

Growing Pains: The Promise and Reality of Biden's Middle East Policy

by [Leonardo Jacopo Maria Mazzucco \(/experts/leonardo-jacopo-maria-mazzucco/\)](/experts/leonardo-jacopo-maria-mazzucco/), [Kristian Alexander \(/experts/kristian-alexander/\)](/experts/kristian-alexander/)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

[Leonardo Jacopo Maria Mazzucco \(/experts/leonardo-jacopo-maria-mazzucco/\)](/experts/leonardo-jacopo-maria-mazzucco/)

Leonardo Jacopo Maria Mazzucco is visiting researcher at Trends Research & Advisory and a Research Assistant at Gulf State Analytics. He is a contributor to Fikra Forum.

[Kristian Alexander \(/experts/kristian-alexander/\)](/experts/kristian-alexander/)

Dr. Kristian Alexander is a Senior Fellow at TRENDS Research & Advisory in Abu Dhabi, and an adviser at Gulf State Analytics (GSA). He is a contributor to Fikra Forum.



Brief Analysis

A year after Joe Biden's inauguration, expectations for a shift in America's Middle East policy have not materialized. Gulf monarchies are warily looking on as Washington continues to debate the U.S. role in the region.

The Biden team spent a great deal of effort in 2021 working to differentiate itself from the administration of Donald Trump, including a strong focus on [re-establishing](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/usa/2020-01-23/why-america-must-lead-again) (<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/usa/2020-01-23/why-america-must-lead-again>) a cordial dialogue with U.S. allies around the globe. Yet domestic concerns such as the COVID pandemic and the country's battered economy have dominated the presidential agenda, leaving residual diplomatic capital and resources for issues abroad. Within the foreign policy sphere, President Biden has prioritized confronting a constantly expanding China and an increasingly revanchist Russia. In consequence, apart from the [chaotic American withdrawal](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/03/us/politics/bidens-chaotic-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-is-complete) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/03/us/politics/bidens-chaotic-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-is-complete>) from Afghanistan and the resumption of the [Iranian nuclear dossier](https://www.rand.org/blog/2021/03/why-biden-cant-turn-back-the-clock-on-the-iran-nuclear.html) (<https://www.rand.org/blog/2021/03/why-biden-cant-turn-back-the-clock-on-the-iran-nuclear.html>)—which [entered](https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/irans-oil-exports-are-focus-vienna-nuclear-talks-top-diplomat-says-2021-12-27/) (<https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/irans-oil-exports-are-focus-vienna-nuclear-talks-top-diplomat-says-2021-12-27/>) its seventh round on December 27—many of the most urgent regional humanitarian and political crises from Yemen to Syria have not really been addressed.

The Biden administration has made no secret of its intention to downsize the U.S. footprint in the Middle East and reorganize the American overseas military to better counter the present threats to Washington's national strategic interests, especially those originating from [Russia](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/17/world/europe/russia-nato-security-deal.html) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/17/world/europe/russia-nato-security-deal.html>) and [China](https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/opinion/article/3154948/why-us-losing-china-battle-southeast-asia) (<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/opinion/article/3154948/why-us-losing-china-battle-southeast-asia>). In the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance statement that President Biden released in March 2021, America's number-one enemy is identified as “[antagonistic authoritarian powers](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf) (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>)”—those nations eager to undermine the democratic values underpinning the foundations of the liberal order as forged by the United States and its allies during the post-Cold War era.

Yet the matters of U.S. foreign policy remain a labyrinth, while the White House, despite its primary role, represents only one of the many centers of power capable of influencing its course. While it takes time for an incoming president to orient the country's diplomatic apparatuses towards the same goal, the Biden administration faces a possible change in the political dynamics of the country with the November [midterm elections](https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/12/29/biden-foreign-policy-congress-midterm-elections/) (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/12/29/biden-foreign-policy-congress-midterm-elections/>), heightening urgency around this matter.

Tough Acts to Follow: The Foreign Policy of Trump and Obama

President Biden inherited a complex legacy concerning the U.S. posture in the Middle East from his two predecessors; the Obama administration repositioned the country away from the Bush era's “War on Terror,” issuing a [2012 Defence Strategic Guidance](https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R42146.pdf) (<https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R42146.pdf>) that committed the military to curbing expenditures and gradually disengaging from Middle Eastern conflicts.

The 2015 JCOA furthered this approach, but the strategy ultimately turned out to be [wishful thinking](https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/10/15/448925947/pledging-to-end-two-wars-obama-finds-himself-entangled-in-three) (<https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/10/15/448925947/pledging-to-end-two-wars-obama-finds-himself-entangled-in-three>) in terms of reducing conflict in the region. Not only did U.S. partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) [disagree](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/4/14/why-saudi-arabia-and-israel-oppose-iran-nuclear-deal) (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/4/14/why-saudi-arabia-and-israel-oppose-iran-nuclear-deal>) with Washington breaking bread with Tehran, but the concordant U.S. troop withdrawal allowed a vacuum of power from which the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria ([emerged](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-usa-syria-idUSKCN0XL0ZE) (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-usa-syria-idUSKCN0XL0ZE>)).

Tensions further intensified when Donald Trump brought a more aggressive foreign policy back to the White House in 2016. With his “[America first](https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/04/20/the-trump-doctrine-big-think-america-first-nationalism/)” (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/04/20/the-trump-doctrine-big-think-america-first-nationalism/>)” and “[maximum pressure](https://www.rand.org/blog/2019/03/can-us-attain-foreign-policy-goals-with-maximum-pressure.html)” (<https://www.rand.org/blog/2019/03/can-us-attain-foreign-policy-goals-with-maximum-pressure.html>)” policies antagonizing European allies and aggravating Iran, uncertainty and [growing militarization](https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2020-01-03/trump-to-send-3-000-more-troops-to-middle-east-amid-iran-escalation) (<https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2020-01-03/trump-to-send-3-000-more-troops-to-middle-east-amid-iran-escalation>) followed. Trump's White House also favored a more transactional quid pro quo diplomacy via multi-million-dollar arms sale contracts serving as rewards to U.S. partners in the region, a policy that resonated in [Saudi Arabia and the UAE](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-saudi-arms-idUSKCN1SU25R) (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-saudi-arms-idUSKCN1SU25R>).

Contrary to Trump, who broke White House protocol by making his first official overseas trip to [Saudi Arabia](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39984903) (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39984903>), President Biden has yet to make any visit to the Middle East and no heads of state from the Gulf region have been invited to Washington, though Jordan's [King Abdullah](https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/king-abdullahs-visit-resetting-american-jordanian-relations/) (<https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/king-abdullahs-visit-resetting-american-jordanian-relations/>) and Israel's [Prime Minister Naftali Bennett](https://www.timesofisrael.com/bennett-lands-in-us-on-first-state-visit-as-pm-ahead-of-meeting-with-biden/) (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/bennett-lands-in-us-on-first-state-visit-as-pm-ahead-of-meeting-with-biden/>) have visited. On the other hand, The Biden foreign policy team's [experienced officials and diplomats](https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/24/biden-has-the-team-obama-always-wanted/) (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/24/biden-has-the-team-obama-always-wanted/>)—Secretary of State Antony Blinken, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, and Iran Special Envoy Rob Malley—suggest the administration is well-positioned to take advantage of the current momentum in the Gulf. They have held talks with Saudi Deputy Minister of Defense, [Prince Khalid bin Salman](https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/saudi-arabias-deputy-defense-minister-in-us-to-meet-biden-officials/2296189) (<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/saudi-arabias-deputy-defense-minister-in-us-to-meet-biden-officials/2296189>), Emirati Foreign Minister [Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan](https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2021-10-13/biden-administration-hosts-israel-and-uae-in-move-to-build-on-abraham-accords) (<https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2021-10-13/biden-administration-hosts-israel-and-uae-in-move-to-build-on-abraham-accords>), and Qatari Foreign Minister [Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani](https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-and-qatari-deputy-prime-minister-and-minister-of-foreign-affairs-mohammed-bin-abdulrahman-al-thani-at-a-signing-ceremony-and-joint-press-availability-for-the-u-s-qatar-str/) (<https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-and-qatari-deputy-prime-minister-and-minister-of-foreign-affairs-mohammed-bin-abdulrahman-al-thani-at-a-signing-ceremony-and-joint-press-availability-for-the-u-s-qatar-str/>).

After two drastically different approaches to the region, its players have signaled to the Biden presidency that they have a vested interest in switching from the confrontation-based

foreign policy that underpinned the Trump administration to one that is more informed by diplomacy. The Arab Gulf monarchies in particular made it clear when they **closed ranks** (<https://gulff.org/what-the-al-ula-gcc-summit-has-and-has-not-accomplished/>) at the al-Ula meeting in early 2020 that for the time being, they want to avoid head-on disputes. This signals a **trend of deep-seated transformations** (<https://agsiw.org/uae-outreach-to-iran-cracks-open-the-door-to-dialogue/>) that began after September 2019, when President Trump **refused to retaliate** (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/18/the-real-reason-trump-wont-attack-iran-saudi/>) against Iran after **drone attacks** (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/14/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-refineries-drone-attack.html>)—attributed to Iran—targeted Saudi oil facilities at Abqaiq and Khurais. Efforts to thaw regional relations have also included a Saudi and Emirati rapprochement with both Iran and Turkey—**mending fences** (<https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/turkey-and-the-gulf-states-a-new-era-of-detente/>) with the countries' regional rivals.

It's Hard to Say Goodbye: The Perils of Troop Extraction

However, Gulf states are also wary of the domestic shift within the United States away from military involvement in the region, even as the administration's focus on a troop draw-down seems less likely to bear fruit. Calls to do so have been a common *fil rouge* dominating the electoral presidential campaigns of **Obama** (<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/03/obama-doctrine-wars-numbers/474531/>), **Trump** (<https://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/trump-middle-east-isis-232291>), and **Biden** (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/12/09/biden-wars-terrorism-iraq-afghanistan-syria/>). Once in power, however, U.S. presidents from both parties have faced substantial **difficulties** (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/11/us/politics/trump-troop-withdrawals-war.html>) in turning these electoral promises into sustainable, concrete policies. Ambitious agendas, fueled by strategic realignment or populist sentiment against decade-long "**endless wars** (<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/07/27/30-years-after-our-endless-wars-in-the-middle-east-began-still-no-end-in-sight/>)," have butted up against the realities of the region's conflicts, along with the vested interests of the U.S. military and its industrial partners in ensuring stable defense budgets. Washington is also aware of the fact that if the United States reduces its troops in the region, it is likely to once again create a security vacuum.

Downsizing would also require a rethinking of American military bases and accepting the sunk costs of their building and maintenance. In the Gulf alone, the **U.S. 5th Fleet** (<https://www.cusnc.navy.mil/>) is harbored in Manama, Bahrain and the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) forward headquarters is at the **Al Udeid Air Base** (<https://www.airforce-technology.com/news/us-qatar-support-udeid-air-base/>) in Qatar. Troops are stationed at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait, Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia, and Al Dhafra Air Base in the UAE. Troop reductions and **minor closures** (<https://www.stripes.com/branches/army/2021-07-01/us-military-closes-qatar-camps-in-move-that-could-play-into-iran-policy-2009140.html>) are planned, but major structural transformation is not currently scheduled.

Regardless of its feasibility, Gulf Arab monarchies view the **U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan** (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-taliban-idUSKBN20N06R>), part of the February 2020 Doha Agreement, as a game changer in regards to U.S. presence in the region. Since the early 1980s, these countries viewed the U.S. military footprint as an insurance policy against existential threats to their security, whether originating from Saddam Hussein or the Ayatollahs of Iran. The GCC monarchies have since **raised doubts** (https://www.msnbc.com/opinion/our-afghanistan-exit-won-t-shatter-u-s-credibility-way-n1286715?mc_cid=993d0ef4b1&mc_eid=9fcd5ee540) about the United States' willingness to stand up and deter looming threats to the stability of the ruling families. With Washington signaling its intention to avoid the risk of entrapment in regional conflicts—especially when American interests are not directly at stake and viable exit strategies are not clearly defined—Gulf monarchies are struggling to adapt to the idea of the United States pivoting away from the Middle East and giving up its decade-long role of security guarantor.

The arm sales' circle **continues** (<https://www.dsca.mil/press-media/major-arms-sales/saudi-arabia-aim-120c-advanced-medium-range-air-air-missiles-amraam>) unabated with the Biden team, and multi-million weapon contracts **successfully navigate** (<https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2021/12/08/senate-rejects-bipartisan-bid-to-stop-650m-saudi-arms-sale/>) twists and turns in Congress. However, state officials in Riyadh remain **skeptical** (<https://agsiw.org/saudi-arabias-patriot-buys-the-political-aspects-of-missile-defense/>) about Washington's commitment to playing the long game in the region, especially in circumstances where its support is needed most. The issue of **resupplying** (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/saudi-arabia-pleads-for-missile-defense-resupply-as-its-arsenal-runs-low-11638878400>) dried-up Saudi stockpiles of interceptor missiles is a critical case in point.

To avert this risk, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have increasingly resorted to a balancing posture in their foreign policy that threads between the genuine desire to diversify their arms procurement networks away from traditional American suppliers and the tacit intention to reawaken U.S. interest towards the Middle East. By reaching out to Washington's competitors in the arms business, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi are responding to the need for **strategic autonomy** (https://agsiw.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Soubrier_Gulf_Security_Online-1.pdf) in a post-U.S. region while putting pressure on American weapon dealers, who might lobby for a revamped U.S. military outreach to the Middle East in Washington's halls of power if they feel that their market shares are threatened.

Saudi Arabia **signed** (<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/saudi-arabia-is-trying-to-make-america-jealous-with-its-budding-russia-ties/>) a military cooperation agreement with Russia in August 2021, while the UAE **purchased** (<https://www.france24.com/en/diplomacy/20211203-france-s-macron-heads-to-uae-aiming-to-secure-major-rafale-fighter-jet-sale>) 80 Rafale fighter jets from France in December 2021 and **inked** (<https://www.defensenews.com/industry/2022/01/18/south-korea-inks-largest-arms-export-deal-with-uae-for-missile-interceptor/>) a \$3.5 billion contract with South Korea to acquire surface-to-air missiles in mid-January 2022. The Seoul-made Cheongung II, a medium-range surface-to-air missile system based on Russian technology, is considered to be **more efficient** (<https://asiatimes.com/2022/01/why-the-uae-opted-for-south-korean-missiles/>) in intercepting ballistic missiles and armed drones than its American counterpart, the Patriot PAC-3. By making no secret of their intentions to diversify the arms supply chain, the Arab Gulf monarchies are providing numerous instances for the Biden team to reflect on the long-term consequences of a U.S. withdrawal on both Washington's regional strategic interests and the American arms industry.

However, to what extent this policy might prove successful is open to debate. State officials in Washington as well as their counterparts in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi understand that the Gulf monarchies' military apparatus is largely designed to operate in sync with U.S. weaponry systems and technologies. Even with a GCC push to reduce dependency on American arms, running a highly diversified armaments architecture is a time- and resources-consuming endeavor—an option that neither Saudi Arabia nor the UAE can currently afford. Consequently, the primary need to preserve armaments' interoperability is bound to keep this bidding game within its long-established boundaries.

As Washington debates the issue, U.S. warships are still stationed in the Gulf and no closures of major U.S. military installations in the Arabian Peninsula are scheduled. Despite President Biden's calls for more scrutiny of **human rights violations** (<https://www.justsecurity.org/74254/toward-a-more-responsible-us-arms-trade-policy-recommendations-for-the-biden-harris-administration/>), so far the administration has adopted a **business-as-usual approach** (<https://agsiw.org/a-new-u-s-weapons-exports-policy-transformed-or-simply-revamped/>) to U.S. arms export policies rather than distancing itself from Trump-era approaches. In November 2021, Saudi Arabia bought \$650-million' worth of **missiles and missile launchers** (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/8/us-congress-allows-weapons-saudi-arabia-weapons-sale-to-proceed>), and Secretary of State Blinken recently confirmed the sale of **F-35 combat aircrafts** (<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/blinken-says-us-will-move-forward-f-35-sale-uae>) to the UAE.

Engagement through Involvement: A Path to Better Partnerships

On the other hand, if President Biden does decide to proceed with reshaping the American military presence in the region, the administration will need to convince regional partners to take on more responsibility for the security of the Middle East. In the second year of his term, the administration's foreign policy goals should be to persuade allies to pledge commitment to the multilateral order and to halt free-riding practices. This would free up American resources so that they might be better deployed to more sensitive areas.

Qatar exemplifies this model: the Gulf state successfully provided **diplomatic support** (<https://agsiw.org/qatar-the-taliban-and-the-gulf-schism/>) in brokering the 2020 Doha agreement with the Taliban and provided significant **logistical assistance** (<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/uae/qatar-emerges-as-key-player-in>

[afghanistan-after-us-pullout/articleshow/85761805.cms](#)) in the evacuation of Western troops out of Kabul. Doha has made clear to Washington that despite its small size, the country has the credentials and capacities to contribute to regional security. Qatar's efforts have not gone unnoticed by the [Biden team \(https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2766021/austin-blinken-thank-qatari-people-for-support-in-afghan-evacuation/\)](#), as demonstrated when Secretary [Blinken \(https://www.reuters.com/world/exclusive-qatar-act-us-diplomatic-representative-afghanistan-official-2021-11-12/\)](#) publicly praised the country.

For its part, the Biden administration can learn valuable lessons from the failures of the Obama administration when regional players felt excluded from the process of negotiating the JCPOA. As Biden revisits negotiations with Iran, he must give these partners and allies [credible reassurances \(https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/05/18/reassuring-gulf-partners-while-recalibrating-u.s.-security-policy-pub-84522\)](#) about the future of American commitments to regional security. With more than 300 Houthi drone and missile attacks [targeting \(https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2021/12/09/2622709/yemeni-forces-shoot-down-saudi-spy-combat-drone-spokesman\)](#) Saudi Arabia in 2021 and the rebel group's recent attack on civilian targets in the UAE, preventing air strikes has become a matter of high-level security concern for both countries.

The Saudi leadership, as well as decision-makers in the UAE, have seen the uninterrupted provision of ballistic missiles and launching systems from the United States as proof that Washington is still upholding its commitment. Ensuring an air defense system among its partners in the Arabian Peninsula remains a vital issue for the White House. Despite the [muscular approach \(https://theintercept.com/2019/11/21/democratic-debate-joe-biden-saudi-arabia/\)](#) Biden voiced against the Saudi military effort in Yemen during his campaign, once in the Oval Office, he seems to have recognized that the United States [cannot sever ties \(https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/us-saudi-relations-after-khashoggi-intelligence-report-by-richard-haass-2021-02\)](#) with its regional partner and has nothing to gain by turning Saudi into a "pariah." Besides [removing \(https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/biden-yemen-rebels-terrorist-list/2021/02/05/e65e55c8-5b40-11eb-aaad-93988621dd28_story.html\)](#) Yemen's Houthi rebels from the U.S. terrorism list in February 2021, the Biden administration has taken no major steps to undermine the Saudi-led coalition's military operations in war-torn Yemen. Yet the United States has [leverage \(https://www.csis.org/analysis/puzzle-us-saudi-ties\)](#), and should use it to obtain more accountability from Saudi Arabia in terms of human rights violations.

The Biden administration's more responsible and less impulsive foreign policy is not enough to safeguard Washington from increasingly tense [great power competition \(https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-12-10/age-great-power-competition\)](#). In these turbulent times, the United States will need to draw [clearly-defined red lines \(https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/bidens-defense-and-security-strategies-need-specifics/\)](#) on its strategic interests and help ensure that regional allies follow their lead. President Biden should focus on restoring the U.S. [credibility \(https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2021-06-14/america-back-how-long\)](#) while leaving no room for faltering postures as President Obama did in regards to the Russian invasion of Crimea and Bashar al-Assad's regime use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The United States should likewise remain vigilant and condemn ambivalent attitudes from its partners that directly threaten American strategic interests. The Biden administration showed such strength when Beijing allegedly attempted to [build a military facility \(https://www.wsj.com/articles/us-china-uae-military-11637274224\)](#) in the UAE and [tried to assist \(https://edition.cnn.com/2021/12/23/politics/saudi-ballistic-missiles-china/index.html\)](#) Saudi Arabia with its ballistic missiles production.

It is too early to judge President Biden's foreign policy, but his statements and policies during this first year allow us to sketch the parameters of a so-called "[Biden Doctrine \(https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/08/20/the-biden-doctrine-exists-already-heres-an-inside-preview/\)](#)." Though the administration uses as a milder tone and more diplomacy than Trump, its policies still fit under the "America first" label. The aim seems to be to restore confidence in the United States, gain strength on the global stage, and achieve its goals through negotiation rather than unilateral action. The Biden presidency is not immune to [pragmatic thinking \(https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/usa/2021-09-09/biden-realist\)](#), or "[ruthless pragmatism \(https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/07/biden-middle-east-saudi-arabia-syria-yemen-strategy/\)](#)", as Steven A. Cook dubbed the administration's approach. However, as exemplified by its arms sales, U.S. policy continues to look the other way on human rights violations when America's strategic interests are at stake.

With the UN Security Council [condemning \(https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14771.doc.htm\)](#) the Houthi attacks on the Emirati capital, the Arab League council [denouncing \(https://dailynewsegypt.com/2022/01/23/arab-league-calls-for-designation-of-yemens-houthi-movement-as-terrorist/\)](#) the drone strikes at a meeting in Cairo last Sunday, and the UAE rallying for solidarity from the [international community \(https://twitter.com/UAEEmbassyUS/status/1484538336798724101?s=20\)](#), calls have heightened for Washington [to reinstate the Houthis \(https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-17/uae-to-ask-u-s-to-restore-houthi-terrorist-label-after-attack\)](#) terrorist designation. For the moment, the Biden administration is buying time by dispatching the U.S. Special Envoy for Yemen [Tim Lenderking \(https://www.state.gov/u-s-special-envoy-for-yemen-lenderkings-travel-to-gulf-capitals-and-london/#:~:text=U.S.%20Special%20Envoy%20for%20Yemen%20Lenderking's%20Travel%20to%20Gulf%20Capitals%20and%20London,-Media%20Note&text=U.S.%20Special%20Envoy%20for%20Yemen%20Tim%20Lenderking%20will%20travel%20to.officials%2C%20and%20other%20international%20partners.\)](#) to the Gulf to hold talks with its regional partners. As the Emirati air defense system intercepted new ballistic missile attacks fired by the Houthis on Abu Dhabi in the early hours of Monday January 24, tensions are bound to increase. Whether President Biden will prioritize [humanitarian concerns \(https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/10/yemen-houthi-terrorist-designation-threatens-aid\)](#) for civilians in Houthi-controlled areas or make a [significant U-turn \(https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-united-nations-houthi-yemen-middle-east-9e41877a0f20481b85104a8eea18ee28\)](#) remains an open question. ❖

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BRIEF ANALYSIS

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BRIEF ANALYSIS

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BRIEF ANALYSIS

[What Biden Faces with Erdogan at the NATO Summit](#)

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