of Iran

**U.S. is pushing back against Iran, will fight for peace.**

1) U.S. is fighting Iran-backed groups, not allowing Iran to gain ground.

**Politico '22** →The U.S. military launched additional retaliatory strikes on Iran-backed forces in Syria on Thursday, in the latest back-and-forth with militants that American officials said were being directed by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. In the latest skirmish, the militants planned to launch additional rockets on U.S. personnel, Defense Department officials said, but U.S. forces prevented the attack by striking the militants with AH-64 Apache attack helicopters, AC-130 gunships and M777 artillery.

2) The U.S. holds the upper hand because of the looming nuclear deal.

**Politico '22**→Republican lawmakers said the skirmishes between U.S. forces and the Iran-backed militants in Syria show that Tehran can't be trusted to follow through on its obligations as part of any diplomatic agreement. "These attacks by Iran's proxies against U.S. servicemembers show why we cannot cut a bad nuclear deal with Iran," said Rep. Michael McCaul of Texas, the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "The Biden administration must walk away from this bad deal that will fuel Iran's terrorist attacks on U.S. soldiers and citizens." "It's usually sound policy not to negotiate with terrorist states who attack our soldiers and aren't interested in being good actors," added Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.), a former Army Green Beret.

**Impact:** U.S. diplomatic engagement is making advances – peace is possible despite Iran.



**Lawfare '18**→“Since the February speech, U.S. diplomatic engagement around Yemen’s war has made a few important advances. In March, Saudi Arabia announced a proposal that offered a U.N.-monitored cease-fire in exchange for the reopening of the Sana’a airport and allowing food and fuel imports through Hodeidah port. While the statement wasn’t a significant departure from terms that have been under discussion privately since spring of 2020, the fact that it was offered publicly and essentially endorsed the U.N. initiative was a step forward. The kingdom’s announcement was attributable at least in part to renewed U.S. diplomatic engagement. There are also positive signs that negotiations between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis are slowly making progress, again linked to engagement from special envoys from both the United States and the United Nations. Oman, a trusted interlocutor, has also taken a more active role in these negotiations. Direct talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia have reportedly focused on Yemen.”

**Analysis:** Iran is doing its best to prevent any progress towards peace, but the U.S. remains committed to pressuring Iran. The U.S. is making progress despite Iran’s best efforts.

Politico '22

Seligman, Lara. “U.S. strikes back at Iran-backed groups in Syria as skirmishes intensify.” Politico. 8/24/22.  
<https://www.politico.com/news/2022/08/24/iran-syria-rocket-irgc-00053663>

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Politico '22

Seligman, Lara. “U.S. strikes back at Iran-backed groups in Syria as skirmishes intensify.” Politico. 8/24/22.  
<https://www.politico.com/news/2022/08/24/iran-syria-rocket-irgc-00053663>

Though Kati said the U.S. actions were not connected to the talks on restoring the Iran nuclear deal, the attacks come at a key time for the Biden administration, which is continuing to pursue negotiations with Tehran to restore the 2015 agreement former President Donald Trump abandoned. Republican lawmakers said the administration between U.S. forces and the Iran-backed militants in Syria show the Biden team has focused on fulfilling its obligations as part of any diplomatic agreement. “These attacks by Iran’s proxies against U.S. servicemembers show why we cannot cut a deal nuclear deal with Iran,” said Rep. Michael McCaul of Texas, the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. “The Biden administration must walk away from this bad deal that will fuel Iran’s terrorist attacks on U.S. soldiers and citizens.” “It’s usually sound policy not to negotiate with terrorist states who attack our soldiers and aren’t interested in being good actors,” added Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.), a former Army Green Beret.

Lawfare '18

Alexandra Stark. “Giving Diplomacy a Chance in Yemen?” July 2018. Lawfare.  
<https://www.lawfareblog.com/giving-diplomacy-chance-yemen>

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## AT: U.S. diplomatic efforts fail because of Russia

**The U.S. can successfully counterbalance Russia through diplomacy.**

1) U.S. has succeeded despite Russia.

**War On The Rocks '21**→“No one can accuse the Biden administration of having done nothing in Syria. On the diplomatic front, America’s UN mission has supported justice and accountability, and worked to ensure the continuation of cross-border humanitarian aid. Most notably, the Biden administration navigated a UN Security Council showdown, in which Russia threatened to veto an extension of cross-border aid to northern Syria via Turkey, and secured a nominally year-long, cross-border aid extension for nearly 4.5

million Syrians. In June, the Biden administration announced an additional \$436 million in Syria aid, atop more than \$13 billion in U.S. taxpayer dollars that already represent the lion's share of global humanitarian aid to Syrians. The State Department has issued more than 30 statements about Syria since Biden took office, and Blinken has chaired a ministerial meeting on Syria and held discussions on the sidelines of the Arctic Council with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Biden himself raised the topic of Syria with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the U.S.-Russian summit in Geneva in June."

2) U.S. diplomacy can halt the expansion of Russian influence.

**Center For American Progress '18**→"The United States has an opportunity to shape this emerging landscape in a way that advances American interests and values. Meeting these goals will require a new policy approach that better matches U.S. goals to U.S. resources and better mobilizes U.S. partnerships throughout the region. This policy should prioritize de-escalating the conflict, stabilizing Syria's periphery, and establishing a new diplomatic framework that tables Assad's fate in favor of an intermediate agreement to separate forces on the ground. As a key part of this strategy, the United States should preserve the American-led military presence and accelerate stabilization efforts in the northeast. It should also leverage a firm commitment to defend this zone to engage Russia and Turkey in a new, U.N.-backed plan to end the fighting. This approach is not without risks, but it offers key advantages over the course the United States is on today: It would allow the United States to responsibly conclude the campaign against IS. By freezing the conflict in place, it would prevent a murderous regime from exercising control over an entire population as well as halt the expansion of Russian and Iranian influence in the Middle East."

**Impact:** U.S. has to use its diplomatic influence to counterbalance Russia.

**Cekuta '22**→Sanctions will not be enough to halt Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggression. With Russia's assault on Ukraine and Putin's broader ambitions, U.S. sanctions have to be accompanied by tough, more creative and persistent U.S. diplomacy to build a stronger international coalition and reinforce support for a rules-based international order. Nowhere is such diplomacy needed more and needed now than in Central Asia and the Caucasus — countries that like Ukraine were also once part of the Soviet Union, but they likely wonder if there is anyone out there standing with them in the face of the threats coming out of Moscow. The U.S., along with the U.K. and EU, Japan and Australia, have been clear that Putin's actions against Ukraine are not

acceptable, for example in imposing a growing set of sanctions, sending military aid to Ukraine, and bolstering troop and equipment levels in NATO countries. The United States and others are rightly clear in our support of Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Europe and the U.S. are clear that threats to Ukraine are threats to the security of Europe...

However, the United States needs to energize its diplomatic approach to the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, taking into account Russia's pressure on those countries also to accede to becoming part of a Neo-Russian empire.

Analysis: Russia is preoccupied by its conflict with Ukraine, which presents the U.S. with the perfect opportunity to improve diplomatic relations in West Asia. Improving those relationships is crucial in preventing the spread of Russia's influence throughout the region.

#### War On The Rocks '21

Adham Sahloul. "Ending America's Diplomacy-Last Syria Policy", War on the Rocks. October 2021.

<https://warontherocks.com/2021/10/ending-americas-diplomacy-last-syria-policy/>

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#### Center For American Progress '18

Brian Katulis. "Seizing the Diplomatic Initiative in Syria." 2018. The Center for American Progress.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/seizing-diplomatic-initiative-syria/>

\*\*The United States has an opportunity to shape this emerging landscape in a way that advances American interests and values. Meeting these goals will require a new policy approach that better matches U.S. goals to U.S. resources and better mobilizes U.S. partnerships throughout the region. This policy should prioritize de-escalating the conflict, stabilizing Syria's periphery, and establishing a new diplomatic framework that tables Assad's fate in favor of an intermediate agreement to separate forces on the ground. As a key part of this strategy, the United States should preserve the American-led military presence and accelerate stabilization efforts in the northeast. It should also leverage a firm commitment to defend this zone to engage Russia and Turkey in a new, U.N.-backed plan to end the fighting. This approach is not without risks, but it offers key advantages over the course the United States is on today: it would allow the United States to responsibly conclude the campaign against IS; by freezing the conflict in place, it would prevent a murderous regime from exercising control over an entire population as well as halt the expansion of Russian and Iranian influence in the Middle East. And it would buy time for Syrians and the international community to seek a more durable national political settlement.\*

#### The Hill '22

Cekuta, Robert F. "U.S. has to up diplomacy in Central Asia and the South Caucasus now." The Hill. 2/25/22.

<https://thehill.com/opinion/international/595840-us-has-to-up-diplomacy-in-central-asia-and-the-south-caucasus-now/>

Sanctions will not be enough to halt Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggression. With Russia's assault on Ukraine and Putin's broader ambitions, U.S. sanctions have to be accompanied by tough, more creative and persistent U.S. diplomacy to build a stronger international coalition and reinforce support for a rules-based international order. Nowhere is such diplomacy needed more and needed now than in Central Asia and the Caucasus — countries that like Ukraine were also once part of the Soviet Union, but they likely wonder if there is anyone out there standing with them in the face of the threats coming out of Moscow. The U.S., along with the U.K. and EU, Japan and Australia, have been clear that Putin's actions against Ukraine are not acceptable, for example in imposing a growing set of sanctions, sending military aid to Ukraine, and bolstering troop and equipment levels in NATO countries. These countries will not compromise on key principles and will take further measures in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The United States and others are rightly clear in our support of Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Europe and the U.S. are clear that threats to Ukraine are threats to the security of Europe and to the rules-based system that has brought peace and the means to realize tremendous prosperity to around a billion Americans, Europeans and Russians since 1945. However, the United States needs to energize its diplomatic approach to the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, taking into account Russia's pressure on those countries also to accede to becoming part of a Neo-Russian empire. News articles and media discussions in the United States have tended to ignore or gloss over an important set of facts: the threats to Ukraine are also being made, perhaps more subtly, but still quite clearly to the countries of the Caucasus as well as those of Central Asia. They, too, were once part of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union, all but one (Georgia) incorporated by force of Russian arms. While Georgia has sought to join the EU and NATO, most of the others have pursued non-aligned, neutral or multi-vector foreign policies that have enabled them to develop as independent states in a region where Russia, China and others have been manifesting their geopolitical ambitions. (Georgia, it's worth remembering, paid heavily for seeking stronger integration with the West when Russian troops invaded in 2008 supporting separatists in Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia; those Russian "peace-keepers" are still there.)

## AT: Diplomacy hurts the Israel/Palestine conflict

### U.S. making strides in relations with Palestinians, could play a key role in relations.

1. **Biden has appointed a special representative for Palestinian affairs.** McKernan '22 says that, "The White House informed Congress on Tuesday that it had promoted Hady Amr, previously the deputy assistant secretary of state for Israeli-Palestinian affairs, to the newly created, Washington-based role, Axios and the Times of Israel reported. Amr will work closely with the assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs and with diplomats at the Jerusalem-based office of Palestinian affairs, the reports said."
2. **Appointing special representative signifies improving relations.** McKernan '22 says that, "Amr, 58, a Lebanese American, worked as an economist and foreign policy analyst before joining the Clinton administration's department of defence. Since 2014 he has served on-and-off in roles related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and is held in high regard by Israeli and Palestinian diplomats. During a visit to the region last week, Amr reportedly urged officials from the corruption-plagued PA to undertake serious reforms in order to bolster its legitimacy, and told Israeli officials that they must do more to prop up the PA, amid fears that the de facto Palestinian government body is losing control in cities in the north of the West Bank. For the most part, Israel and the PA coordinate on security issues."
3. **Impact: The U.S. has helped create incremental progress in the negotiations between Israel and Palestine.** Robinson '22 says that, "Shortly after the 1967 war, Israel began building settlements in some of the territories it had seized. By 2019, some six hundred thousand Israelis were living in settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. A 1978 State Department legal opinion stated that Jewish settlements in occupied territory are not admissible under international law, yet President Ronald Reagan stated in a 1981 interview that the settlements were "ill-advised" but "not illegal." George H.W. Bush was the first president to link the amount of aid that Israel would receive to its settlement building, deducting the cost of settlement construction from U.S. loan guarantees. However, Clinton later allowed exemptions for settlement construction in East Jerusalem and for "natural growth." In 2004, George W. Bush wrote a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon recognizing that the "new realities," or settlements, would make it impossible for Israel to revert to pre-1967 borders in any peace agreement. While the Obama administration took actions to shield Israel from political movements that sought to penalize Israeli businesses operating in the West Bank, it also delivered a rebuke of Israel's settlements by abstaining from a UN Security Council vote declaring the settlements illegal."

### McKernan '22

McKernan, Bethan. "Biden upgrades U.S.-Palestinian relations by naming special representative." The Guardian. 11/23/22. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/nov/23/biden-upgrades-us-palestinian-relations-by-naming-special-representative>

Joe Biden has appointed a new special representative for Palestinian affairs, a significant upgrade in relations with Ramallah despite the fact the American diplomatic mission in Jerusalem, closed by Donald Trump in 2019, is yet to reopen.

The White House informed Congress on Tuesday that it had promoted Hady Amr, previously the deputy assistant secretary of state for Israeli-Palestinian affairs, to the newly created, Washington-based role, Axios and the Times of Israel reported. Amr will work closely with the assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs and with diplomats at the Jerusalem-based office of Palestinian affairs, the reports said. The move comes amid deteriorating conditions in the occupied West Bank: 2022 is already the deadliest year for Palestinians living in the territory and in annexed East Jerusalem since 2005, with more than 130 Palestinians killed in fighting.

## McKernan '22

McKernan, Bethan. "Biden upgrades U.S.-Palestinian relations by naming special representative." The Guardian. 11/23/22. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/nov/23/biden-upgrades-us-palestinian-relations-by-naming-special-representative>

U.S. officials, including the ambassador to Israel, Tom Nides, have repeatedly emphasised that Washington remains committed to reopening the Jerusalem mission and to a two-state solution to the decades-long conflict.

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During a visit to the region last week, Amr reportedly urged officials from the corruption-plagued PA to undertake serious reforms in order to bolster its legitimacy, and told Israeli officials that they must do more to prop up the PA, amid fears that the de facto Palestinian government body is losing control in cities in the north of the West Bank. For the most part, Israel and the PA coordinate on security issues.

Israel must also follow up on recent pledges to improve living standards and strengthen the struggling economies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to help quell the violence, Amr is reported to have said.

## Robinson '22

Robinson, Kali. "What is U.S. Policy on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?" CFR. 7/20/22. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-us-policy-israeli-palestinian-conflict>

Shortly after the 1967 war, Israel began building settlements in some of the territories it had seized. Settlement construction began under Labor party governments seeking to strengthen defense in parts of the West Bank that had seen heavy fighting during the Arab-Israeli wars, but it increased rapidly as some settlers viewed the land as their religious and historical right, and others found economic incentives to live there. By 2019, some six hundred thousand Israelis were living in settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

For years, the United States officially condemned these settlements—branding them an obstacle to peace—but avoided outright calling them illegal to avoid the possibility that Israel would face international sanctions. A 1978 State Department legal opinion stated that Jewish settlements in occupied territory are not admissible under international law,

yet President Ronald Reagan stated in a 1981 interview that the settlements were "ill-advised" but "not illegal." George H.W. Bush was the first president to link the amount

of aid that Israel would receive to its settlement building, deducting the cost of settlement construction from U.S. loan guarantees. However, Clinton later allowed exemptions for settlement construction in East Jerusalem and for "natural growth." In 2004, George W. Bush wrote a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon recognizing that the "new realities," or settlements, would make it impossible for Israel to revert to pre-1967 borders in any peace agreement. Most administrations came to believe that Israel would keep its three largest settlement blocs in exchange for ceding other land to the Palestinians in any peace deal, thinking it unrealistic that Israel could force so many of its citizens to leave the settlements. While the Obama administration took actions to shield Israel from political movements that sought to penalize Israeli businesses

operating in the West Bank, it also delivered a rebuke of Israel's settlements by abstaining from a UN Security Council vote declaring the settlements illegal.

## AT: Diplomacy hurts the Armenia/Azerbaijan conflict

### U.S. influence has had a positive impact in this conflict.

- 1. U.S. hosted Armenia and Azerbaijan in direct talks. "U.S. hosts talks with Armenia, Azerbaijan." DW '20** says that, "U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken hosted the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in New York on Monday in the first direct talks between the two sides since deadly border clashes earlier this month. "Blinken conveyed condolences for the lives lost and emphasized the need to prevent further hostilities, underscoring the importance of returning to the peace process," State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement. "They discussed next steps, and the secretary encouraged the sides to meet again before the end of the month," Price added. In Monday's meeting, Armenian Foreign Minister Mirzoyan called for Azerbaijani armed forces to withdraw from Armenian territory and for "international mechanisms" to be introduced "to prevent further escalations," a statement from the Armenian Foreign Ministry said.
- 2. Washington is encouraged by decreased military actions in advance of peace talks. "U.S. hosts talks with Armenia, Azerbaijan." DW '20** says that, "Intense artillery shelling broke out earlier this month, killing more than 170 among troops on both sides and rekindling tensions. Each country blamed the other for the initial provocation. Last week, Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed on a ceasefire. Ahead of the talks, Blinken had said that Washington was "encouraged by the fact that the fighting has ceased and there have not been any additional military actions over the last few days. On Sunday, U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi visited Armenia and decried "illegal and deadly attacks by Azerbaijan on Armenian territory."
- 3. Impact: The U.S. is committed to ending the conflict. Carpenter '22** says that, "The recent violations of the ceasefire on September 13 and 14, and again on September 28, are of grave concern to the United States. The United States encourages Armenia and Azerbaijan to strictly adhere to a sustainable ceasefire, pull back and distance their armed forces, and continue negotiations on border delimitation to support a peaceful resolution. The United States supports a comprehensive peace process and is committed to working bilaterally, with close partners like the European Union, and through international organizations such as the OSCE.

### "U.S. hosts talks with Armenia, Azerbaijan." DW '20

"U.S. hosts talks with Armenia, Azerbaijan." DW. 9/20/20.

<https://www.dw.com/en/armenia-azerbaijan-diplomats-meet-after-deadly-border-clashes/a-63176839>

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken hosted the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in New York on Monday in the first direct talks between the two sides since deadly border clashes earlier this month.

Blinken's trilateral meeting with Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov came on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

What was discussed at the meeting?

"Blinken conveyed condolences for the lives lost and emphasized the need to prevent further hostilities, underscoring the importance of returning to the peace process," State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement.

"They discussed next steps, and the secretary encouraged the sides to meet again before the end of the month," Price added.

In Monday's meeting, Armenian Foreign Minister Mirzoyan called for Azerbaijani armed forces to withdraw from Armenian territory and for "international mechanisms" to be introduced "to prevent further escalations," a statement from the Armenian Foreign Ministry said.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijan's Bayramov said before the meeting that his country is "satisfied with the level of relations" with the U.S. and added that his direct dialogue with Mirzoyan was not unusual.

"We are always open for meetings," he said.

## **"U.S. hosts talks with Armenia, Azerbaijan." DW '20**

"U.S. hosts talks with Armenia, Azerbaijan." DW. 9/20/20.

<https://www.dw.com/en/armenia-azerbaijan-diplomats-meet-after-deadly-border-clashes/a-63176839>

Intense artillery shelling broke out earlier this month, killing more than 170 among troops on both sides and rekindling tensions. Each country blamed the other for the initial provocation. Last week, Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed on a ceasefire.

Fighting between the two former Soviet states also threatens to pull Turkey, a key supporter of Azerbaijan, and Russia — Armenia's security guarantor — into a broader conflict at a time when geopolitical tensions are already high.

Ahead of the talks, Blinken had said that Washington was "encouraged by the fact that the fighting has ceased and there have not been any additional military actions over the last few days."

On Sunday, U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi visited Armenia and decried "illegal and deadly attacks by Azerbaijan on Armenian territory."

## **Carpenter '22**

Carpenter, Michael. "On the latest development between Armenia and Azerbaijan." U.S.

Mission to the OSCE. 10/6/22. <https://osce.usmission.gov/on-the-latest-development-between-armenia-and-azerbaijan/>

The recent violations of the ceasefire on September 13 and 14, and again on September 28, are of grave concern to the United States. The United States encourages Armenia and Azerbaijan to strictly adhere to a sustainable ceasefire, pull back and distance their armed forces, and continue negotiations on border delimitation to support a peaceful resolution. We reiterate our call on Azerbaijan's forces to return to their initial positions prior to the outbreak of hostilities on the night of September 12. Border disputes must be resolved through negotiations, not violence. The deaths of Armenian soldiers and Azerbaijani civilians from landmines during the past week clearly and tragically demonstrate the ongoing human consequences of this conflict.

Finally, Mr. Chair, the United States strongly supports the activation of the OSCE's confidence-building and conflict prevention instruments, including the establishment of a Fact Finding Mission, as has been requested by Armenia. We urge Armenia and Azerbaijan to take urgent steps to de-escalate tensions, build confidence, and hold themselves accountable to international obligations and commitments. We encourage further progress in resolving the issue of missing persons and the return of all remaining prisoners of war. The United States supports a comprehensive peace process and is committed to working bilaterally, with close partners like the European Union, and through international organizations such as the OSCE.

## AT: Regionalism is more effective

1. **Regionalism failed to integrate** “The crisis that erupted highlighted the limitation of integrative institutionalization in the 36-year-old GCC. While the GCC summit took place in Kuwait, the GCC will struggle to regain its relevance and repair the damage done to ties of trust and confidence by the crisis.” [Ulrichsen 18'](#) The crisis that erupted on June 5, 2017, when three members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) turned on a fourth—for the second time in three years—has highlighted the limitation of integrative institutionalization in the 36-year-old GCC. While the GCC summit took place in Kuwait in December 2017, against the expectations of many, the two-day event broke up in acrimony and was overshadowed by the announcement of a wide-ranging cooperative partnership between Saudi Arabia and the UAE. As the center of gravity in Gulf politics refocuses on a hawkish security-centric and regionally interventionist axis running between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, the GCC will struggle to regain its relevance and repair the damage done to ties of trust and confidence by the crisis.
2. **The GCC has proven to fail to uphold its goals.** “Progress toward the goals outlined in the Unified Economic Agreement was slow and halting, as illustrated by the aforementioned failure of the single currency and monetary union. In practice, however, the segmented nature of individual labor markets and comparatively low cross-border trade flows among the six GCC states meant the impact of the common market was less pronounced than might otherwise have been expected.” [Ulrichsen 18'](#) Progress toward the goals outlined in the Unified Economic Agreement was slow and halting, as illustrated by the aforementioned failure of the single currency and monetary union. Nevertheless, a customs union was launched in 2003 and was followed five years later by a common market that became operational on January 1, 2008.<sup>18</sup> In theory, the common market extended equal rights to citizens of GCC states to take up employment and residence, access education and healthcare, and establish companies and buy or sell shares in each member state. In practice, however, the segmented nature of individual labor markets and comparatively low cross-border trade flows among the six GCC states meant the impact of the common market was less pronounced than might otherwise have been expected.

PS, if your opponents argue that this is talking about monetary while they are talking about diplomacy, just say that this is showing how they are not capable of accomplishing any of their goals meaning diplomacy will not work either.

1. **The GCC Has Failed** “we have witnessed media campaigns against fellow GCC states and intense political disputes. Currently, starting the fourth year of the blockade of Qatar, it is clear that the GCC has failed as an institution and the council is incapable of ending the divisions. This toothless and dormant existence has pushed nearly all GCC states to look for alternative security guarantors as their fellow GCC



states have turned into either foes or are similarly incapable of deterring threats.” [GIF 20](#)’ Ever since the birth of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981, motivated by the external threat, the six states have viewed regional and international threats differently. In some cases, differences of opinion did not develop into deeper or strategic disputes, while at other times, and especially since June 2017, we have witnessed media campaigns against fellow GCC states and intense political disputes. Currently, starting the fourth year of the blockade of Qatar, it is clear that the GCC has failed as an institution and the council is incapable of ending the divisions. This toothless and dormant existence has pushed nearly all GCC states to look for alternative security guarantors as their fellow GCC states have turned into either foes or are similarly incapable of deterring threats.

## AT: Arms Sales are Linked With Diplomacy

**Turn:** Arms sales are increased by wars, proving the necessity of diplomacy

1. Arms Sales are building up in the Middle east. The Neg world is the status quo and we can see a huge amount of arms sales in the middle east. “Saudi Arabia has spent a fortune buying arms from America to prosecute a war that has killed almost a quarter of a million people” [Riedel 21](#)’ The war in Yemen is America’s war. Saudi Arabia has spent a fortune buying arms from America to prosecute a war that has killed almost a quarter of a million people – the world’s worst humanitarian catastrophe in our lifetime. Two American administrations have enabled the war. It’s long past time to stop.
2. Arms sales increase the likelihood of war. If we stop conflict through diplomacy, we can lower arms sales. “arms transfers to a state increase the likelihood of conflict breaking out, and, once begun, extend the conflicts longer and make them deadlier.” [Carnegie Corp 22](#)’ Research shows that arms transfers to a state increase the likelihood of conflict breaking out, and, once begun, extend the conflicts longer and make them deadlier. In response, policymakers have committed to a range of measures designed to control arms exports.

# EV on Internal Conflicts

Intl Committee Red Cross defines internal conflicts: A non-international (or "internal") armed conflict refers to a situation of violence involving protracted armed confrontations between government forces and one or more organized armed groups, or between such groups themselves, arising on the territory of a State.

## AT: diplomacy causes military intervention

<https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/10/bidens-national-security-strategy-americas-search-for-order-in-the-middle-east/>

Fpri '22

States "President Joe Biden's *National Security Strategy* (NSS) **addresses two trends in America's Middle East policy that have been apparent over his tenure: military de-escalation** and regional integration. A year after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, the NSS emphasizes what was implied in that decision—that **US military involvement cannot effectively promote stability, and by extension, the goal of democratization, through efforts at regime change**. The statement exclaims that, "**it is time to eschew grand designs in favor of more practical goals,**" namely regional stability and the **advancement of US interests such as countering Russian and Chinese aggression**, and shoring up domestic industry. In addition to Afghanistan, the Trump-era Abraham Accords—the 2020 joint agreements between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain to normalize diplomatic relations—appear to be the second hinge point of this policy statement."

NOTE: There was also a source another team used that had more specifics, I couldn't find that source, but I believe it was called Ryan/Rue '22