

Articles & Op-Eds

It's Time for a Serious Saudi-Houthi Back Channel

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War on the Rocks

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Riyadh has leverage to undermine Iran's project in Yemen and can do so alongside UN-brokered peace talks.

Hopes remain high for the peace process currently underway between the Yemeni government and the Houthis, in no small part because UN-appointed Special Envoy Martin Griffiths has set such low expectations to begin with. He notably termed the meetings launched in December confidence-building "consultations" rather than peace talks. His pragmatic calibration has produced slow progress plagued by fits and starts, but has also led to the first successful effort to bring the parties together since the collapse of negotiations in 2016. Yet his goal is unlikely to meet the paramount objective that fueled the Saudi-Emirati intervention in the first place: ending Iranian influence in Yemen. The Houthi-Iranian relationship has steadily deepened over the course of the war, but it is vulnerable to reversal—as episodic Houthi signaling to Riyadh demonstrates...

[**Read the full article at the War on the Rocks website.**](#)