

Maersk-Chartered Boxship Continues Voyage Despite Houthi Claims of Strike



Megalopolis' route across the Arabian Sea, Oct. 14-21 (Pole Star)

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The container ship that Yemen's Houthi rebels claimed to have hit on Friday appears to be navigating on its normal commercial route, defying the group's assertion.

On Friday, Houthi spokesman Yahya Saree claimed that the terrorist organization "successfully" hit the boxship *Megalopolis* with a "number of drones," and that the operation achieved unspecified objectives. Saree did not provide the date or time of the claimed strike.

The Houthis have previously claimed long-range strikes in the Arabian Sea; their known attacks have been concentrated in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, far closer to Houthi forces and the suspected Iranian spy ships that are believed to provide them with targeting assistance.

AIS tracking provided by Pole Star shows that *Megalopolis* was under way in the Western Indian Ocean last week after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, bound for a destination in the Mideast. On the night of the 16th, her speed dropped to zero knots and her heading briefly reversed; she then changed course towards Salalah, Yemen, arriving on the 18th and departing again on the 20th. As of Monday, *Megalopolis* was transiting the Strait of Hormuz, bound for Jebel Ali.

The Royal Navy's UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) division has reported no security incidents in the region since October 10. Maersk, the charterer of the *Megalopolis*, has not confirmed any strike on the vessel.

In July, Yahya Saree claimed that Houthi forces had attacked the U.S.-flagged *Maersk Sentosa* in the Arabian Sea. Maersk and UKMTO confirmed an attack, but put the location in the Gulf of Aden, much nearer to shore.

