

Why Biden's Red Sea Strategy Will Blow Up in His Face

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The Houthis are going to prevent Israel-bound commercial ships from reaching Israeli ports as long as Israel prevents food, water and medicine from reaching Palestinians in Gaza. If Israeli leaders want to end the blockade, they need to stop killing Palestinians and end the siege. This is the simple, moral solution to the current crisis in the Red Sea.

Over the weekend, Houthi fighters launched attacks on two more commercial ships despite the presence of US warships patrolling the area. The primary target was the Maersk Hangzhou that was swarmed by small boats filled with Houthi militants who fired small arms weapons at the sailors on board. US Naval helicopters were sent to the scene and sunk three of the boats killing all of the crew.

Sometime later, **the Maersk Hangzhou was attacked again in the southern part of the Red Sea. It was hit by a missile that was launched from a location on Yemen's coastline.** Following the attack, the Hangzhou made a Mayday call requesting assistance from Naval ships operating in the area. According to one account: "The vessel is reportedly seaworthy and there are no reported injuries."

It's worth noting that Maersk had ordered a complete suspension of all commercial ships passing through the Red Sea just two weeks ago on December 15. Maersk had only reluctantly agreed to resume sailing because leaders at the Pentagon had assured them that they would be safe. On December 19, Pentagon chief **Lloyd Austin** launched a multi-national maritime task-force, named Operation Prosperity Guardian, that was supposed to

protect commercial ships in Red Sea from Houthi missile and drone attacks. **The incidents that occurred this weekend prove that Austin's coalition is a failure. And Maersk has tacitly admitted it is a failure by pausing all sailing through the Red Sea for the next 48 hours. We expect that the "pause" will be indefinitely extended until the issue is resolved, which is unlikely to be anytime in the near future.**

The decision to create a naval task force -that will ostensibly protect "freedom of navigation" in the Red Sea- is as foolish and reckless a policy as anything we've seen since the decision to invade Iraq. No one in the region has any misgivings as to why the US initiated the policy. The United States is forcefully expressing its full support for Israel's sadistic war on the Palestinian people. That is the widely held perception, and that is the truth. The Biden administration has made no attempt to talk to the Houthis nor have they put any restrictions on Israel's behavior. (No "red lines") The only thing one can construe from Biden's approach is that he has decided to entirely abandon the pretense of being an "impartial broker" on matters involving the Middle East, and opted instead to be an active participant in the hostilities on Israel's side. In short, Operation Prosperity Guardian has nothing to do with "freedom of navigation". It is the deployment of US military assets to further the Zionist aspiration of ethnically cleansing historic Palestine in order to create Greater Israel. The US has now joined Israel in its attempt to make that objective a reality.

The continued support of the United States, Britain and other EU countries for Israel's crimes is not something that can be hidden from the eyes of any impartial viewer and erased from the historical memory of nations! [#ISISrael pic.twitter.com/nQOZbooOV9](https://twitter.com/nQOZbooOV9)

— بچه مهندس (@bacheye_sevom) [October 29, 2023](#)

As we mentioned earlier, **the Houthis have agreed to end their attacks on commercial traffic in the Red Sea if Israel simply stops military operations long enough to deliver humanitarian aid to the Palestinians.** This is not only a reasonable request, it's a policy that is supported by the vast majority of nations and people around the world. Surprisingly, the Houthis are alone in taking positive, concrete steps to see that the policy is implemented. They have courageously put their own lives at risk for an oppressed people with whom they have almost no direct contact. Their actions reflect the sincerity of their beliefs and a commitment to principle. It should surprise no one that they are so widely admired. Here's more background from an article at Aljazeera:

If the task of Operation Prosperity Guardian were to be defined narrowly, only to prevent hits on merchant ships, it could be performed using the centuries-old principle of sailing in convoys with the protection of warships. In a convoy, slow, defenseless commercial cargoes sail in several columns at precisely defined distances from each other — led, flanked and tailed by fast warships that can take on any threat....

But every strategy has its limitations. A convoy is big and cumbersome, extending for miles to give behemoth ships a safe distance from each other and to enable them to maneuver if needed. **Whatever the protective measures taken, huge tankers and container carriers - longer than 300 metres (984 feet) - still present big targets....**

Their escorts, even if well-armed, carry a limited number of missiles and must plan their use carefully, allowing for further attacks down the shipping lane and ultimately leaving a war reserve for the defense of the ship itself. Once they expend some of the missiles, they need to replenish them – a task that is possible at sea but done much more quickly and safely in a friendly port out of reach of Houthi missiles.

To clear the critical 250 nautical miles (463km) along the Yemeni coast leading to or from the Bab al-Mandeb strait, advancing at assumed 15 knots (28kmph) — as convoys always sail at the speed of the slowest units — **ships would be exposed to even the shortest-ranged Houthi missiles and drones for at least 16 hours.”**
[Analysis: In the Red Sea, the US has no good options against the Houthis](#), Aljazeera

This brief excerpt illustrates the obvious shortcomings of the Pentagon strategy. **A large naval escort will only create a more target-rich environment for Houthi missile launchers. Besides -as we’ve already seen with the Maersk Hangzhou incident- the strategy doesn’t work.** The proximity of US warships does not deter Houthi attacks nor will it assure freedom of navigation. The plan is neither economically feasible nor militarily practical. (Note: How long will the US be able to provide a naval flotilla to escort commercial ships carrying I-pods and Hula Hoops to market?)

And let’s not ignore the Houthis impressive offensive power either. Check it out:

The Houthi missile threat is now known to be high, and their arsenal is substantial. Naval planners must be worried by their ability to mount concentrated prolonged attacks simultaneously from several directions. (Aljazeera)

So why would the US engage in such a costly strategy if they knew that it was bound to fail?

Perhaps, failure is the goal, because failure moves the conflict further up the escalatory ladder and closer to a regional war that is sought by the Washington neocons and their puppet-master allies in Israel. Here’s more from Aljazeera:

Every admiral would tell his political superiors that military necessity would call for attacks on Houthi missile infrastructure on the ground in Yemen: fixed and mobile launch sites, production and storage facilities, command centres and whatever little radar infrastructure there exists. A proactive response to the missile threat, in other words, to destroy the Houthi ship-targeting capability, rather than the reactive one limited to shooting missiles down as they come in.

In theory, attacks against Houthi missile infrastructure could be based on satellite and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) reconnaissance and carried out by missiles launched from the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean and armed drones from distant land bases. But the only realistic chance at meaningful success would require the use of combat aircraft, bombers based on the two US Navy nuclear carriers in the region.

Attacks against targets in Yemen would have a clear military justification. But they would also carry a clear political risk: that of the West, particularly the US, being seen in the Arab and Islamic world as actually entering the Gaza war on the side of Israel. After all, the Houthis say their attacks on Red Sea ships are aimed at getting Israel to end the war.

Aware of the perils of such a development that could easily cause the conflict to spread, the US has tried to tread carefully, engaging with regional powers, and sending messages that it wants no escalation. ([Aljazeera](#))

The US “wants no escalation”?

Nonsense. Are we expected to believe that the Pentagon hasn't gamed this out and already knows the outcome? But, how could that be if –as the authors says– “military necessity would call for attacks on Houthi missile infrastructure on the ground in Yemen: fixed and mobile launch sites, production and storage facilities, command centres and... radar infrastructure.” In other words, **they fully expect an escalation that will lead to more destruction, more bloodshed and a deeper commitment of military resources. If that isn't a persecution for a broader regional war, then what is?**

BREAKING:

↗Another ship attacked by the Houthis in the Red Sea

UK reports a ship has been attacked off Yemen's coast.
pic.twitter.com/V5zxsAdr2Z

— Megatron (@Megatron_ron) [December 30, 2023](#)

And when shelling (or bombing) of Houthi positions on the ground doesn't work (and it did NOT work in the 9 year-long war with Saudi Arabia) then Washington will be forced to send in the ground troops. But first, **Biden will have to use US warships as 'sitting ducks' so they are hit by Houthi missiles which will generate the mass-hysteria needed to dupe the American people into another disastrous war in the Middle East.**

By the way, **since Denmark's Maersk announced it was planning to resume transit through the Red Sea (on December 24) there has been another Houthi missile attack on a container ship named the MSC United on December 26. This latest incident could persuade Maersk that sailing the Red Sea is still not safe and that it would be wiser to reroute its ships around the Horn of Africa until the hostilities cease.** We'll have to wait and see what Maersk does. (Note– This was written a day before the Houthi attack on the Maersk Hangzhou.)

In any event, the damage inflicted on commercial shipping has been nothing short of breathtaking. Take a look at this excerpt from an article at Bloomberg:

Half of the containership fleet that regularly transits the Red Sea and Suez Canal is avoiding the route now because of the threat of attacks, according to new industry data.

The tally compiled by Flexport Inc. shows 299 vessels with a combined capacity to carry 4.3 million containers have either changed course or plan to. **That's about double the number from a week ago and equates to about 18% of global capacity.**

The diverted journeys around Africa can take as much as 25% longer than using the Suez Canal shortcut between Asia and Europe, according to Flexport. Those trips are more costly and may lead to higher prices for consumers on everything from sneakers

to food to oil if the longer journeys persist.... The figures show the scale of the mounting maritime disruption after **Houthis launched more than 100 attacks on commercial ships in the past month....**

Containership arrivals were down 87%, gas tankers about 30% and car carriers about 25%. It's a similar picture for Suez Canal transits, which were down about 45% between Dec. 22 and Dec. 26 for vessels heading south, according to Clarksons....

"While the US-led coalition might appear successful militarily, it might not be sufficient for major shipping companies to resume Red Sea transits," said Gerard DiPippo, senior geo-economic analyst with Bloomberg Economics. **"The longer the Houthi attacks continue, the more pressure the US will face to go on the offensive, which risks regional escalation."** [299 Containerships Reroute to Avoid the Red Sea, Doubling in Number from Last Week](#), Bloomberg (from gcaptain)

Are the American people aware of the damage that's being caused by our blanket support of Israel? And these disruptions will likely balloon by many orders of magnitude once the US goes on the offensive and launches a war on the Yemeni mainland. Then we'll see commercial shipping in the Red Sea grind to a standstill.

Yemen is teaching the world what active solidarity looks like.
pic.twitter.com/NjMyXPZP67

— Jairo I Fúnez-Flores (@Jairo_I_Funez) [December 18, 2023](#)

Bottom line: The strategy of escorting commercial ships through the Red Sea has clearly failed. **For all practical purposes, Operation Prosperity Guardian is kaput.** We must assume that the Pentagon is conjuring up a more aggressive strategy that will involve greater risks and potentially a wider war. Simply put, the Houthis are now regarded as a threat to America's vital interests as designated in [Biden's 2022 National Security Strategy](#). Here's the relevant excerpt:

....the United States will not allow foreign or regional powers to jeopardize freedom of navigation through the Middle East's waterways, including the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab al Mandab, nor tolerate efforts by any country to dominate another—or the region—through military buildups, incursions, or threats."

There it is in black and white. **The Houthis now represent a clear and present danger to US national security. That is no different than an explicit declaration of war,** which is why we think this conflict will escalate very quickly from this point on, shifting from a defensive posture to aggressively bombarding Houthi military positions in Yemen to, finally, the deployment of US Special Forces and ground troops to Yemen itself. ("boots on the ground") Team Biden has put the US on the fasttrack to a catastrophic war on the Arabian peninsula, a war that will push Arab leaders into the arms of Russia and China, a war that will strengthen anti-American alliances and exacerbate geopolitical divisions, a war that will deepen America's isolation and the steady erosion of its moral authority, and a war that terminate the unipolar moment and the waning "American Century."

Wouldn't it be easier to simply ask Israel to stop its bloody rampage?

Britain has assisted Israel's genocidal war on Gaza through logistics, intelligence, and arms deliveries.

It is now part of the US coalition to punish Yemen for its courageous stand with Palestine

— Lowkey (@LowkeyOnline) [December 18, 2023](#)

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