

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 12, 2018

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable James Mattis
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretaries Pompeo and Mattis:

We write to express our grave alarm regarding developments in Hudaydah, Yemen. We are concerned that pending military operations by the United Arab Emirates and its Yemeni partners will exacerbate the humanitarian crisis by interrupting delivery of humanitarian aid and damaging critical infrastructure. We are also deeply concerned that these operations jeopardize prospects for a near-term political resolution to the conflict.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are U.S. partners facing an unacceptable threat in Yemen. The Houthis – enabled by the Iranian regime – have acquired increasingly sophisticated land and anti-ship missiles that threaten freedom of navigation in vital waterways and terrorize the people of Saudi Arabia. Recent actions by the Treasury Department to impose sanctions on Iranian entities providing illicit materials to the Houthis in Yemen are a welcome and overdue step.

Over the course of more than three years of war in Yemen, U.S. officials have consistently stated that there is no military solution to this conflict. Senior Saudi and Emirati officials have echoed this. It is therefore urgent for the U.S. to reassert its leadership by supporting UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths, encouraging all stakeholders to consider confidence-building measures toward de-escalation of military operations, and swiftly returning to negotiations that will end the suffering of Yemen's people. Mr. Griffiths announced his intent to present a new framework for peace negotiations in mid-June, having spent the past few months meeting with a broad range of stakeholders in the Yemen war. In April, Mr. Griffiths warned the UN Security Council that an attack on Hudaydah "would, in a single stroke, take peace off the table."

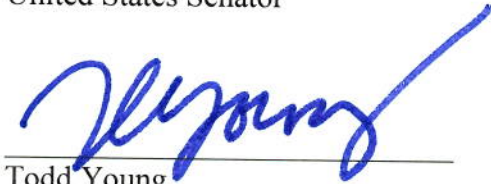
During the April 17 hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, State and Defense Department witnesses noted that the Port of Hudaydah is the principal access point for all humanitarian and commercial goods into Yemen, and highlighted the humanitarian implications of even a temporary closure of the port. In a June 10 Wall Street Journal article, the top UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen stated that 250,000 of Hudaydah's residents could

lose their lives during military operations. The UN also reports that 340,000 people could be displaced as forces advance toward the city of Hodaydah. Humanitarian organizations and the UN repeatedly have warned that military operations at the port likely would render the area inoperable or at further reduced capacity for weeks, if not months. These are unacceptable consequences for any responsible member of the community of nations. Therefore, we urge you to strongly support Mr. Griffiths' efforts to negotiate a resolution to this conflict and to encourage all parties to avoid steps that will further impede access by millions of Yemenis to the food, fuel, and medicine they need to survive.

Sincerely,



Bob Corker
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator



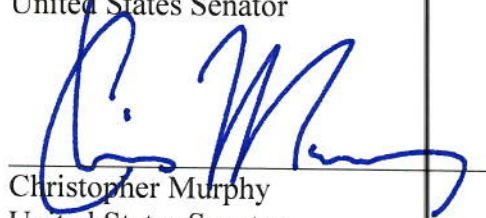
Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



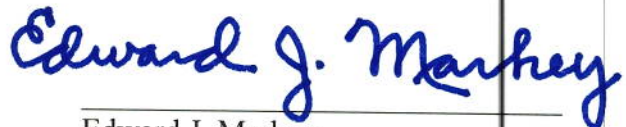
Jerry Moran
United States Senator



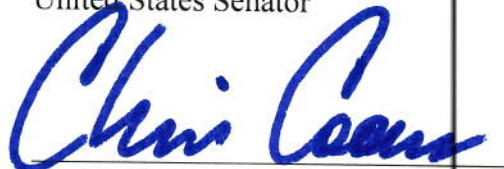
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



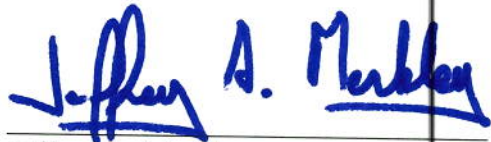
Christopher Murphy
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator