

Will Biden be Forced to Send Ground Troops to Yemen? Escalation? “Both Israel and the US want to Implicate Iran.” Mike Whitney

By [Mike Whitney](#)

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Why go for war, when Yemen’s request is very simple: Allow humanitarian aid flow into Gaza and a Ceasefire. They didn’t even request it for themselves, even though they have a need for aid. God bless Yemen @EsirEid

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—      (@EsirEid) [December 19, 2023](#)

The Biden administration is blaming Iran for drone attacks on a commercial tanker in the Indian Ocean. The claims are being used as leverage on Iran to pressure the Houthis to abandon their blockade in the Red Sea and allow maritime traffic to return to normal. But the Houthis have no intention of caving in to pressure from Iran or anyone else. They are determined to continue their attacks on Israel-bound traffic however long it takes and whatever the cost.

On Sunday, numerous articles in the western media reported that Iran had launched a drone attack on a Japanese-owned chemical tanker named the MV Chem Pluto in the Indian Ocean. Many of these articles based their reports on claims made by unidentified Pentagon sources or declassified intelligence. As of Tuesday, none of those allegations have been independently verified or proven to be true.

What we know from previous experience is that elements of the national security state

frequently plant fictitious stories in the media in order to garner public support for unpopular military campaigns or to demonize foreign nations for things for which they are in no way responsible.

And that appears to be the case here. **There is no doubt that both Israel and the US want to implicate Iran in the recent attacks on merchant ships in the Red Sea.** But, so far, there is no evidence to verify those claims. Iran's leaders strongly oppose Israel's ongoing massacre in Gaza, but they've also indicated that they do not want to participate in the hostilities. Iran does not want to get dragged into a broader regional war which could trigger a confrontation with the United States which would result in the deaths of millions of Iranians. All of this suggests that the recent flurry of anti-Iran reporting is agenda-driven disinformation designed to turn public opinion against Iran. This is from an article at BBC:

A chemical tanker in the Indian Ocean was hit by a drone launched from Iran on Saturday, the US military says....

Iran has not commented. Houthi rebels in Yemen – who are backed by Iran and support Hamas in its war with Israel – have recently used drones and rockets to target vessels in the Red Sea....

The same company also said **the vessel was heading from Saudi Arabia to India, and was linked to Israel.** The Houthis have claimed to be targeting Israel-linked vessels over the conflict in Gaza.

The US said the Chem Pluto was hit by **“a one-way attack drone fired from Iran”**. It is believed to be the first time the US has publicly accused Iran of targeting a ship directly.

It has previously accused Iran of being “deeply involved” in planning operations against commercial vessels in the Red Sea – a charge Tehran has denied...[Tanker hit off India coast by drone from Iran, says US](#), BBC

Yemen is so very badass—they take this brave stance as the poorest country in the Middle East, and in their 8th year of war and forced starvation by US/Israel and their allies. Yemen: "FU. GO AROUND AFRICA!!" lol Be like Yemen. [#ILoveYemen #SaveGaza pic.twitter.com/49zSFMVThy](#)

— Tamlyn Joy 🇲🇪🇲🇪 (@TamlynJJoy) [December 25, 2023](#)

Not surprisingly, the BBC article is factually wrong on several counts. First, **Iran HAS commented on the incident, in fact, they have categorically denied any involvement whatsoever.** This is from Al Jazeera:

Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has dismissed accusations of the United States that Tehran struck a chemical tanker in the Indian Ocean, as tension rises globally over threats to maritime shipping.

A spokesperson for the ministry dismissed the accusation out of hand at a news conference on Monday. He asserted that the US claim that an Iran-launched drone had hit a Japanese-owned tanker as it sailed near India was false.

“We declare these claims as completely rejected and worthless,” said Nasser Kanaani when asked about the US accusation.

“Such claims are aimed at projecting, distracting public attention, and covering up for the full support of the American government for the crimes of the Zionist regime [Israel] in Gaza,” he added. [Iran dismisses US accusations of tanker attack off India](#), Al Jazeera

We cannot understand why BBC editors did not include this explicit denial of involvement unless they were driven by an ulterior motive, that is, to further demonize Iran.

Second, **we have zero evidence that the “drone (was) launched from Iran”**. None of the many cookie cutter articles we have read provide anything remotely resembling verifiable evidence.

Third, **Iran is not “deeply involved” in planning operations against commercial vessels in the Red Sea**. The idea of attacking Israel-bound merchant ships in the Red Sea was concocted by Houthi leaders alone. Both the Houthis and the Iranians have admitted as much. Here’s more from the BBC:

The Pentagon statement said the Chem Pluto, “a Liberia-flagged, Japanese-owned, and Netherlands-operated chemical tanker”, was struck on Saturday at 10:00 local time **The BBC was not able to independently verify the incident.**” BBC

If the BBC “was not able to independently verify the incident,” then why in heaven’s name did they file a report that implied Iranian culpability? Is that not professional malfeasance?

Here’s more from the same article:

Many global shipping groups have suspended operations in the Red Sea due to the increased risk of attacks. The UK government has vowed to ensure the route’s safety.

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps told the Sunday Times newspaper that the UK was committed to repelling attacks on vessels – and would not allow **the Red Sea to become a “no-go area”**...

Chris Farrell from Neptune P2P Group, a UK maritime security company, described nervousness in the region and observed that **container ships were proving more likely to reroute than larger vessels.** “Nobody really knows the situation out there,” he told the BBC World Service’s Weekend programme.

“Because of the lack of stability, that’s creating the uncertainty with the clients and the shipping companies which are putting their assets within that region.” [BBC](#)

This is so epic. Yemen. pic.twitter.com/GwQqEeN1CL

— Shirin Khan (@Shirinkhan0) [December 19, 2023](#)

This excerpt requires some additional analysis: The UK Defence Secretary says he will not

allow the Red Sea to become a “no-go area” while tacitly admitting that it has already become a “no-go area”. In other words, by his own admission, **“Many global shipping groups have suspended operations in the Red Sea”, the transit corridors are no longer safe, and “container ship” are already being rerouted. By any conceivable metric, the Houthi strategy is working better than anyone could have imagined.**

That is what he is saying. Don't the authors realize that? Don't they see that **they have just admitted that the Houthi's asymmetrical attack may be the most successful hybrid attack of all time; that they have effectively detonated a nuclear bomb at the economic epicenter of the “rules-based order”?** It would be impossible to overstate the impact this ingenious offensive is having on political leaders and elites scattered across the western world. The sense of hysteria is palpable. A smallish, unsophisticated militia has delivered a withering blow to the Empire's Achilles heel—the **vital transit corridor for global trade that is now under the de facto control of Washington's mortal enemy, the Houthis.** Is that not a victory for the majority of ordinary people around the world who oppose the US and Israel's sadistic butchery of the Palestinian people?

It is a victory. It is a triumph of good vs evil. But it will not go unanswered. Here's more from an article at CNN:

The US on Friday released newly declassified intelligence that suggests Iran has been “deeply involved in planning the operations against commercial vessels in the Red Sea,” National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson told CNN.

The Iran-backed Houthi rebels have launched more than 100 attacks against about a dozen commercial and merchant ships transiting the Red Sea over the past four weeks, CNN previously reported. The **newly declassified intelligence suggests** that “Iranian support throughout the Gaza crisis has enabled the Houthis to launch attacks against Israel and maritime targets, though Iran has often deferred operational decision-making authority to the Houthis,” Watson said.

On Tuesday, **a senior US military official said** the Iranians are operating in the Red Sea when asked whether Iran is helping the Houthis select targets. But that official said the Houthi attacks have been broadly indiscriminate.

“Iran has the choice to provide or withhold this support, without which the Houthis would struggle to effectively track and strike commercial vessels navigating shipping lanes through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden,” Watson said....[US intelligence suggests Iran involved in planning attacks in Red Sea](#), CNN

What declassified intelligence? What senior US military official? Who provided this intelligence and what documents can CNN produce to prove their claims? We need to know the answers to these questions.

Once again, there's no evidence, no witnesses, no documents, no electronic communications, and no proof. We are left with nothing but a “tapestry of lies” supporting an insidious anti-Iran narrative that may or may not be true. We just don't know, because there are no verifiable facts, just speculation amid huge doses of hearsay. All we know for sure is that the authors want us to believe that Iran is source of all the problems in the Middle East. But that idea defies any understanding of the region's history or recent events.

It's not Iran that has been toppling governments, killing millions and obliterating countries across the ME for the last 30 years. That is Washington's doing. And it's not Iran that has waged a brutish war of extermination on the civilian population in Gaza, reducing most of the area to smoldering rubble while herding 2 million starving people towards the Egyptian border. That is Israel's doing. Iran wages war on no one; rather, they have been the target of relentless US hostility for over 5 decades for having the audacity to assert control over their own resources. That is Iran's real crime; it's unwillingness to bend a knee to Uncle Sam and timidly accept its role as Washington's servile meat-puppet. Is that true or not true?

It's true. This is from ABC News:

U.S. President **Joe Biden ordered the United States military to carry out retaliatory airstrikes against Iranian-backed militia groups** after three U.S. service members were injured in a drone attack in northern Iraq....

Iraqi officials said that U.S. strikes targeting militia sites early Tuesday killed one militant and wounded 18. They came at a time of heightened fears of a regional spillover of the Israel-Hamas war....

The U.S. has also blamed Iran, which has funded and trained the Hamas group, for attacks by Yemen's Houthi militants against commercial and military vessels through a critical shipping choke point in the Red Sea. ["Biden orders strikes on an Iranian-aligned group after 3 US troops wounded in drone attack in Iraq, ABC News](#)

Are these really "retaliatory strikes" on Iranian positions or is Biden trying to coerce Iran into putting pressure on the Houthis?



IMO, **the attacks are clearly aimed at the Houthis who can only be approached via their ally, Iran.** The administration has made no effort to talk directly with the Houthis nor will they. US leaders will not negotiate with people they see as their inferiors which means they must persuade Iran to make their case for them. But, what does Iran get for its efforts?

They avoid the wider regional war that Netanyahu is angling for but that no one else (including the US) really wants. So, **the Biden team is pressuring Iran because the next escalatory step is firing directly on Houthi positions, command-and-control, arms depots, communications and the rest.** Once that happens, events will move very quickly. The Houthis will close the Red Sea to maritime traffic, they will attack regional US bases and installations, and they will take out critical oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia. The genie will be out of the bottle and all Hell will break loose across the region. Oil prices will skyrocket, markets will plunge, and the global economy will go off a cliff. Which is why Biden is pursuing the Iranian track. It's a last-ditch effort to avoid a Middle East catastrophe.

Sadly, it won't work because Israel is determined to continue its ethnic cleansing in Gaza and then move on to the West Bank. So, the attacks on commercial ships are going to continue which will leave Washington with no option but war.

Yemen poses a unique but serious threat to US hegemony. Its military is small by US standards but they are adept at fighting in rugged terrain and they know every nook and cranny of the battlefield. They are fully prepared to fight a guerrilla war that could drag on for years. Naturally, Biden and his advisors would rather avoid such a conflict, but that may not be possible, after all, the "rules-based order" rests on a foundation of economic-political-military power.

So, when a smaller country 'disrespects' the US by disrupting merchant ships in the world's most important shipping lanes, Uncle Sam must prove that he has the power to put down that rebellion or be prepared to face similar insurgencies in the future. This is the logic that guides imperial policy. Never show weakness or the jackals will rip you apart and leave you to die. That is the maxim Washington lives by.

What the Houthis are showing the world is that the Washington is no longer capable of imposing its Pax Americana on the hinterland. The US cannot form a broad-based maritime coalition because America's allies no longer trust Washington's judgement or believe in its moral authority. Nor does the Navy have a flotilla large enough or nimble enough to protect the waterways and transit corridors that sustain western economies. This is no small problem. This is crisis of legitimacy. It is a question of whether the US can act as the guarantor of global security or not. We don't think it can, but we do think that the administration and the western elites that support them, are going to give-it-the-old-college-try by charging into Yemen 'guns blazing' in an effort to put down the Red Sea rebellion and to restore America's image as the world's premier military power.

Bottom line: Uncle Sam is not going to allow itself to get slapped-around in public by a country it sees as a 'third-rate power.' It's going to roll-out the heavy artillery and then send in the ground troops. God help us.

The current situation pic.twitter.com/MW5QhMgXZI

— Rev Laskaris (@REVMAXXING) [December 24, 2023](#)

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