

Ein amerikanischer Freund schreibt mir:

Menno,

Thanks for the detailed essay.

Unfortunately, most of its points are misleading or irrelevant.

Some points:

--The Iranians fired the missiles from Iranian territory.

--The Hufhi claim of responsibility is a transparent effort to confuse the issue. The Huthis likely coordinated this messaging in advance with their Iranian masters.

--The Iranian attacks on Saudi oil should be seen in the context of a long-term plan of aggression stretching from Lebanon and Yemen to Afghanistan. Many details of their aggression are not publicly known.

--The recent escalations (tanker attacks, the Abqaiq missile attack) test how far Iran can go without serious US retaliation. Answer: quite far, since they have taken 50 percent of Saudi output offline.

-- The US has economic sanctions to use, but these are of declining effectiveness, since China and others are ignoring them.

--US military options are limited, since they would likely have to escalate quickly to all-out war, the consequences of which are unknowable. Many or most Sunni Arab states are highly unstable, and the risk of regional chaos is high.

--Precision missiles now based in Iran and Lebanon could destroy a wide range of critical infrastructure in Israel, Saudi Arabia and the GCC states.

--Iran has a full range of limited and not so limited military options. In game-theoretical terms, it has escalation dominance.

--If this is Iran's strategic position without nuclear weapons, imagine what it will do with nuclear weapons. Anyone who believes their nuclear program is peaceful is worse than naive.