

YEMEN POLICY INITIATIVE

Coordinated by the Hariri Center for the Middle East at the Atlantic Council and the Project on Middle East Democracy

Recognizing a dearth of policy-oriented dialogue on Yemen in Washington, the **Hariri Center for the Middle East at the Atlantic Council** and the **Project on Middle East Democracy** have launched the Yemen Policy Initiative to provide a platform for dialogue and opportunities for advocacy to advance a more coherent and comprehensive U.S. policy toward Yemen.

Relative to other uprisings in the Arab world, discussion about Yemen from a policy perspective has been limited, which is in part a result of a lack of information, knowledge and accessibility. The Yemen Policy Initiative seeks to respond to that vacuum by generating informed discussion with policymakers, raising the degree of knowledge and understanding in the Administration and on Capitol Hill through targeted briefings, and utilizing print, electronic, and broadcast media to effectively carry policy messages.

The Yemen Policy Initiative brings together key thinkers to form a “brain-trust” of experts on Yemen, provides political and economic analysis on issues of concern to policymakers, and provides a platform for policy debate and discussion. The primary objective is to advance concrete policy recommendations to the U.S. and E.U. about how they can support Yemen through this transitional political process, taking into consideration the need to secure national security interests.

To date, U.S. policy has clearly centered on counterterrorism cooperation with Yemeni security forces and assistance to combat al Qaeda operatives. However, it is clear that eliminating the threat of terrorism toward American targets will not be gained by a policy focused solely on military assistance, weapons, and drone attacks. There is consensus among practitioners and analysts that the U.S. must adopt a more holistic approach in Yemen, focusing on economic growth, sustainable development, strong institutions, and the rule of law in order to create long-term stability and prosperity that will advance the national security interests of both the United States and Yemen.

The **Yemen Policy Initiative** challenges the tendency to view Yemen through the narrow lens of counterterrorism and aims to:

- Create space for specifically policy-oriented discussions and galvanize consensus among experts, practitioners, and advocacy groups.
- Educate key policymakers and opinion-shapers on the complexity of Yemen’s situation
- Advocate for a robust U.S. role advancing political and economic reform—and not just sustaining familiar military relationships—that ultimately serves U.S. long-term interests.

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