

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Statement on United States and United Kingdom Joint Airstrikes in Yemen
January 11, 2024

Today, at my direction, U.S. military forces—together with the United Kingdom and with support from Australia, Bahrain, Canada, and the Netherlands—successfully conducted strikes against a number of targets in Yemen used by Houthi rebels to endanger freedom of navigation in one of the world's most vital waterways.

These strikes are in direct response to unprecedented Houthi attacks against international maritime vessels in the Red Sea, including the use of antiship ballistic missiles for the first time in history. These attacks have endangered U.S. personnel, civilian mariners, and our partners, jeopardized trade, and threatened freedom of navigation. More than 50 nations have been affected in 27 attacks on international commercial shipping. Crews from more than 20 countries have been threatened or taken hostage in acts of piracy. More than 2,000 ships have been forced to divert thousands of miles to avoid the Red Sea, which can cause weeks of delays in product shipping times. And, on January 9, Houthis launched their largest attack to date, directly targeting American ships.

The response of the international community to these reckless attacks has been united and resolute. Last month, the United States launched Operation Prosperity Guardian, a coalition of more than 20 nations committed to defending international shipping and deterring Houthi attacks in the Red Sea. We also joined more than 40 nations in condemning Houthi threats. Last week, together with 13 allies and partners, we issued an unequivocal warning that Houthi rebels would bear the consequences if their attacks did not cease. And yesterday the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution demanding the Houthis end attacks on merchant and commercial vessels.

Today's defensive action follows this extensive diplomatic campaign and Houthi rebels' escalating attacks against commercial vessels. These targeted strikes are a clear message that the United States and our partners will not tolerate attacks on our personnel or allow hostile actors to imperil freedom of navigation in one of the world's most critical commercial routes. I will not hesitate to direct further measures to protect our people and the free flow of international commerce as necessary.

Categories: Statements by the President : U.S. and United Kingdom joint airstrikes in Yemen.

Subjects: Global supply chain disruptions, efforts to address; Piracy, efforts to combat; Red Sea attacks on commercial shipping; Yemen, Houthi militant organization; Yemen, U.S. and U.K. airstrikes.

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