



Ministry
of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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THE EARL OF MINTO
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

4/8/1/1/ap

13 March 2024

Dear Archie,

Thank you for your question during the statement on the Red Sea on 29 February. You asked about French and German efforts to suppress the Houthis.

Germany and France are both members of the EU-led Operation ASPIDES, which aims to protect vessels against ongoing attacks in the Red Sea, accompany vessels, and reinforce maritime situational awareness. The mandate of this mission is purely defensive and does not include the conduct of any strikes. Germany has sent the frigate Hessen as part of Operation ASPIDES, and the French frigate Alsace has also joined the operation.

France is also contributing the Languedoc to the US-led Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN, which was established to ensure freedom of navigation through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The naval force includes three US destroyers, one UK destroyer (HMS Diamond) and one French warship (FS Languedoc), which is returning to France in March 2024. All three nations have successfully intercepted Houthi attacks.

We will continue to work alongside Germany and France to deter acts of Houthi aggression to protect and uphold freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

THE EARL OF MINTO

The Rt Hon the Lord Hamilton of Epsom
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