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Khalil Nasrallah

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## ***How Yemen is redefining regional power***

Yemen's bold preemptive strike against US naval forces using sophisticated intelligence methods demonstrates its newfound centrality in the Axis of Resistance, with the unique capability of providing a deterrence umbrella for its entire alliance.

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The Ansarallah-aligned Yemen military, a key pillar of the Axis of Resistance, continues to strengthen its position in the ongoing war in West Asia, advancing to new levels in showcasing its power and cementing its role as a formidable force.

Once viewed as a convenient Saudi punching bag, Sanaa's [growing influence and operational capabilities](#) today are reshaping the dynamics in the region and creating new challenges for both regional and international actors.

The Yemenis have shown the ability to launch – and get away with – nonstop military operations at sea against ships linked to Israel, the US, and the UK, missile operations and drones targeting the Israeli depth, and even [targeting](#) US aircraft carriers and destroyers stationed in the Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and northern Indian Ocean.

These US naval forces conduct regular air operations against the war-torn Gulf state, attempting to intercept Ansarallah's efforts and influence its strategic decision to support Palestine and Lebanon. The boldness of these operations demonstrates Yemen's unyielding commitment to supporting the Resistance Axis and becoming the first Axis member to confront global powers directly.

### **Thwarting US strikes on Yemen**

At every stage, Sanaa has managed to surprise both allies and adversaries alike. The latest example is its exposure of Washington's plans for a major air strike on Yemeni targets,

which it worked to scuttle. This was explicitly [announced](#) by Ansarallah leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi on 14 November, as he described the targeting of the USS Abraham Lincoln in the Arabian Sea and two US destroyers in the Red Sea.

“The Yemeni armed forces successfully defended their defensive position, preventing the American enemy from launching a large-scale aggression on the country,” he declared. This operation was not just a demonstration of military might, but also a message of deterrence, making it clear that any aggression against Yemen would not go unanswered.

According to the Yemeni military spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Saree's [statement](#) on 12 November, Yemeni armed forces conducted rocket strikes over an eight-hour period, using ballistic and winged missiles alongside various drones:

**“We targeted the US aircraft carrier Lincoln located in the Arabian Sea with several cruise missiles and drones while it was preparing to launch operations against our country. The operation successfully achieved its objectives.”**

The strikes were preemptive, thwarting the advancement of a large-scale US air operation in the making, which would have targeted vital areas inside Yemen. Saree did not hide this intent during Thursday's speech, which was followed by mass public demonstrations the next day.

### **Strategic capabilities of Yemeni forces**

The complexity and coordination of these missile and drone strikes signify the strategic planning capabilities of Yemeni forces. Conducting an eight-hour operation against such formidable targets required extensive intelligence, meticulous coordination, and advanced technology – a testament to the growing capabilities of Yemeni forces in both conventional and asymmetrical warfare.

Sanaa's stance on the militarization of waterways emphasizes its strategic leverage in controlling some of the world's busiest and most important maritime routes. By positioning itself as the protector of these routes against external aggression, Yemen is effectively turning the tables on its adversaries, challenging their presence, and questioning their right to operate freely in these waters.

A few hours after the Yemeni armed forces announced the operation and its details, the Pentagon partially acknowledged the attack, with spokesman Pat Ryder [saying](#):

**“On November 11th, US Central Command forces successfully repelled multiple Iranian backed Houthi attacks during a transit of the Bab al-Mandab strait. During the transit, the Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer, USS Stockdale, and USS Spruance were attacked by at least eight one-way attack uncrewed Aerial**

**systems, five anti-ship ballistic missiles and three anti-ship cruise missiles which were successfully engaged and defeated.”**

Ryder, however, added the caveat: “To my knowledge, I'm not aware of any attacks against the [USS] Abraham Lincoln.”

In response, the Yemeni armed forces claimed the carrier had moved hundreds of miles away after the strike, detailing its previous routes in order to counter the Pentagon's narrative and demonstrate Ansarallah's close surveillance of US naval vessels.

The Yemeni armed forces have previously directed strikes against US destroyers, as well as the US aircraft carrier [Eisenhower](#), which was targeted twice in the northern Red Sea region.

This discrepancy in reports points to the ongoing information warfare between the two adversaries, with each trying to control the narrative and maintain morale. Sanaa's confidence in openly challenging the US version of events highlights its newfound regional communication impact and its intent to shape the international perception of the conflict.

### **Messages behind the preemptive attack**

The preemptive nature of this operation carries significant messages. First, it demonstrates Yemeni intelligence's capabilities in detecting hostile US and UK military plans. This level of intelligence gathering suggests that Sanaa has infiltrated sources of information that provide real-time updates on enemy movements and intentions.

Second, conducting a preemptive strike means that Yemen can anticipate military strategies, maneuver, and repel attacks before they materialize. This ability puts Sanaa in a proactive rather than reactive position, giving it a strategic edge.

Third, Yemeni forces are steadily improving their [military](#) and [intelligence](#) capabilities, challenging US dominance in the region. This consistent enhancement of ballistic missile technology, drone capabilities, and real-time surveillance is what continues to reshape the military balance in the region.

Fourth, the operation serves as a stark warning to anyone with aggressive intentions in the region, especially as the US-backed, Saudi/UAE-led war on Yemen remains unresolved. The preemptive strike demonstrates that Sanaa will not hesitate to use force to protect its sovereignty and strategic interests.

### **Sanaa's strategy of gradual escalation**

Speaking with *The Cradle*, Yemeni military expert Brigadier General Mujib Shamsan emphasizes that the unexpected strike sent multiple messages to Washington. One key

message was that the era of US attempts to assert influence without facing repercussions is over: “Sanaa's capabilities are no longer just defensive but extend to taking the fight to the enemy – especially at sea.”

Shamsan does not limit the results of the operation and its impact to the US only, but considers that “some of its repercussions affect Washington's tools in the region, especially those who were moving them to achieve its goals, whether at the level of aggression against Yemen or for other goals, as a result of the destabilization of the state of trust.”

“Whoever can conduct an eight-hour sea operation has the capability to execute broader offensives,” Shamsan warns, cautioning against any new American “adventure” against the Yemeni armed forces. He notes that Sanaa is not using all its resources at once but is gradually escalating its tactics, suggesting that hypersonic missiles could be deployed in future operations to cause severe damage – [just as they were against Tel Aviv](#) – rather than merely issuing warnings.

This gradual escalation signals a meticulously thought-out strategy that keeps the enemy guessing, maintaining an element of unpredictability:

**"Sanaa does not throw its cards at once, but rather launches gradually, and what drones and winged missiles have reached can be reached by hypersonic missiles with a different effect that goes beyond warning and aborting enemy operations to direct and serious injuries to the aircraft carrier. The US understood that message well, and accordingly worked to withdraw its aircraft carrier miles away."**

### **Intelligence is key**

Shamsan says that Ansarallah's intelligence and surveillance prowess are the cornerstone of its military success. “Information is the foundation of battle, and Sanaa has reached an advanced level of intelligence gathering, which has puzzled the Americans who struggled to conceal the carrier's location,” he adds.

These successes are not limited to tracking enemy movements, but also extend to deciphering their strategies, which enables preemptive measures to nullify threats before they are fully realized.

Since last year's Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, West Asia has been undergoing a shift as Yemen's actions are becoming [increasingly](#) central to the region's resistance. From Sanaa's initial missile strikes on 18 October 2023 to the recent operation on 11 November 2024, Yemen's active military role has been a game changer.

Security in the region is now closely tied to Yemen's security, challenging Washington and its allies to reassess their strategies. For Sanaa, the notion of marginalizing Yemen was buried with the [21 September Revolution](#) of 2014, which cut off foreign – particularly Saudi – influence over Yemeni decision-making.

Yemen's role in supporting the Palestinian and Lebanese causes also means that Israel and its allies cannot brush away the devastating debris of those wars via 'ceasefires' because that will not solve their 'Yemeni problem.' Despite what happens in the Levant, strategic – and now powerful Axis leader, Yemen – will hold the keys to many regional and resistance decisions.

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