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Yemen

# Yemen on the brink

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**Our natural reaction to any US attack on any country in the Global South is to condemn it, and this is the correct position. The US attacks on Yemen are no exception, all the more since they are accompanied by the cessation of humanitarian aid to a large part of this poor and afflicted country. This is entirely consistent with the imperialist course pursued by the United States in the Arab East in particular, which has escalated sharply since the Soviet Union's agony and subsequent collapse. Since then, we have witnessed a first war on Iraq, followed by a low-intensity war along with the strangulation of the country by way of a criminal embargo, mostly affecting the civilian population, and finally the occupation and its dire consequences, which Iraq continues to endure. This is in addition to the subsequent bombing operations that have turned Iraq, Yemen, and Syria into a shooting range for the US armed forces, which bomb whoever they want, whenever they want, and however they want with their aircraft, missiles, and drones.**

All of the above falls within the nature of things, as we are talking about the behaviour of an imperialist state that is the world's mightiest military power. For this very reason, regimes opposing this superpower must avoid anything that would give it a pretext for a military attack, even when they are subject to various abuses by it. For example, Cuba has been subject to a criminal embargo for decades, but its government is too smart to engage in actions that would give Washington a pretext for launching a military attack on the island, which would seriously exacerbate its economic crisis. Imagine, for example, if Cuba decided to bomb US ships in its maritime zone in response to Washington's strangulation. Such behaviour would be completely legitimate from the standpoint of right, but very reckless from a practical standpoint, given the woes it would inevitably bring upon the island.

From this standpoint, the Houthis' behaviour in bombing US ships in the Red Sea is similar to the above hypothesis. It is legitimate from a moral perspective: solidarity with the people of Gaza is not only legitimate, but a duty indeed. However, attacking the ships of a superpower in an international maritime passage is reckless behaviour in terms of its potential consequences. It is bound to bring calamities to the people of Yemen, who certainly do not need them, given all they have endured during a devastating war that began ten years ago and has yet to end, and the dire poverty and famine that are rife among them.

While the United States has not suffered any significant harm from the Houthis' actions, and Israel has suffered only minor harm, the main victim has been Egypt, whose revenue from shipping through the Suez Canal declined by 60 percent in 2024 compared to the previous year, a loss of \$7 billion – which is a huge loss for a country struggling with a worsening economic crisis. In fact, a large segment of the Yemeni people view the Houthis' actions very differently from those who applaud their actions from abroad as if they were heroic acts. In Yemen's other half, there are those who see the Houthis' behaviour as a political manoeuvre by the Sana'a government in its sectarian and political conflict with them, just as it uses the opportunity to stir up the feelings of people in the north to cover up its major economic failure.

The truth is that the Houthi regime, officially known as "Ansar Allah" (Partisans of God), is of a deeply reactionary social and political nature, steeped in obscurantism, and resembling the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan. It resulted from a reactionary coup against the legitimate democratic settlement that emerged from the popular uprising in 2011. It did so through a brief alliance with ousted President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who shared nothing with the Houthis except sectarian affiliation. The Houthi regime exploited the atmosphere of mobilization created by its actions in the Red Sea to tighten its repressive grip on society, even attacking aid organizations in a Taliban-like manner, arresting more than 100 of their members at a time when Yemen is in dire need of international aid and relief.

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The escalation of US military strikes on Houthi-held areas even appears to have come at the urging of the rulers of the other half of Yemen. Washington has so far been content with limited strikes, as the Houthis' actions have not posed a significant threat. Indeed, all Houthi attacks on US warships using ballistic missiles and drones have been thwarted due to their inferior technology (this is actually fortunate, as had the Houthis hit one of these ships and killed some of its crew, their territory would have been subjected to a far more destructive onslaught than what we have witnessed so far).

Two months ago, the London Guardian quoted Aidarous al-Zubaidi, the deputy prime minister of the internationally recognized Yemeni government and head of the Southern Transitional Council, calling on the new US president to escalate the attack on the Houthis, while criticizing the previous administration for its lack of firmness in confronting them. Al-Zubaidi also called for coordination between US strikes and ground attacks by Yemeni government forces, something we may witness soon. If this were to happen, the Houthis' actions would have paved the way for a renewed war in Yemen, this time with direct US military intervention. This would be consistent with the Trump administration's hostility towards Iran, the Houthis' sponsor, which far exceeds that of the Biden administration.

When Donald Trump was first president, a Senate majority voted in 2019 to end US support for the Saudi intervention in Yemen. The resolution was initiated by Bernie Sanders. Trump overruled it with a presidential veto. When Joe Biden succeeded him in the White House, one of his first decisions was to freeze arms sales to the Saudi kingdom and the United Arab Emirates (note the difference between this and Biden's attitude towards the Zionist state). Now that Trump has returned to the White House with far greater arrogance than during his first term, the possibility of re-escalating the war in Yemen with direct US involvement has become very real, as part of US pressure on Tehran and Trump's threat of direct military aggression against Iran's own territory.

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