

# UK Starmer government joins US in attacks on Houthis, declares Washington “closest security ally”

Robert Stevens  
30 April 2025

On Tuesday evening Britain’s Royal Air Force (RAF) joined the US in attacking Houthi forces in Yemen.

A Ministry of Defence (MoD) statement claimed, “Careful intelligence analysis identified a cluster of buildings, used by the Houthis to manufacture drones of the type used to attack ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, located some fifteen miles south of Sanaa.

“Royal Air Force Typhoon FGR4s, with air refuelling support from Voyager tankers, therefore engaged a number of these buildings using Paveway IV precision guided bombs, once very careful planning had been completed to allow the targets to be prosecuted with minimal risk to civilians or non-military infrastructure.”

The Paveway bombs, costing £30,000 each, contain a 500lb warhead able to penetrate concrete and are the “go-to” missile weapon of the RAF.

The operation was the first time that the UK armed forces have struck a target in Yemen since May last year. That was the culmination of a series of five joint naval and air strikes conducted by US and UK forces against the Houthis from January 11 to May 30, 2024.

The US bombardment of Yemen was triggered by statements in November 2023 by the Houthi movement that it would block the passage of Israeli ships through the Red Sea, a waterway critical for US control of the region, in response to Israel’s genocide in Gaza.

The previous strikes by Britain on Yemen were carried out by the Sunak Conservative government alongside Biden’s Democratic Party administration. This week’s joint operation with US forces was the first by the UK since Donald Trump was re-elected last November.

They were authorized by Sir Keir Starmer’s Labour government, which is desperately trying to win favour with Trump. The attack on Yemen took place within hours of it emerging that Trump has made a trade deal with the UK only a second or even third-order priority. The *Guardian* reported Tuesday that after weeks of negotiations—with Starmer’s government seeking to cut US tariffs on steel, aluminium and cars as part of any deal—“US officials have decided to split their negotiations with more than a dozen other countries into three phases, with the UK being placed in either phase two or three, according to people who have been briefed on the talks.”

As with the Tory’s previous military strikes on Yemen, which Labour as the main opposition party backed unreservedly, there was no parliamentary vote. But such is the unanimity among the main parties of the ruling class that this is now viewed as unnecessary.

Announcing details of the resumption of Britain’s bombing of Yemen to the House of Commons on Wednesday, Defence Minister John Healey said, “We did so in collective self-defence and to uphold freedom of navigation as Britain has always done... yesterday’s operation was carried out alongside the US, our closest security ally.”

Healey stressed that the operation was “conducted in line... with the established UK policy of this government and the last. And in opposition... you’ll remember that Labour backed the government when it conducted five separate strikes with the US against Houthi targets.”

Healey added, “This government rejects any Houthi claims that attacking ships in the Red Sea is somehow supporting Gaza ... these attacks do absolutely nothing for the Palestinian people or the push for a lasting

peace.” This from a government which has backed Israel’s genocide of the Palestinians to the hilt.

Healey took the opportunity to beat the drums of war, declaring, “Make no mistake Houthis act as an agent of instability. They continue to receive backing from Iran, both military and financial, and even Russia has attempted to support the Houthi operations. The aggression in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden is yet another example of how our adversaries are increasing working together against our interests.”

Healey hailed the huge surge in US attacks under Trump, saying “since last month the US has been conducting a sustained campaign against the Houthis in Yemen. They moved two carriers into the region. Their recent strikes have destroyed multiple command and control centres” and military facilities. He reiterated that the “US continues to be the UK’s closest security ally, they’re stepping up in the Red Sea. We are alongside them.”

He described “yesterday’s joint operation” as building on “the broader support that we have provided to the US in the region in recent months.” This included “air to air refuelling, the use of our important military base in Diego Garcia for regional security operations and RAF Typhoons to support the defence of the US Carrier Strike Group.”

Healey made no mention of the critical role that another UK military base, RAF Akrotiri, has played in support of Israel’s slaughter. In March *Declassified UK* published findings of an investigation they commissioned by Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) showing that the RAF “has conducted at least 518 surveillance flights around Gaza since December 2023.”

Declassified reported, “AOAV’s analysis of flight-tracking data shows that between 3 December 2023 and 27 March 2025, the RAF carried out at least 518 Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) flights over or close to Gaza’s airspace.

“Both Labour and Conservative governments have enacted the policy, with at least 215 flights taking place during Keir Starmer’s tenure as prime minister and 303 under Rishi Sunak’s administration.

“The frequency of flights remained high throughout 2024 [Starmer came to office in July 2024], with some months seeing as many as 49 sorties. The missions have typically lasted up to six hours, with the longest

flight recorded at seven hours and four minutes.”

The defence secretary parroted Trump’s incessant demand that NATO countries massively upscale military spending and not rely on the US shouldering the cost of imperialist operations. “The UK is now stepping up and encouraging allies to do more to protect our common security, just as we are with last week’s deployment of our own Carrier Strike Group starting an eight month deployment into the Mediterranean and Indo-Pacific,” said Healey.

The day before, the UK’s *Prince of Wales* aircraft carrier and supporting flotilla arrived in the Mediterranean Sea. After taking part in a major NATO exercise, Neptune Strike 25, the UK’s Carrier Strike Group will traverse the Red Sea and Bab-el-Mandeb Strait chokepoint—connecting the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden—the major flashpoint in the war on the Houthis.

In his paeon to US and British militarism, Healey was careful not to mention the savage attack the US carried out on in Yemen on Monday evening, just 24 hours prior to the US-UK strikes. That strike killed 68 people at a migrant detention facility in Yemen’s Sa’ada province—one of the worst massacres of civilians to date in the Trump administration’s war on Yemen. Trump is pledged to “completely annihilate” the Houthis.

Neither was there any mention of the fact that between 2015 and 2022, Yemen was subjected to a Saudi-US campaign of bombardment and deliberate starvation that led to the deaths of as many as 400,000 people.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**