

Houthi attack on SOUNION: What does it mean?



What happened?

- Greek-flagged oil tanker was attacked by Yemen's Houthis on August 21-23, 2024, 77 nms. west of Hudeidah/Yemen as it was assumed violating the blockade on Israeli ports.
- SOUNION was reported shipping crude oil (150.000 metric tons) enroute from Iraq to Greece, and claimed to carry explosives/oil from India to Israel (not confirmed).
- SOUNION was the third vessel operated by the Athens based Delta Tankers targeted in the Red Sea in August, 2024.
- 25 crew members were rescued by French Cruiser (Operation Aspides) present in the region in the wake of final assault.
- The attack on the SOUNION set fire and adrift, claimed to causing environmental disaster in the region in the Western media, claimed the attack was conducted to prevent humanitarian disaster in Gaza, by pro-Houthi media.

If the Western presence in Red Sea,	failed to intercept	(intentionally) not intercepted
1 st order effect	Houthis are still effective in targeting international shipments violating the blockade on Israel	Letting Houthis to damage Greece shipments, and messaging about the future shipments that are potentially evading the sanctions on Russia (if India connection can be confirmed)
2 nd order effect	Demonstrating the Western ineffectiveness to secure international shipping and maritime lines of communication	Increasing Greece, Southern Cyprus and European involvement in defence of Israel, by letting Houthis to be effective in imposing the blockade
3 rd order effect	Might peel off allies from the US and UK led posturing against Iran and its proxies as the pressures on global economy mount	Refraining from escalatory moves against Iran and its proxies to delay further the expected retaliation

So What?

The attack showcased ongoing effectiveness of Houthis in targeting international shipping that are deemed to violate the blockade imposed on Israel, and ineffectiveness of Western posturing to deter Houthis to refrain from attacks. Consistent targeting of Greek assets indicates that Houthis are uneasy about Greek support to the US and UK, particularly with the use of UK bases in Cyprus Island, and support of Southern Cyprus.

What to Monitor?

- the level of support of Greece and Southern Cyprus to Israel, the US, and UK
- the level of Greece flagged shipments from India that are deemed evading sanctions on Russia
- the outcome of ongoing ceasefire talks on Gaza

What to Expect?

- presuming an increase in Greece and Southern Cyprus involvement in the defence of Israel, the failure of the ceasefire talks, the targeting of Greece flagged shipments will likely persist, and the bases in the Cyprus Island will plausibly become targets of Hezbollah.