

Houthi Actions Threaten Economic Security of US, allies, Del Toro Says



Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro speaks with Marines, Sailors and civilians from U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart during a visit to U.S. Army Garrison Panzer Kaserne, Stuttgart, Germany, Jan. 22. *U.S. Marine Corps | Cpl. Jacob Richardson*

LONDON □ Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro defended recent U.S. and allied military actions against Houthi militants in the Red Sea, saying Houthi strikes against commercial shipping threaten freedom of navigation and the economic security of the United States and its allies.

“Iran □ through its Houthi proxies □ aims to impose real economic costs on the rest of the world by increasing shipping costs and maritime insurance rates, as well as the time it takes goods to reach their intended ports,” Del Toro said in a speech at the Royal United Services Institute here, the world’s oldest defense and security think tank.

“Make no mistake, these costs aren’t borne by Iran. Rather, they are a burden on the everyday American, Briton, and European, and are paid for at the gas pump, at the grocery store, at the pharmacy, not to mention the delays in the shipping of everyday household items.

“The Houthis’ actions in the Red Sea are sending reverberations across the global economy and are felt in almost every facet of our lives.”

He also noted they have come at a direct cost in U.S. Navy lives, as this week the service suspended the search for two missing Navy SEALs, Petty Officer First Class Christopher Chambers and Petty Officer Second Class Nathan Ingram, who

were attempting to intercept Iranian lethal aid to the Houthis.

“We will honor these men and their ultimate sacrifice by continuing to counter Iran’s malign actions in our shared maritime commons as they attempt to spread their influence across the region, and across the world,” Del Toro said.

The Navy secretary spoke in London after first visiting allies in Germany and meeting with leaders from U.S. Africa Command and European Command. He said future security in the Atlantic hinges on the ability of the allies to address common challenges in the maritime domain.

“These challenges include adapting to the effects of climate change, deterring piracy, combatting narcotics and human trafficking, and countering illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing,” he said.

“We are committed to working with all of our Atlantic partners and allies — across Europe, Africa, as well as North, Central, and South America — to achieve lasting solutions that preserve our shared maritime economic resources. And as we look across the Atlantic, it is imperative that we also give due attention to the increased activity in the Arctic region.”

China’s “aggressive” foreign policy and illegal territorial claims are also threats, which will be challenged by the AUKUS security partnership between the U.S., the U.K. and Australia, which aims to equip Australia with new nuclear-powered submarines.

“As part of AUKUS, we will also begin deploying Virginia and Astute-Class submarines to Australia as a part of Submarine Rotational Force-West, based out of HMAS Stirling, providing a constant, forward presence of our undersea fleets,” Del Toro said.

Our presence at HMAS Stirling will be essential for developing

vital skills necessary to establish, operate, and sustain the Royal Australian Navy's future nuclear-powered submarine fleet.