



## National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

1730 M St NW, Suite 503  
Washington, DC 20036

Phone: +1-202-293-6466  
Fax: +1-202-293-7770  
Web: [ncusar.org](http://ncusar.org)

## **24<sup>th</sup> Arab-U.S. Policymakers Conference**

*U.S.-Arab Relations at a Crossroads: What Paths Forward?*

**Washington, D.C.  
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### **"YEMEN-U.S. RELATIONS IN FOCUS"**

***Speaker:***

**H.E. Ambassador Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak** – Ambassador of the Republic of Yemen to the United States; former Director, Presidential Office, and Chief of Staff, Republic of Yemen; former Secretary General, Yemen's National Dialogue Conference.

*Remarks as delivered.*

**[Ambassador Ahmed Mubarak]** [Greetings in Arabic] Your Excellencies, distinguished guests. It is my pleasure and an honor to be giving my speech at the National Council on US-Arab Relations in my capacity as Yemen's Ambassador to the United States.

I would like to begin by offering my gratitude to the team at the Council, especially Doctor Anthony, for their committed support to Yemen and for giving me this opportunity today.

Ladies and gentlemen.

As the assembly here is aware Yemen is currently in the grips of a brutal conflict, which has killed at least 2,300 civilians. It has further displaced roughly 1.5 million families. Furthermore the conflict in Yemen has had huge effects on the nation's infrastructure, leaving as much as 80% of the population without food security. There are hundreds of thousands left without any water supplies or electricity.

I speak to you today while Taiz, one of the most populated cities in Yemen, a city known for producing well-known Yemeni intellectuals, is suffering from all sorts of humanitarian tragedies. Innocent lives are now being lost to the irresponsible actions of Houthi and Saleh militias. But still the main question is: how Yemen got off track? This unfortunate crisis stemmed from the political disagreements when Houthi forces allied with ex-President Saleh loyalists turned against the legitimate President of Yemen and the whole government.

As the constitutional committee came too close to presenting a new draft constitution that reflected the outcomes of the national dialogue conference these factions erupted in violent protests against the new model of governance, effectively carrying out a coup and sabotaging what hundred of delegates from all walks of life worked for during the national dialogue conference.

I myself was a victim of Houthi brutality as I was abducted for two weeks while I was on my way to deliver a draft of the new Yemeni constitution, abducting as well, the people's hopes and dreams. This setback, putting the entire safety of the Yemeni people at risk from sectarianism and an ideologue regime transported from the Iranians into Yemen. And the work of these escalating turn of events, President Hadi and the government faced difficult choices, able to leave Yemen to avoid being kidnapped by Iranian proxies or being called for assistance from our brothers in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates and the rest of the GCC countries, to assist the people of Yemen and to safeguard the region's collective security from complete mayhem.

Now, we ask ourselves, is there still hope for Yemen? The answer will definitely be yes.

There is a roadmap that Yemen can work with in order to solve this crisis. This political roadmap is based on the GCC initiatives and the outcome of the national dialogue conference, which is giving Yemen a clear path on how to go, about resolving its political differences.

The question remains are the Houthis and the Saleh group ready to commit to them. The Government of Yemen stands ready to solve the process through political means and has on many times called on all factions to engage in sincere dialogue that aims to resolve the current political crisis. We believe that there is no military solution. Additionally President Hadi has repeatedly asked all of the factions to adhere to United Nations Security Council Resolution 2216. Only the implementation of this resolution can effectively pave the way to a sincere dialogue.

However, guarantees need to be taken into consideration. This is an important point that our international partners need to recognize. Yemen cannot afford to disappoint its people with peace talks only to wake up to another conflict again.

We need sustainable peace. In order to reach this sustainable peace the Houthis and the Saleh group must adhere to the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2216 without any delay.

Dear friends.

Despite the complexities that have been outlined, Yemenis nevertheless will meet these challenges with determination. Yemen's rich civil and cultural heritage serves as a constant reminder that great challenges are met by great nations. Our country the fortunate Arabia, it's one of the oldest centers of civilization in the world.

Through Yemen's trading routes over the land and seas, my nation left its fingerprints in different regions around the world. Yemen's successes can be traceable into modern times through its influence on the impact on global trade and commerce. It even became one of the first nations in the region to establish strong ties with several powerful businesses in the market of Asia, even contributing to the spread of Islam.

Even as recently as the '40s Aden was the fourth busiest port in the world. In fact about eight percent of the world trade, and 40 percent of the global oil and petroleum still travel through Bab el Mandeb, which makes Yemen's stability a global priority.

Yemen was not only known for its successes in commerce and even in engineering, Shiban and Haudramaut, the uniqueness in the old city of Samar, my nation's history is rich as well as with its civil progressiveness. Today Yemen's civil society organizations, especially the women movement are known to be one of the most vibrant in the region and reflect a tradition of community, stability in the country.

As our history testifies, ladies and gentlemen, Yemeni people come from a capable and hardy crop, yet the mass of their destruction left behind this time can only be resolved with the assistance of our international partners such as the United States. Looking back through the U.S. history this nation went through its own challenges until it was able to define a political system that would fit to the aspirations of its people. The road to democracy is not easy and therefore must be earned. This was the lesson taught by the U.S. to the world.

This truth in turn lent greater significance to the assistance provided by Yemen by the United States during the Yemenis national dialogue conference, a conference that aimed at putting together opposite factions under one roof, leaving behind their weapons, focusing their efforts in a state of resolving their differences through peaceful means to fulfill the dreams of the Yemeni youth, who have risked their lives voicing their demands for our modern and civil state.

Dear friends.

It is the impact of the lives of the people that matters the most. A community of poor people living in a remote village in the Yemeni mountains that had a water well dug by USAID will probably talk best about the new, good mutual relations that changed lives and perspective forever.

Furthermore, the educational programs sponsored by USAID have opened the eyes of many young Yemenis to the American dream and reinforced the positive perception of the United States and its great people in the hearts and minds of Yemenis. As Yemen strives to achieve its post-conflict reconstruction needs, Yemeni people must once again look to our friends in the United States.

We look forward working with the US government and the US private sector, the American universities and hospitals and many other US institutions to address Yemenis' critical post-conflict needs. But then again, post-conflict recovery can only be achieved once conflict has ceased, security conditions have normalized and relative peace has been achieved.

Additionally, the Government of Yemen will continue to work in the field of counter terrorism as it endangers gravely our nation and the world. Through our united efforts I believe that we can aid a creation of a new more inclusive Yemen, one which better fits to the expectations of its people.

In closing I once again repeat my appreciation for the organizer of this conference as we continue working together to address the region's crucial needs and hopefully to see you again next year.

Thank you very much.

[**Anthony**] Thank you Ambassador Mubarak. And welcome to Washington, welcome to the National Council and welcome to these conferences.

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