

## 25 Days to Aden

### The Unknown Story of Arabian Elite Forces at War

by [Michael Knights \(/experts/michael-knights\)](#)

January 2023

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Michael Knights \(/experts/michael-knights\)](#)

Michael Knights is the Jill and Jay Bernstein Fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states. He is a co-founder of the Militia Spotlight platform, which offers in-depth analysis of developments related to the Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria.



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In March 2015, the outcome of an overlooked but vital war hung in the balance. The strategic Yemeni city of Aden—once the world’s busiest port—had been invaded by a mixture of Iran-backed Houthi mountain fighters and armored units led by Ali Abdullah Saleh, the deposed president who had ruled the country for decades by playing enemies against each other. If they seized Aden, their coup against the UN-backed government would be complete, and Iran would have a new proxy capable of disrupting a vital Red Sea chokepoint.

Opposing the invaders was a ragtag force of surviving loyalist army units and ill-equipped local civilians. Yet as Houthi forces clawed their way into the city, a new player entered the fray: a ten-nation coalition thrown together in just one week and tasked with launching perhaps their biggest military operation ever.

In his new book *25 Days to Aden*, published by Profile Editions, Washington Institute military expert Michael Knights tells the largely unknown

story of this crucial operation, which was conducted against a dramatic backdrop of towering volcanic cliffs, Victorian monuments, beach resorts, and dense urban alleys. Based on years of direct conversations and embedded moments with the combatants on the ground, the book offers a gripping account of how forces from the United Arab Emirates and other nations fought “a ghost from the mountain, next to the world’s most important seaway.”

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