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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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Henry Kamens

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Collateral Damage or Calculated Strategy?

The EU Feels the Heat from America's Yemen Military Operation!

One must stop and ask that if the US was aware that its operations in Yemen would have such limited results, why would it undertake such a risky and expensive operation in the first place?



It is more involved than just opening up the straits of the Red Sea for international shipping, especially for the benefit of Israel or the United States.

In the fog of war and diplomacy, clarity often lies not in what's said—but in who suffers. **Operation Rough Rider** may not be officially aimed at Brussels, the capital of the EU, but its strategic outcomes speak louder than policy briefings. Ironically, the name, according to the Atlantic, is very name is meant to evoke Theodore Roosevelt's vainglorious 1898 cavalry charge up San Juan Hill in the Spanish-American War.

As U.S. political elites openly mock European allies and leak plans with startling candor, the lines between defense, deception, and economic warfare blur further

As European trade chokes and Washington insiders mock their so-called allies, it's fair to ask whether the Houthis were ever the real target—or merely a convenient excuse. Either way, the operation isn't working as officially claimed. In the broader Great Game of global power, Yemen may be the battleground, but Europe looks increasingly like the economic casualty. The layers run deep, and we're only beginning to peel them back.

Is the EU the Real Target of US Military Operations against Yemen?

Firstly, only a fraction, less than 5 percent, of US cargo finds its way through these disputed waters. This begs the question, why then would the US start an operation that has resulted in shutting down transit for all flags, not only those coming and going from Israel?

But motivations are different, and there is no having a small country doing the right thing, and at the right time. Yemen may go down in history as one of the few countries that were morally responsible enough to stand up for human rights, and for having taken a principled stance against genocide in Palestine when the real history is written.

It is possible that the US is attacking Yemen for all practical purpose to cover for its separate agenda, so to weaken the EU as its products, imports and exports, need this vital waterway, and as a punitive action for Yemen standing up to genocide in Palestine.

A recent Mondoweiss article titled “Yemen is acting responsibly to stop genocide and the U.S. is bombing them for it” presents a perspective that Yemen's actions in the Red Sea are legally justified responses to international law violations, especially in terms of the crisis situation in Gaza.

The piece presents a convincing position that Yemen's blockade of ships destined for Israel through the Red Sea port of Eilat is a lawful measure aimed at preventing further human rights violations and genocide against the Palestinian people, which may soon expand to the West Bank.

Genocide, Geopolitics, and the Price Europe Pays

The Houthis have clearly stated that they will continue retaliating against shipping of any flag that supports Israel and turns a blind eye to blatant genocide. But who is really suffering, other than the US taxpayer?

It should be obvious that this is an expensive operation and high-tech bombs and keep battle groups in the region does not come cheap, and it weakens the US position should it need to shift to another area of operation, for instance, the South China Sea. Likely, the operation has already exceeded 1 billion dollars for the US, and with little to show for it.

The Houthis are still able to launch attacks; the costs of the mission are mounting, which would require the Pentagon to ask for more funds from Congress. In addition, the US has

been forced to transfer a second carrier from the Pacific, in a sign that not all is well with the campaign, a situation likely to nearly double the ongoing costs of the operation. In addition, the Houthis have become quite adept at shooting down US M

This may be nothing, small change, in comparison to what the EU is suffering in losses due to sanctions against Russia, US tariffs, and having its supply chains interrupted, and, whereas before only ships coming and going to Israeli ports were subject to attacks, now the Red Sea is a free fire zone, and **Lloyds of London** is not willing to provide insurance coverage to merchant shipping in the areas due to the US operation.

America's Bombs, Europe's Losses: The Hidden War Behind Operation Rough Rider

One could even fathom that the US was well aware of this fact, and knew that there would be externalities, and this would hurt another one of its purported friends, and “real rival” who has gotten rich as a result of US trade policies over the years and the American taxpayer's subsidy to the defense of old Europe.

One has to listen to the news, with a smile and tongue in cheek, how National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, who inadvertently added a journalist to a group chat that discussed Yemen strike plans, speaks as he sits with U.S. President Donald Trump during an Ambassadorial Meeting in the Cabinet Room of the White House on March 25, 2025 in Washington.

This comes as close to Machiavellian as possible, due to the potential fallout, economic impact, and the fear it spreads to allies, and especially those most economically affected—as in the case of the EU.

While the operation is not explicitly targeted at the European Union (EU), at least openly, it has far-reaching implications for European interests. The Red Sea is a critical maritime route for global trade, including that of EU member states. Houthi attacks on shipping lanes have disrupted international commerce, affecting European economies which are too reliant on these trade routes.

Some U.S. officials have expressed concerns about the operation's focus, suggesting that the benefits may accrue more to European allies than to the United States itself. For instance, a U.S. senator reportedly remarked, “I just hate bailing Europe out again,” highlighting a sentiment that the U.S. is bearing the operational costs while Europe reaps the benefits of secured trade routes.

The supposedly leaked war plans on the Signal Group Chat, may not have been accidentally leaked at all, and are most revealing. To put it simply, it not only exposed U.S. officials

discussing airstrikes on Yemen's Houthis but how they not only distrust Europe but OPENLY despise it,

We can glean how VP JD Vance, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio weren't just discussing military strategy, but were ranting about the freeloading of the Europeans, how they would be benefiting more from the planned US strikes, and how it was the Americans who were bailing out the Europeans.

Even Trump shared similar views a month ago, and in a nutshell, he claimed the EU was "formed to screw the United States." I don't know if that is politically acceptable from any other than Trump but what he is saying hits home with many, as, from Trump's perspective, the actions of the EU, aside from pushing for a continued war in Ukraine, look like **economic warfare cloaked in bureaucracy**, where U.S. wealth is siphoned off through **unfair trade practices**/

Who is Screwing Who?

It is the American taxpayers who are picking up the tab for the Defense of Europe, and even this military operation against Yemen, in theory, should help Europe more but in reality, now no ships are passing, who is screwing who now?

Operation "Rough Rider" may be framed in the guise of protecting international shipping lanes and addressing regional instability, but its true impact—and likely intent—appears far more strategic.

Though publicly justified as a response to Houthi aggression, the disruption of Red Sea trade routes has hit the European Union hardest—not Israel or the United States. Israel had already suffered from earlier Houthi blockades. Whether by design or fortunate consequence, the operation has undermined a key economic rival under the guise of humanitarian aid and security enforcement.

As U.S. political elites openly mock European allies and leak plans with startling candor, the lines between defense, deception, and economic warfare blur further. If the goal was to punish the Houthis, it has failed. But if the deeper aim was to pressure Europe—economically, politically, and symbolically—then Operation Rough Rider may be succeeding more than it appears.

The **real question** is not why the U.S. is bombing Yemen, but who they really wanted to hit. Behind the façade of humanitarian and free trade concern lies an economic war that's crippling EU trade and shaking global alliances, and sending messages to China, for good measure, that there is more than one way to get the desired results, though it must be said that

the US failure to silence the Houthis, or stop their attacks on shipping, may be sending the wrong message, as I warned earlier.

While the U.S. chips away at a European rival, its struggle against the Houthis exposes the limits of American military power against a determined adversary. In the process, Washington may be weakening its own position. A wider showdown with Iran, despite the bold claims of Trump and Hsghith about America's "unrivaled power," could prove just as costly—and just as ineffective.

[Henry Kamens](#), April 26, 2025

Henry Kamens, columnist, expert on Central Asia and Caucasus