

BREAKING FROM SAUDI ARABIA!!! TWO MONTH OLD MISLEADING NEWS

This Reuters exclusive is getting a lot of careless attention. Here's what a careless reader learns:

*Exclusive:
US
withdraws
staff from
Saudi Arabia
dedicated to
Yemen
planning*

From that headline, particularly the use of the present tense, you might assume that the US is in the process of withdrawing its Yemen-related staff from Saudi Arabia, perhaps in response to the Saudi war crimes earlier this week.

But here's what the story actually reports: the staff withdrawal happened in June, and was in no way a response to this week's war crimes.

The June staff withdrawal, which U.S. officials say followed a lull in air strikes in Yemen earlier this year, reduces [sic] Washington's day-to-day involvement in advising a campaign that has come under increasing scrutiny for causing civilian casualties.

In spite of the fact that this "exclusive" – which has since been reported by other outlets with similarly misleading headlines – describes two month old news, it nevertheless obscures that fact with its editorial choices, as here

where it suggests the move “reduces,” in present tense, staff numbers, or the headline which hides that, in fact, the US already withdrew these staffers.

In fact, the report goes on to admit that this was not a response (which would have required a time machine in any case).

U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the reduced staffing was not due to the growing international outcry over civilian casualties in the 16-month civil war that has killed more than 6,500 people in Yemen, about half of them civilians.

But the Pentagon, in some of its strongest language yet, also acknowledged concerns about the conflict, which has brought Yemen close to famine and cost more than \$14 billion in damage to infrastructure and economic losses.

“Even as we assist the Saudis regarding their territorial integrity, it does not mean that we will refrain from expressing our concern about the war in Yemen and how it has been waged,” Stump said.

I’d also suggest that reports about what non-uniformed US personnel are doing in Yemen’s immediate neighborhood would be a better gauge of the support we’re giving Saudi Arabia beyond refueling their airstrikes, the latter of which has not stopped at all.

It’s not until the last line two paragraphs of the story that we learn what this misleading news is really about:

U.S. Representative Ted Lieu, a Democrat from California and a colonel in the Air Force Reserve, said he believed such strikes could help galvanize votes for limiting arms transfers to Saudi Arabia.

“When its repeated air strikes that have now killed children, doctors, newlyweds, patients, at some point you just have to say: Either Saudi Arabia is not listening to the United States or they just don’t care,” Lieu said.

Not long ago, the US announced \$1.5 billion in new arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Congress has a narrow window to affirmatively veto that sale, and people like Ted Lieu and Rand Paul and Chris Murphy are trying to do just that. The arms sale was announced such that Congress has just one day after they come back in session to reject the transfer. Stories like this – suggesting the US is not as involved in this war as it really is – will make the task all the more difficult.

The reality remains that the US, even the overt uniformed operations, continues to provide key support to Saudi Arabia’s war, and therefore to its war crimes. Selling it more arms in the wake of these most recent war crimes only doubles down on the complicity.