

An Israeli Perspective on the Houthis

From Local Yemeni Movement to Strategic Threat to the Red Sea and Beyond

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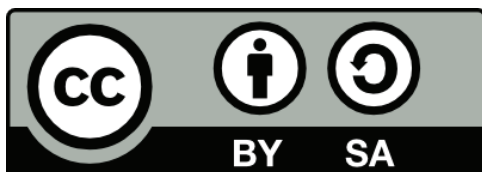
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Summary

Understanding this transformation is essential because the Houthi challenge will not disappear with another ceasefire in Yemen or even with a broader agreement between Iran and the United States. The Houthis have developed their own political objectives, ideological worldview, and strategic capabilities. Iran played a critical role in accelerating this transformation, but describing the Houthis simply as an Iranian proxy obscures rather than explains the problem.

The Houthis are no longer a peripheral Yemeni problem. What began as a Zaydi revivalist movement in Yemen's northern province of Sa'ada has evolved into one of the Middle East's most consequential armed actors. Today, the Houthis possess ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, drones, and anti-ship capabilities; threaten Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the stability of the whole region; can disrupt one of the world's most important maritime corridors; and are developing relationships across the Horn of Africa.

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Introduction

The Houthi movement turned from a local actor in Yemen into a global problem. Over the past decade, it has evolved into an organization capable of threatening critical infrastructure, launching long-range attacks, and disrupting one of the world's most important maritime corridors. What began as a local insurgency has become a challenge with direct implications for Middle Eastern stability, international trade, and global security.

For Germany and Europe, the significance of the Houthi challenge lies above all in the Houthis' ability to threaten the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. Disruptions to these routes affect European supply chains, trade routes, and energy security at a time when insecurity surrounding the Strait of Hormuz and threats arising from Russia have reached unprecedented levels. For Israel, the threat is even more immediate. Since October 2023, the Houthis have demonstrated both the capability and the intent to attack Israeli territory while simultaneously using maritime pressure as a strategic tool. For the Arab Gulf states, the threat is even more direct. Saudi Arabia in particular has repeatedly faced missile and drone attacks against airports, energy infrastructure, and critical economic assets, resulting in casualties, injuries, and significant economic disruption. Although Europe, Israel and Saudi Arabia approach the region from different perspectives, they face the consequences of the same phenomenon: the rise of a heavily armed, Iran-aligned actor capable of undermining regional stability, threatening critical infrastructure and the freedom of navigation upon which global commerce depends.

The future trajectory of the Houthi challenge remains uncertain. A relatively favorable outcome would see the movement contained through a combination of regional partnerships, strengthened maritime security, and effective deterrence, limiting its ability to threaten shipping and neighboring states. A more likely possibility is continued regionalization, with the Houthis deepening cooperation with other Iran-backed actors and maintaining persistent pressure on Israel, Saudi Arabia, and international trade routes. This scenario could lead to improved relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia after years of contention due to the Hamas attack on October 7 and the following war in Gaza. In the most adverse scenario, the Houthis could further consolidate their position around the Red Sea, transforming themselves from a powerful Yemeni faction into a dominant regional actor capable of exerting sustained influence over one of the world's most strategically important maritime chokepoints, causing economic and political costs that further threaten the economic well-being of Germany, Europe, and the global economy, also with indirect effects on the war in Ukraine.

This paper argues that the Houthi challenge should no longer be understood as an isolated Yemeni conflict. It has become a shared strategic concern for Israel, Europe, and the Gulf states, requiring a long-term approach that combines security cooperation, maritime protection, regional partnerships, and sustained efforts to limit the movement's military and political expansion.

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The Beginning

The movement, formally “Ansar Allah” and widely known as the “Houthis,” [emerged](#) from Yemen’s Zaydi community in the north. During the 1990s, Hussein Badr al-Din al-Houthi became a central figure in the Zaydi revivalist movement known as the Believing Youth. The movement initially focused on religious and cultural revival but became increasingly political and militant. Hussein al-Houthi was deeply hostile toward the United States and Israel and drew ideological inspiration from Iran’s Islamic Revolution and Hezbollah. Between 2004 and 2010, the movement fought six rounds of war against President Ali Abdullah Saleh’s government. Hussein was killed in 2004, and leadership eventually passed to his younger brother, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi.

Iran did not create the movement. Indeed, little evidence shows that Tehran provided significant

material assistance before 2011, when the Houthis demonstrated resilience and strength within the collapsing Yemeni order. Tehran [increasingly recognized](#) that the Houthis could provide Iran with something extraordinarily valuable: a powerful partner on Saudi Arabia’s southern border and, potentially, influence near Bab al-Mandeb, the southern gateway to the Red Sea. It is also important to emphasize that the Houthis and Iran are not religiously identical, despite both belonging to branches of Shi’a Islam. Iran is overwhelmingly based on Twelver Shiism, which recognizes a line of twelve Imams and holds that the Twelfth Imam entered occultation and will ultimately return. [The Houthis](#), by contrast, emerged from Yemen’s Zaydi Shi’a tradition, historically known as the “Fivers” because the Zaydi line diverged from other Shi’a traditions around the Fifth Imam.

From Sa’ada to Sana’a

The decisive turning point came in 2014. Exploiting the weakness of Yemen’s transitional government, popular grievances, and alliances of convenience, the Houthis advanced south and seized Yemen’s capital, Sana’a, in September 2014.

The Houthis subsequently advanced south toward Aden, prompting Saudi Arabia to launch a military intervention in March 2015. Between 2015 and 2019, the Saudi-led coalition relied heavily on air power, conducting extensive strikes against Houthi military positions, weapons depots, missile launch sites, and command facilities. On the ground, the coalition depended largely on Yemeni forces and its regional partners, particularly the United Arab Emirates, while also imposing maritime restrictions intended to limit the flow of weapons and supplies to the Houthis.

One of the coalition’s immediate priorities was to prevent the Houthis and forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh from taking permanent control of Aden. With coalition air support and significant Emirati involvement, local forces succeeded in driving the Houthis out of the city in July 2015. Saudi Arabia and its partners then sought to secure Aden, including its port and airport, and restore the authority of the internationally recognized Yemeni government.

The Saudi-led campaign achieved important but limited objectives. It prevented the Houthis from consolidating control over the entire country and helped restore Aden and significant parts of southern and eastern Yemen to anti-Houthi forces. But Riyadh failed to retake Sana’a or destroy the movement. Instead, years of warfare entrenched Houthi control over Yemen’s most populous northwestern

regions while creating a fragmented anti-Houthi camp in the south.

Meanwhile, Iran helped transform Houthi military capabilities. [This assistance](#) went far beyond rifles or financial support. The Houthis acquired increasingly sophisticated ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, drones, anti-ship weapons, and surveillance capabilities. With help from the Iranian Quds Force, the Houthis have developed indigenous capacity to build many of these complex systems themselves in Yemen. This represents perhaps Tehran's greatest strategic achievement in Yemen: Iran helped turn a geographically isolated insurgent movement into a force capable of threatening Saudi cities, energy infrastructure, Israel, and international trade.

Yet as mentioned, the relationship should not be [misunderstood](#). The Houthis are strategically aligned with Iran, but they are not an Iranian proxy in the traditional sense. Tehran supplies weapons, technology, expertise, training, and political support; assistance from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Hezbollah has been important to Houthi military development. However, the Houthis have their own leadership, domestic interests, and strategic calculations. Their relationship with Tehran is therefore better understood as an asymmetric strategic partnership in which Iranian and Houthi interests frequently overlap but are not identical.

October 7 and the War Against Israel

Support for the Palestinian cause and hostility toward Israel are [deeply embedded](#) in Houthi ideology. Their slogan itself includes "Death to America" and "Death to Israel," and Hussein al-Houthi's teachings placed confrontation with both countries at the center of the movement's worldview. But Israel nevertheless underestimated the threat from Yemen.

The Houthis [began launching](#) missiles and drones toward Israel on October 19, 2023, when the USS Carney intercepted three cruise missiles and several drones launched from Yemen over the Red Sea. Although the Pentagon initially stated that Israel was only a possible target, the Houthis formally acknowledged their campaign against Israel on October 31, when they claimed responsibility for launching ballistic missiles and drones toward Israeli territory. On the same day, Israel intercepted, using its Arrow missile defense system, a surface-to-surface missile approaching from the Red Sea. [In parallel](#), on December 9, 2023, the

Houthis announced a maritime blockade against Israel, declaring that any vessel heading to an Israeli port, regardless of its nationality or ownership, would be considered a legitimate target. The decision represented a significant escalation from their earlier campaign against Israeli-linked shipping, which had begun in November and included the seizure of the Galaxy Leader on November 19. Although the Houthis did not physically close the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, their attacks and threats increasingly disrupted commercial shipping through the Red Sea, creating substantial economic and security consequences extending well beyond Israel.

The result was strategically significant even when individual missiles were intercepted. Shipping companies rerouted vessels around Africa, while the effective closure of the Red Sea route to Israeli-linked traffic severely damaged activity at Israel's southern port of Eilat.

Israel's Efforts to Strengthen Its Capabilities Against the Houthis

Israel's confrontation with the Houthis has exposed a significant intelligence gap. For years, Yemen was a relatively low priority for Israeli intelligence, and when the Houthis began launching missiles and drones toward Israel in October 2023, Israel lacked the depth of intelligence it had developed over decades against Iran and Hezbollah. Although the Israeli Air Force demonstrated its ability to strike targets more than 1,800 kilometers away, operational reach did not necessarily translate into the ability to inflict lasting damage on the Houthis' military capabilities.

Israel responded with increasingly powerful air strikes against Houthi infrastructure, including the ports of Hodeidah and Salif, power infrastructure, and targets around Sana'a. [In August 2025](#), an Israeli strike killed Houthi-appointed Prime Minister Ahmed al-Rahawi and numerous cabinet officials. Yet even this impressive intelligence and operational achievement demonstrated the limits of air power: many of those killed were administrative officials rather than the core military and ideological leadership controlling the movement. The Houthis survived, continued firing, and retained their strategic capabilities.

Israel has consequently begun investing in a more comprehensive approach to Yemen, combining intelligence development, organizational changes within its military intelligence establishment, and efforts to expand its regional presence.

One important development was [Israel's formal recognition](#) of Somaliland in December 2025. Beyond its diplomatic significance, the decision offers Israel an opportunity to establish a strategic foothold in the Horn of Africa, across the Gulf of Aden from Yemen. Closer relations with Somaliland could improve Israel's understanding of developments around the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, strengthen maritime security cooperation, and potentially provide additional opportunities for intelligence collection. However, diplomatic

recognition does not automatically translate into military access or operational capabilities, and any Israeli security presence would require further agreements with Somaliland.

The potential benefits are significant, particularly given the Houthis' growing ability to threaten shipping through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. At the same time, Israel must recognize the political and security risks associated with a more visible presence in the Horn of Africa. The Houthis have already threatened to target any Israeli military presence in Somaliland, while Somalia and several regional governments have opposed Israel's recognition of the territory.

A second important development has been the expansion of Israel's intelligence infrastructure dedicated to Yemen. During 2025, the Israeli military established additional intelligence capabilities focused specifically on the Houthi threat. These included a [dedicated Yemen desk](#) within the Israeli Air Force's intelligence organization and new intelligence units within the IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate (Aman). Their establishment reflected a growing recognition that Yemen could no longer be treated as a secondary theater.

The objective is to develop a much deeper understanding of the Houthis' military organization, command structure, weapons production capabilities, logistical networks, and decision-making processes. Such intelligence would be particularly important in the event of renewed hostilities, enabling Israel to identify the movement's principal military centers of gravity and conduct more effective operations against capabilities directly supporting attacks on Israeli territory.

The experience of previous Israeli strikes has demonstrated both the potential and the limitations of military force. Israel has targeted ports, energy infrastructure, military facilities, and senior Houthi officials, but the movement has repeatedly

demonstrated its ability to absorb punishment and continue operating. The central challenge is therefore not simply to expand the scale of Israeli strikes, but to improve the intelligence foundation on which military operations depend. Even with better intelligence, however, may not change the Houthis' strategic calculations.

A third element concerns Saudi Arabia. The renewed confrontation between Riyadh and the Houthis has created an opportunity for limited security cooperation between Israel and Saudi Arabia, particularly in intelligence sharing, missile defense, and early warning. Israel's experience countering Iranian missiles and drones, combined with its expanding knowledge of Houthi capabilities, could provide valuable assistance to Saudi Arabia as it seeks to protect its population, military installations, and critical infrastructure.

[Reports](#) in September 2026 indicated that Israel and Saudi Arabia had discussed intelligence cooperation through U.S. Central Command. Such cooperation could serve both countries without requiring formal diplomatic relations. For Israel, helping Saudi Arabia confront the Houthi threat could contribute to regional stability and reduce the ability of an Iran-aligned armed movement to threaten the Red Sea and neighboring countries.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that security cooperation against the Houthis will produce a breakthrough in Israeli-Saudi normalization. Riyadh's position on normalization remains closely linked to the Palestinian issue and to broader regional and domestic political considerations. Shared security interests may create opportunities for practical cooperation, but they cannot substitute for the political conditions Saudi Arabia considers necessary for establishing formal diplomatic relations with Israel.

Ultimately, Israel's challenge is to move beyond a strategy based primarily on retaliatory airstrikes toward a sustained effort to understand the Houthis, strengthen its regional partnerships, and improve its ability to counter their military capabilities. Recognition of Somaliland, expanded intelligence resources devoted to Yemen, and potential intelligence cooperation with Saudi Arabia all reflect this adjustment. Yet none of these measures, individually or collectively, guarantees a decisive outcome. Israel's objective should be to reduce the threat posed by the Houthis while avoiding the assumption that military superiority alone can resolve the conflict.

The War Against Iran and the Houthi Response

The war that began on February 28, 2026, provided an even clearer demonstration of the unusual Iran-Houthi relationship. Despite their close strategic partnership with Tehran, the Houthis initially stayed out of the war. For about a month, they avoided large-scale intervention [due to](#) a calculated strategy of self-preservation, severe military degradation, and tactical coordination, before ultimately entering the war a month later in March. On March 28, they launched a confirmed attack against Israel, but they did not immediately reopen a full campaign against Red Sea shipping.

This war also exposed the [close relations](#) between the Houthis and the Shi'a militias in Iraq. The relationship has transformed from a loose ideological alignment into a tightly integrated, operational alliance that forms a core pillar of the Iranian-led "Axis of Resistance." Under IRGC direction and funding, both factions have established a joint operations command center to synchronize tactical orders and alert statuses in real time. This collaboration manifests on the ground through coordinated drone and cruise missile salvos targeting strategic assets in Israel, attempting to overwhelm regional

air defense networks from multiple fronts simultaneously. Beyond offensive operations, the Iraqi–Yemeni axis facilitates the exchange of advanced technological expertise, smuggling methods, and covert procurement networks for precision weapon components. Ultimately, this integration

aims to operationalize Tehran’s “Circle of Fire” strategy, leveraging the Houthis’ maritime leverage in the Red Sea and the Iraqi militias’ geographical proximity to apply continuous pressure on Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel.

The Road to a New Saudi–Houthi War

The end of the latest phase of the regional war between the U.S. and Iran did not resolve the conflict in Yemen. Instead, it created another opportunity for the Houthis. The movement sought to translate its improved strategic position into relief from the restrictions imposed on Houthi-controlled Yemen and greater political recognition. Renewed disputes over access to Sana’a International Airport and maritime and aerial restrictions contributed to escalating confrontation. In July, Yemeni government [forces struck](#) the runway at Sana’a airport to prevent an Iranian aircraft from landing, illustrating how control of air access had itself become part of the confrontation.

The Houthis subsequently adopted an increasingly explicit logic of “blockade for blockade.” If Houthi-controlled Yemen remained restricted, Saudi Arabia’s ability to export energy and use the Red Sea would also be threatened. This fundamentally changes Saudi Arabia’s strategic dilemma. For years, Riyadh hoped that de-escalation, economic incentives and negotiations could contain the Houthi threat. At the same time, disagreements between Saudi Arabia and the UAE and fragmentation among their Yemeni partners weakened the anti-Houthi front. [But](#) the Houthi offensive in Yemen forced Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to sideline an intense diplomatic rift and finalize an emergency pact in Riyadh. To block Houthi advances and secure the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, both nations placed their local proxy militias under a single command structure for the newly launched Operation “Yemen Dawn.” While the UAE and Israel leverage the Abraham Accords

for deep intelligence and defensive sharing against Iranian proxies, Saudi Arabia refuses formal normalization with Jerusalem. Instead, Riyadh maintains strictly tactical, back-channel cooperation with Israel and the Emirates, preferring to build separate defense arrangements with partners like Pakistan and Turkey.

The Houthis exploited those divisions. Their September 2026 [offensive](#) produced one of the most important changes in the Yemeni war in years. Houthi forces captured Mokha and nearby territory and islands and advanced toward positions overlooking Bab al-Mandeb. [Iranian assistance to the Houthis](#) in their current military campaign against Saudi Arabia relies on deep operational integration, intelligence sharing, and persistent weapons smuggling pipelines. IRGC advisers reportedly provided intelligence, training, and other direct assistance during the offensive. Saudi Arabia now faces an extraordinarily difficult choice. It can continue a costly military campaign against an adversary that has demonstrated an enormous capacity to absorb punishment or negotiate from a position in which the Houthis can demand major concessions, including the lifting of restrictions on Houthi-controlled Yemen. The Houthis’ [primary strategic demand is](#) the permanent and unconditional removal of all maritime and aerial blockades. They will not accept partial economic concessions or temporary pauses. For Sana’a, a permanent end to economic restrictions is the baseline for any conversation, effectively institutionalizing their control over northern Yemen.

Recent Developments

The Houthis launched a wave of [ballistic missiles](#), cruise missiles, and drones deep into Saudi Arabia. The strikes hit Saudi Aramco oil facilities, triggering major fires in Riyadh, Khurais, and Rabigh. Additional attacks hit civilian and military airports, including King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, Abha Airport, and bases in Khamis Mushait and Najran, killing three people and wounding dozens. Following the strikes, new defensive cage fences were erected around Aramco fuel tanks near the Riyadh airport.

On the ground, Houthi forces have made [slow but steady advances](#) in southwest Yemen. Moving from Taiz province, Houthi ground forces advanced toward Aden, the temporary capital of the Saudi-backed Yemeni government. To cut off government supply lines, Houthi forces targeted the strategic routes connecting Taiz to Aden. They fired missiles directly at Aden International Airport shortly before a scheduled civilian flight landing.

The Saudi-led coalition responded with a heavy aerial campaign, conducting over 100 airstrikes

within 24 hours. The bombardments targeted Houthi strongholds in Sana'a, Taiz, Sa'ada, al-Jawf, and Amran, focusing on mobile missile launch platforms. Rashad al-Alimi, head of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council, [declared](#) Operation "Yemen Dawn" to counter the Houthi advances. Backed by over 100 coalition warplanes, the counteroffensive aims to retake the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, clear the western Red Sea coast, and advance toward Sana'a. By backing this campaign, Saudi Arabia faces distinct risks:

- **Economic Vulnerability:** Houthi strikes on inland Aramco infrastructure disrupt operations and impact global oil markets.
- **Trade Route Disruptions:** With restrictions in the Strait of Hormuz, Saudi Arabia depends heavily on its Red Sea ports. Houthi operations near the Bab al-Mandeb Strait threaten these alternative shipping routes.
- **End of the Truce:** This escalation ends the fragile ceasefire negotiations, returning Saudi Arabia to a direct war of attrition.

The European Dimension

This is why the latest British and French decisions matter. The United Kingdom announced additional military assistance to Saudi Arabia, including an RAF Voyager aircraft to provide air-to-air refueling supporting Saudi defensive operations. British personnel and air defense capabilities were already helping defend Saudi territory against missile and drone attacks. [France](#) went further in protecting critical infrastructure. President Emmanuel Macron announced the deployment of troops, radars and air defense systems to help protect Yanbu, Saudi Arabia's strategically vital Red Sea oil terminal.

This should become the foundation for a broader European role. Protecting Yanbu is not simply

defending Saudi Arabia. The security of Saudi energy exports, Bab al-Mandeb, and the Red Sea directly affects European energy security, the Suez route, and global trade. Europe therefore has a [direct strategic interest](#) in preventing the Houthis from acquiring the ability to determine when vessels can safely transit the southern Red Sea. The risk of a "double choke point" scenario, with the Strait of Hormuz heavily restricted due to the broader war with Iran and the Bab al-Mandeb under siege, directly threatens European energy security and global trade.

[Operation Aspides](#) was never fully dismantled; the European Council officially extended its mandate

until February 28, 2027. However, the escalation following the Houthi ground offensive and their seizure of critical chokepoints like the port of Mokha and Perim Island created a new environment, including a higher threat level, for which the mission is under-resourced and structurally unequipped.

The Houthi challenge is also expanding beyond Yemen. The clearest example is Somalia. The Houthis and the terrorist organization al-Shabaab have reportedly developed ties [involving](#) arms transfers and the provision of technical expertise from the Houthis to al-Shabaab. A later UN investigation reported growing cooperation, including training for al-Shabaab personnel in improvised

explosive devices, drone technology, and weapons maintenance. This development should be treated seriously. Houthi influence on the African side of the Gulf of Aden could create a strategic ecosystem connecting Yemen with smuggling networks and militant organizations across the Horn of Africa. Reports of Houthi contacts and networks elsewhere in the Horn, including around Eritrea and Ethiopia, require further verification.

The response must therefore include stronger intelligence and security cooperation with governments across the Horn of Africa, maritime surveillance, counter-smuggling operations and assistance to states vulnerable to Houthi penetration.

No Quick Solutions – Recommendations

The most important conclusion is that there is no quick solution to the Houthi problem. A ceasefire may be desirable and necessary, but an agreement that leaves the Houthis with their growing military arsenal and control over strategic territory risks postponing rather than resolving the problem. The movement has repeatedly shown it can turn periods of reduced conflict into opportunities to rebuild, acquire technology and strengthen its political position.

A sustainable strategy therefore requires several simultaneous efforts:

1. Saudi Arabia requires sustained international defensive assistance, particularly against ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones. The British and French deployments should be viewed as the beginning of a broader European commitment rather than temporary emergency measures.
2. An international maritime coalition must guarantee freedom of navigation through Bab al-Mandeb and the Red Sea. Maritime security cannot depend on Houthi calculations about which countries or vessels are legitimate targets.
3. Interdiction efforts against Iranian weapons and dual-use components must be strengthened. Smuggling routes through the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and networks connected to Oman require significantly greater surveillance and diplomatic attention. The objective should not be to sever every Iranian-Houthi relationship, an unrealistic goal, but to make the continuous upgrading of Houthi strategic capabilities substantially more difficult.
4. The African dimension must become part of Red Sea strategy. Cooperation with Somalia and other Horn of Africa states should focus on preventing weapons transfers, training networks, and the development of a Houthi-al-Shabaab operational ecosystem. The emerging relationship between the Houthis and al-Shabaab demonstrates that the threat can no longer be understood solely through the geography of Yemen.

5. A diplomatic agreement with Iran will not automatically resolve the Houthi challenge. Tehran has enormous influence, but the Houthis have become an autonomous regional actor with their own ideology, interests, and ambitions.
6. The priority should be to build a viable anti-Houthi force in southern Yemen, capable of changing the balance of power over time. Saudi support should therefore focus on transforming its local partners into a credible military and political counterweight to the Houthis—one that could eventually support a broader campaign if deterrence and diplomacy fail.
7. A parallel priority should be sustained engagement with the Iraqi government to weaken the increasingly important relationship between the Houthis in Yemen and Iran-backed Shi'a militias in Iraq, particularly Kataib Hezbollah and Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba. This relationship has moved beyond ideological solidarity: the Houthis and Iraqi factions have publicly claimed joint

military operations, while reporting has documented Houthi personnel operating alongside Iraqi militia elements.

The question is therefore no longer how to eliminate the Houthi problem. That objective is unrealistic under current conditions. The challenge is to build a long-term regional and international architecture capable of containing Houthi expansion, protecting Saudi Arabia and the Horn of Africa, restricting Iranian military assistance, and ensuring that no armed movement can hold freedom of navigation through Bab al-Mandeb hostage to its political and ideological objectives.

The Houthi challenge is not going away. Strategy must finally begin from that premise. That is the strategic reality now confronting Saudi Arabia, Israel, Europe, and the United States. The Houthis have survived years of Saudi-led warfare, American and Israeli strikes, economic hardship and political isolation. They have emerged with greater military capabilities, wider regional ambitions and an increasingly important position overlooking one of the world's most strategically significant maritime corridors.

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