

Dear %FIRSTNAME%,

Rogue Submarine Newsletter

Volume 19

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Rogue Readers,

1. Tactical Team Results
2. Yemen
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1. Tactical Team Results

With the release of *Rogue Mercenary*, I asked for volunteers to help promote the book.

Each member of the tactical team had roughly 15 minutes of work and seemed to enjoy the assignment. The outcome is that *Rogue Mercenary* now sits atop the results of a search phrase that a small but significant amount of Amazon readers use to find their naval thriller books.

By my estimate, 2 to 3 new readers join the *Rogue Submarine* fleet per day thanks to this effort.

This is the first time I've asked for you, my reader, to help beyond reviews, and it worked! I'm 99% sure that every author who makes a living selling books on Amazon employs similar tactics, and I would be a fool to ignore future opportunities like this.

So, I will do it again with *Rogue Neptune*. If you want to do it again, or if you feel like you missed out with *Rogue Mercenary*, stay tuned.

2. Yemen

Since *Rogue Neptune* will take us to Yemen, let's examine what's going on there.

The politics are mind-boggling and have led to the dire humanitarian problem. Where to begin?

Let's start with the most obvious bad actors. ISIS is there, as well as Al Qaeda, which controls a large chunk of the country. That already sounds horrible, and that's before we even look at the groups that are warring with each other.

The rebels are called Houthis, whose slogan is "God is great, death to the US, death to Israel, curse the Jews, and victory for Islam". So, I'm comfortable calling them bad actors, too. Backed by Iran, they control the western part of Yemen, including its capital and its largest seaport, through which flows 70% of humanitarian goods.

The internationally-recognized government is the Cabinet of Yemen, led by President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Al-Hadi. I have no idea how good, bad, or indifferent this government is since all it seems to be doing is fighting for its existence.

There's a separatist movement trying to undo the unification of South Yemen with North Yemen. Its latest name is the Southern Transition Council.

The Saudis and United Arab Emirates have been supporting the legitimate Hadi government in fighting the rebel Houthis, but it's not that simple.

The Saudis have all but taken over the eastern third of the country under the claim of thwarting the Houthis. But the reality is more likely that they want to run a pipeline through it to the Arabian Sea.

The UAE, on the other hand, has taken over the strategic Yemeni island of Socotra and may be trying to take control of a Yemeni seaport on the Gulf of Aden or the Arabian Sea. Although they withdrew militarily from the island—mostly, they keep a strong economic presence and are trying to win the hearts and minds of the Socotrans to become UAE citizens.

As tensions have grown between the Saudis and the UAE while assisting in the war, they've started to become adversaries, and the UAE is even seen to side with the Saudi's adversary, Iran. The enemy of my enemy is my ally.

The United States backs the Saudis, which is always a sticky situation.

With so many warring factions, you could expect a humanitarian crisis. And we've got one. The United Nations says that Yemen under a continued war will be the poorest country in the world by 2022. But with political alliances shifting swiftly, all parties accused of war crimes, and major ports inaccessible, getting aid where it belongs is a monumental task.

If there were a hopeful conclusion I could point to, I would. However, the situation is simply dire. There's no happy ending in sight for Yemen.

3. Yemeni Navy

As you can imagine, a failed state like Yemen has a failed navy. A stone's throw from Somalia, the Yemeni Navy's focus prior to the country falling apart was anti-pirate operations. They've got a couple old Cold War era Russian *Tarantul* corvettes and a few old Russian *Osa* missile boats, more than half of which were captured by the Houthis and the Southern Transition Council.

If it sounds like a weak navy, that's an understatement. But the *Tarantuls* and *Osas* have two factors in their favor. First, they pack big punches with huge Styx anti-ship missiles. Second, they move at 40+ knots. They're designed to move, strike, and evade counterattacks. They will

do their part to help the Mercenary Fleet help their nation.

4. Rogue Neptune

Rogue Neptune will take us to Yemen, where Renard will fund a humanitarian mission.

I can't see the Egyptians allowing the mercenary fleet to use the Suez Canal for this. Maybe they would, for the right price, but I avoided the question by having our fleet choose the element of surprise for their initial involvement. So, the canal isn't open to them.

That means Renard's fleet will come in phases, with the *Xerses* making the trip from Taiwan and arriving first. With phased arrivals, there will be phased mission goals, and a longer mission. Ultimately, our team will have to hold open ports to allow humanitarian aid to reach harbors. This could lead to a longer campaign, which is why I'm considering making this mission into two books.

Who are they fighting? Will they face off against the Houthi's scavenged scraps, the Southern Transition Council, the UAE, the Saudis, and the Iranians? The three recognized nations at the end of that list each has enough air and sea power to crush our little fleet. So, my intent is for the fleet to tackle only a couple adversaries at a time. That suggests limited targets and phases, which aligns with the fleet's arrival.

It will be a trick to keep it simple, dramatic, and fun. But I'll see what I can do!

I'm targeting 1Q20 for the delivery of Rogue Neptune and 3Q20 for Rogue O.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Thanks for reading! - John