

## Did Saudi Pressure Cause New York Times to Change Its 'Negative' Headline?

By [21st Century Wire](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

*Living in the west, one becomes used to media self-censorship when covering geopolitical and current events.*

*It's generally accepted that all mainstream media outlets will stay within the party line's narrow parameters, so as not to make Washington, London or Europe 'look bad' internationally. This was certainly the case before and during most major US-NATO military or covert interventions, like Yugoslavia, Iraq, Syria, the Ukraine and of course, who can forget their most egregious recent military adventure in Libya.*

*Are US media outlets changing their headline or stories under pressure from foreign governments?*



*Air strike on supposed army weapons depot on a mountain overlooking Sanaa (Image Source: [Channel News Asia](#)).*

Yesterday, the New York Times released a front page story in their early morning domestic print edition, whose headline read:

Saudi Defiance on Yemen Reflects Limits of U.S. Strategy

The sub-header went on to describe how Saudi Arabia's "insistence on using airstrikes threatens larger goals", which could easily be translated as 'US foreign policy goals'. No surprise there. But then we looked for [this same article online](#), only to find that the headline has been changed to:

### Saudi Resolve on Yemen Reflects Limits of U.S. Strategy

Some may say that changing a single word in a headline doesn't amount to very much, but then consider the weight of this word appearing at such a crucial juncture in America's premier news source, or 'paper of record', and how it changes the entire tone of the article - and gives a 180° spin in terms of public relations. The question is not *why* did the New Times editors make this strategic change (that's fairly obvious). The bigger question is: *who* applied pressure to the editors to make such a significant change on a lead story, assuming that the change was made in that order, from 'Defiance' to 'Resolve', or from *negative* to *positive*, in terms of its PR effect on Saudi Arabia, and by extension it's US ally.

Is this a case of US media engaging in willful war propaganda? One can understand when an editor needs to tone down an inflammatory headline, but if we are indeed truly witnessing a PR power-play by either the Saudi Arabian Ambassador Adel al-Jubeir (via the US State Department?), or by Washington directly, then this is a fairly big problem in terms of press freedom in the US. If indeed, someone is attempting to downplay what is obviously an undeclared, illegal war of aggression against Yemen by a brutal monarchy exerting overwhelming force - the *NY Times* editors should have to answer who, what, when, why and *how* this came to be. If the Saudi monarchy is throwing its weight around in order to protect its collapsing image as a "progressive" state in the Middle East, then the nation really needs to know.

Although the US broadcast media pundits and political talking heads are going out of their way to portray Saudi Arabia as acting independently and on its own volition as part of some glorious "Coalition" (yes, they are definitely learning how to do wars of aggression - without saying they are), the fact is the US military and intelligence services are giving full-spectrum support to Riyadh in Yemen. Washington and Riyadh are in lock-step, and one could even go so far as to say that Saudi Arabia has become a wing of the US military overseas now. The US is supplying all of Saudi's arms, jets, equipment, ammunition, satellite targeting data, logistical support, and even helping to rescue its ejected pilots.

You can tell that the Saudis are new to this 'empire' thing by their abysmal PR management surrounding the destruction of their neighbor Yemen. It's been one snafu after another. Less than 48 hours ago, the US and western media crowed proudly that, "Saudi Arabia has halted airstrikes in Yemen", and then less than 24 hours later we're told that, "Saudi Arabia has *resumed* airstrikes". Was that some sort of international joke? Is this the new normal?

The Saudis are learning quickly, however. Already they appear to have taken a page out of the *'Israeli manual for international ceasefire negotiations'*, declaring that:

"The decision to calm matters now rests with them[the Yemenis]," Saudi ambassador Jubeir told reporters at the Saudi Embassy yesterday.

If harkens back to [last summer's brutal siege of Gaza in Israel-occupied Palestine](#), where, after weeks of shelling defenseless civilian areas by Israel's IDF, and killing thousands in the process, Israeli leaders continued to declare that any ceasefire was 'up to the Palestinians', and not them - making Israel unaccountable (in their own eyes, anyway).

You could also say that the Saudis have taken a page out of '*Kiev's manual of ceasefire negotiations*' too. After leveling whole civilian neighborhoods with indiscriminate shelling designed to cleanse eastern Ukraine of its Russian-speaking populations, the US-backed fascist junta government in [Kiev continued to blame all hostilities on the Donbass Rebels](#), again, making the aggressor totally unaccountable (in their own eyes, anyway).

Is Saudi Arabia being *shifty*, or is this just another case where the US government-media complex is lying to its public? War is a serious endeavor, and Saudi Arabia - with the full backing of Washington's war brain-trust - seems to think it's just an expensive game.

Yes, the Saudis claim that the previous bombing run which has already killed at least 1,000 civilians and displaced some 150,000 people crassly titled *Operation Decisive Storm*, has since given way to its sequel - a second phase, another cynically titled bombing run, 'Operation Restoring Hope'. The Saudis claim that they have finished *Phase I* (death and destruction) and are now moving into *Phase II* - more death, destruction, deploying and providing continued air support to [Saudi's real boots on the ground in Yemen](#), namely, al Qaeda and ISIS brigades, with the hopes of ethnically and politically cleansing 'unfriendly' areas.

Playing word games in war is not a good idea, and risks triggering some very negative sentiments later down the road. The *NY Times* continues, describing this debacle as it unfolds:

"Senior Saudi officials made clear on Wednesday that they had not formally declared an end to bombing. Rather, the Saudi ambassador to the United States, Adel al-Jubeir, said the campaign was shifting to a new phase — one in which Saudi airstrikes would be more limited and come only in response to Houthi attacks, such as the assault against Yemeni troops in Taiz.

"The ambassador did not mention the intensifying international pressure, including from the Obama administration, to stop airstrikes that medical and relief organizations said were killing hundreds of civilians, and to lift an embargo on food, fuel, water and medicines that was contributing to a growing humanitarian catastrophe. But American officials and Middle Eastern diplomats privately acknowledged that this was clearly a factor in the Saudi calculation."

Jubier can't help but be shifty in his explanation, because he's attempting to put *lipstick on a pig*. Some might even say that he is lying through his teeth about a disaster of his own country's making. Yes, the Saudis are learning real quick what this 'empire thing' is all about.

No bother, because as the Saudis and their American managers will tell you - "It's not *our* fault, and any ceasefire is up to them, not us."

Welcome to the new international *terrordrome*.

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