

Houthi Explosive USV Detonated in Red Sea Attack



BAHRAIN (Jan. 2, 2024) Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. 5th Fleet, speaks with Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Carney (DDG 64) after presenting combat medals to Sailors while the ship is in Bahrain, Jan. 2, 2024. Cooper also recognized the whole Carney crew with the Combat Action Ribbon. On Dec. 16, Carney Sailors shot down 14 Houthi unmanned aerial vehicles in the Red Sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob Vernier)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va.—An uncrewed surface vessel (USV) was detonated in the international shipping lanes Jan. 4 in the latest attack launched from Yemen by Houthi rebels.

“Fortunately, there were no casualties, and no ships were hit, but the introduction of a one-way attack USV is of concern,”

said U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, commander, U.S. Fifth Fleet and commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, and commander, Combined Maritime Forces, speaking to reporters in a June 4 teleconference.

The attack was the 25th against merchant ships in the Red Sea since mid-November.

In response to the attacks, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on Dec. 18 launched Operation Prosperity Guardian, a multinational effort to protect shipping through the Red Sea and Bab-el-Mandeb Strait. The Combined Maritime Forces under Commander, Task Force 153, are conducting the operation.

Cooper said that the coalition forces had shot down 11 drones, two cruise missiles, and two antiship ballistic missiles launched from Yemen since the operation began. In addition, three of four Houthi attack boats, which fired on U.S. Navy helicopters, were then destroyed by U.S. Navy MH-60 helicopters from the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Gravely and the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Cooper said a total of 61 drones and missiles had been shot down by U.S. Navy destroyers and F/A-18 Super Hornet strike fighters over the last two months. Other drones and missiles have been shot down by ships of the Royal Navy and French Navy.

Cooper made three key points in the conference:

“By number one, the number of nations participating has grown. Their contributions are meaningful, and our partners are doing great work at sea. Number two, about 1,500 merchant ships have safely transited the waters of the Red Sea since the operation began. And then number three, our collaboration with the maritime shipping industry has increased dramatically. We’re reassuring them through persistent communications that are characterized as two-way, both before and during transits, so

that's going well.

"Now, having said this, the Houthi ruthless attacks have continued, as you know, and there are no signs their irresponsible behavior is abating," he said.