Iran Supporting Houthis with Mandab 1 Naval Missiles

By Salman Askar
Translation by Maya Hardimon
November 14, 2017

A Houthi commander acknowledged that the missiles made available to his group are Iranian-made and referred to by different names, such as Shahab 1, Scud B, Toskha, and others. In a statement to Al Watan, he confirmed that Houthi rebels sent delegations to Hezbollah experts in Lebanon for 6 months to train on how to manufacture these missiles. He stressed that experts from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah militias were the ones overseeing the firing of ballistic missiles toward Saudi Territory.

Smuggling Methods
The commander adds that “there are those who claim that the Houthi’s missile power comes from the Yemeni army and Russian ballistic missile development, but facts in the field contradict this, as the composition of the missiles and their launch process mimic Iranian missiles completely.” He revealed the recent entry of Iranian missile payments into Yemen, mostly for “Shahab” missiles, and that the smuggling process involves small fragments coming in through neighboring countries before being reassembled and launched. The commander stated that the Houthis possess a new missile called “Mandab 1,” a naval missile that Houthi militias are seeking to use to protect the city of Al Hudaydah and its ports from the advance of legitimate forces. This constitutes a new threat to international navigation.

Sarcastic Claims
A Yemeni source ridiculed Houthi claims about Yemeni missile experts, wondering why these experts did not appear until Sana’a and the Northern Provinces falls to the revolutionaries.

The source continued, “all we know from recent periods is that the head of the so-called Revolutionary Committee, Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, was a khat seller, that the so-called Head of Intelligence, Abi Ali al-Hakim, has stolen chickens and gas cylinders, and that Fares Mana’a was smuggling drugs and weapons. We know that the coup’s Minister of Education, Yahia al-Houthi, remains ignorant and has not entered the classrooms at all, and that Hassan Zaid doesn’t understand anything about politics.

Experts from the Former Regime
In a statement to Al Watan, Major General Mohsen Nasser, the scud missile commander under the former Saleh administration, confirmed that all missiles currently being used by the Houthis are supplied by Iran, citing the existence of similar missiles in the previous Yemeni army.

Nasser denied the existence of any former naval missiles other than a “70 kg Rubit” that is completely out of date. He warned that Iranian missiles in the hands of the rebels could threaten maritime navigation, from the islands of Perim and Kamaran to the strategic strait of Bab al-Mandab.
Nasser stressed that the Houthi missiles have no missile expertise. He pointed out that there were few missile experts in the former regime, and they didn’t have much expertise on the use of these missiles.

**Exploiting the Political Vacuum**
Nasser revealed that during the time that President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi was under house arrest in Sana’a, Iranian planes landed in Sana’a airport loaded with spare parts and missile fuel, which was in addition to their regular trips that often included up to ten trips a day. Later, the militias were supplied with military hardware and equipment for the interior provinces, most notably Saada and Hajjah. “Further quantities of missile parts and weapons come through maritime smuggling,” he added, noting that the installation, processing, and launching of missiles requires experts and technicians with extensive experience in the field. He pointed out that secret dirt pathways are helping the rebels deliver weapons and missiles to the fighting fronts.

Nasser stressed that, based on his experience with missiles in the former Yemeni army, there are only around 12 missiles in the military arsenal with ranges of less than 500 kilometers, with the remainder being short-range missiles and many needing periodic maintenance. He stressed that a military settlement will be needed to defeat the militias and diminish Iranian influence.