

US-Saudi Alliance Is SCREWED | Laith Marouf

And suddenly, the underdog flips the table: Yemen is destroying US Middle-East Strategy and there is nothing the US can do about it. Laith Marouf, a Canadian-Syrian journalist based in Lebanon, discusses Yemen's advancing front lines, Saudi Arabia's strategy, Ansar Allah's goals, Oman's mediating role, US involvement, Saudi internal pressures, the wider regional war, nuclear risks, and Egypt's decision to remain outside the conflict. Links: <https://freepalestine.video> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Merch: <https://neutralitystudies.com/shop> Donation: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Yemen's Front Lines Are Moving 00:02:57 The Trigger Behind the New Offensive 00:06:11 Saudi Strategy and Yemen's History 00:09:03 Territory, Population and Ansar Allah 00:12:08 The Strategy Around Ma'rib and Aden 00:15:20 Aden's Geostrategic Importance 00:21:20 Oman's Role in Yemen 00:26:53 US Support for Saudi Arabia 00:30:17 Saudi Arabia's Internal Crisis 00:38:42 Regional War and Nuclear Risks 00:47:30 Egypt's Position and the Regional Shift

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. Today, for an update on the situation in Yemen and West Asia more generally, with Laith Marouf, a Canadian Syrian journalist currently in Lebanon. Laith, welcome back.

#Laith Marouf

Great to be with you, Pascal.

#Pascal

Thank you so much for doing this. And you've kept a very close eye on the situation in Yemen, which actually has been moving now. I mean, the front line has been moving after having basically been frozen for a while. Can you bring us up to speed where the conflict was and what then happened over the last one week to 14 days?

#Laith Marouf

Well, you know, most of the viewers must have forgotten, of course, seeing that rapid advance on the coast of the Red Sea, where Ansarullah and the government of Sana'a captured Bab al-Mandab Strait. And since then, there's been two fronts that are very, very active. One is around Taiz in the south. This is the last inhabited area before Aden, or Aden in English, the major city on the Arabian

Sea. And in the northeast, on the border with the Saudi kingdom, in the province of Al-Jawf. So those are two areas where Ansarullah, the national army, is pushing. And simultaneously, much of the Saudi-backed militias have suffered huge losses, specifically in those two axes.

And at the same time, we see the Saudi Air Force trying to give some air cover for these militias. Since yesterday, for instance, it's almost over 50 air raids by the Saudi Air Force. And that is forcing the Yemeni army to target the airports where these jets are coming to attack them from. So mainly the airports in the south of the Saudi kingdom, in Khamis Mushait, in Jeddah, in Abha. These are the closest military airports, basically, that the Saudis need to use to do multiple raids at a time to provide cover for moving troops. The attacks on these airports are forcing the Saudi Air Force to retreat more north in the kingdom, and that's making their runs longer, making it harder for them to provide air cover for their militias on the ground.

#Pascal

And these movements that now happened, why did this start now? I mean, it was the Saudis that kind of restarted the fighting, if I remember correctly, when they actually attacked an airport in Yemen, I think in Sana'a, actually, when an airplane was on its way back from the funeral of Ali Khamenei, carrying Yemeni dignitaries. And I think there was a humanitarian aspect to that component as well. Was that the start of what's currently going on, or is there something else that happened that I missed?

#Laith Marouf

You know, that was what you referred to. That trip was a few months ago, of course, when the funeral happened. But there was kind of a ceasefire after between the two sides. But suddenly we saw the Saudi military, you know, export all these weapons and push thousands upon thousands of people and their militias across the border in the Taiz region in the northeast. And, you know, they were hoping, I think, the Saudis, to do a big push up the mountain towards Sana'a, which is a lunatic plan because never in history, in recorded human history, did any army succeed going up the mountain to capture Sana'a. Not one foreign army ever occupied Sana'a. Not the Romans, not the British, not the Ottomans, not the Saudis themselves, who tried it multiple times in the last 60 years. So this was the trigger of the beginnings of these confrontations.

The Yemeni armed forces took advantage of the Saudi concentration of attack in the northeast to do a surprise attack on the Red Sea coast, and I think that surprised everybody, not only the Saudis. And the advancing Saudi-backed militias in the northeast fell into a pincer maneuver, and we watched those videos of their troops getting pounded by FPVs and ballistic missiles. So that was the trigger. Since then, we have been hearing that the Saudis have been begging for at least a temporary ceasefire. They asked the Omanis to have meetings with Ansar Allah, and Ansar Allah is

refusing any ceasefire that is temporary and is requesting that the Saudis lift the blockade over the country and withdraw all their backed militias and stop backing militias in the country with weapons and money.

#Pascal

And just for my own understanding, and pardon my ignorance, but what exactly is the beef that the Saudis have with Ansar Allah? And that goes back 12 years. Why are the Saudis so dead set on conquering Yemen? I mean, we've got nearby Oman, which has a passable relationship with Saudi Arabia. Can you explain that triangle to me, like the bigger picture?

#Laith Marouf

Well, for people that don't understand the history of the geography, the Arabian Peninsula has had really just three population centers: the Hejaz, where Mecca and Medina are, Yemen, which is all the mountains south of Mecca and Medina, and Oman. This is historically where the population centers are. Of course, with the coming of colonialism and the discovery of oil, the British and the Americans after them had the primary goal of kind of bringing down the civilization centers and birthing new ones in the middle of the desert, as we saw. So the Saud regime was given weapons in the 1930s to invade Syria.

Hejaz, where Mecca and Medina is, and that happened, and they expelled the Hashemites that were ruling the Hejaz to Jordan, and at the same time invaded what is now the south of Saudi, which was provinces of Yemen, Asir, and kind of ethnically cleansed those regions in 1934. And since then, the Saudis have the interest of maintaining Yemen in an impoverished state because it is the biggest population center in the Arabian Peninsula. It has the geography that gives it control of the strait. It has the resources and so forth. So if actually Yemen rises as a state, it will return to its rightful place, which means it would be dominating the Arabian Peninsula. So since the 1930s, the Saudi regime has been either buying off governments inside Yemen to make sure that the country doesn't develop and/or maintaining a status of war, as we see since the Arab Autumn, or what people call the Arab Spring. In 2012, the war hasn't stopped since then.

#Pascal

Hey, just a very quick note: the best way to support this channel is by signing up for my free Substack. You can also help with a paid subscription there, or you can get some of our new merch on neutralitystudies.com. Links below. See you there. Okay, so this is a long-term Saudi grand strategy to make sure that Yemen never becomes a regional rival. And the Ansar Allah is obviously the force that is not okay with that, because there is a collaborationist government inside Yemen, and that's the one that the Saudis and the United States are backing up. How much of the Yemeni territory is still under that collaborationist control?

#Laith Marouf

Well, if we look at territory, just a map, it's deceiving. Why? Because 90-some-odd percent of the population of Yemen lives in the mountainous region in the west. And currently, 85–87% of the population of Yemen is under the rule of Sana'a and the national government led by Ansarullah. The only major city that is out of control of the government of Sana'a is Aden on the Arabian Sea, and that constitutes another maybe 10% of the population. The rest of the population is spread out in the desert regions in the east of Yemen, which are the largest part of the territory of Yemen.

But this whole region is known as Hadramawt, which means death is present. That's the name of the region of Yemen. That tells you how inhospitable it is. And currently, the military forces of Sana'a are just a few 10 kilometers, 20, 30 kilometers away from Aden. And so if they decide to capture Aden, which I think is not going to happen—they're not going to try to invade into Aden yet—but if they do, there will be only 5% of the population out of their control. So it's not the issue of territory. It's the issue of how much of the population is with which side.

Another thing that is important to note is that Ansarullah, after they captured Sana'a and overthrew the government of Ali Saleh, formed a national coalition, a salvation government with all the parties, invited everybody in, and just a few parties, including the Muslim Brotherhood, refused and formed a government in Riyadh, in the capital of Saudi Arabia. They're sitting in the hotels. That's where the government that the Saudis support actually resides. So definitely, the government of Sana'a led by Ansarullah is more representative, whether we're talking about population and/or in terms of how many parties and political movements are in the coalition with them.

#Pascal

So what do you think then is—if the goal is not to capture Aden—what do you think is the current strategy? Because the Yemenis, I mean, Ansar Allah, also is very famous now for being one of the only foreign governments that actually supports Palestine and actually also refuses to cave to Israel and, together with Iran, of course, is an integral part of the axis of resistance, although the geographic distance to Israel is significant. What do you think are the aims and goals of Ansar Allah, at least at the moment?

#Laith Marouf

I think they are going to be concentrating on capturing Ma'rib and Al-Jawf. These are the provinces in the northeast that border with the Saudi kingdom. It is a hard battle because it's an open space. So whoever has a bigger air force in this situation—the Saudis—will have the ability to pick at his enemy. This is why, at this moment, we see the military of Yemen staying in the hills and the mountains overlooking Al-Jawf and Ma'rib and just pounding at the positions of those gathered mercenaries. So I think they'll concentrate there because they would like to cut the supply route for the militias coming from the border of the Saudi kingdom. And there is only one main border

crossing that has a road actually in that area. And once you have control of that and close it, all of these militias that are backed by the Saudis in the south of Yemen will have zero land supply routes.

They will have to be supplied by air and/or sea, which is not a viable thing to do continuously. It could be a one-off attempt by the Saudis, let's say, to supply their militias by air or by sea. And why would they do that? It's because it's easier, if you cut these supply routes, to negotiate with the militias remaining specifically in Aden. The national government of Sana'a doesn't have the interest of destroying its own city. You know, Aden is—the Yemeni people love their own city, and they're not going to destroy it. But if there's no supplies coming into Aden, then the city could fall through negotiations without actually having to fire any weapons inside the city. I think that's the main goal of their movements right now.

#Pascal

So basically moving from being blockaded by Saudi Arabia to blockading and besieging Aden. And if Aden became actually returned to Sana'a, to Ansar Allah, to the main body of Yemen, what would that geostrategically mean for the United States? I mean, that would be even worse. Ansar Allah was already able to kind of block the Strait of Bab al-Mandeb even without controlling Aden, but that would make everything much worse for the Americans, wouldn't it?

#Laith Marouf

Definitely it would, and it will also give the Yemeni armed forces a lookout into the Arabian Sea and into the north of the Indian Ocean. So the projection of force that Yemen will have will not only be on the Red Sea side, it will also be on the Arabian Sea side, and that's going to make any movement of the American Navy in that whole triangle between Iran and Yemen practically impossible. There will be like a triangulation from both sides. So that's one thing. The other thing is that once the territory of Yemen is reunified, the national government in Sana'a will have access to all the gas and oil that it has. There's gas and oil fields in the east of Yemen that are now being looted by Saudi and Emirati businesses. And so this will bring a lot of revenues to the government of Sana'a, which could be able to heal the state and provide services again, health services and so forth to their populations.

And finally, I would say also, currently, if you look on the map, the Yemeni armed forces are starting to be able to project power across the strait into Djibouti, into the south of Eritrea. But once you have control of the coast on the Arabian Sea side, then they can project power all the way to Somalia, basically. And we will see how Iran rose to its position right now, being able to force its dictates on the statelets on the other side of the Gulf. We'll see the same thing. And then Yemen could be challenging the Israeli-Emirati-American bases in Somaliland that they want to secede to make it into a controllable vassal. Similarly in Djibouti, where all the, you know, American, French, British, even Chinese bases that are in Djibouti will become easy targets.

#Pascal

Do you see here connections or the influence of Iran? I mean, in the West, in Western media, Ansar Allah is constantly portrayed as a proxy of Iran. But it seems to me that Ansar Allah moves very much on its own and actually has developed its own capacities. How important is the connection to Iran for this group?

#Laith Marouf

Well, it is important. I don't want to say that it's not important. It's definitely important because, as we see, the world is all about coalitions. So if Yemen was on its own, it would be in the same position the Saudis are in right now, without imperial direct support. So yeah, it does make a difference that Iran is supporting Yemeni liberation. Having said that, the Yemeni armed forces have been developing weapons themselves. They're building everything there. It's very hard for Iran to deliver any weapons to Yemen because of the blockade that exists right now, you know, the imperialist forces controlling the Arabian Sea. And so that's the only route of supply between Iran and Yemen.

There's rarely any flights, as we saw. You mentioned earlier the flight that almost got shut down by the Saudis that was heading back to Sana'a. So the only route of supplying Yemen is through the sea, and that's very hard to do. But Yemen has acquired the knowledge and built on it of building hypersonic missiles and drones. We saw how Yemen was the first country in the world to use a hypersonic missile when it targeted Israel. So that shows you how advanced their indigenous scientific research is. And they have their factories under these mountains, just like in Iran, which makes them impossible to destroy. So they're able to build their own weapons and try to liberate themselves.

Help came before from Hezbollah and Iran in terms of training. Many big names within the Iranian armed forces and the Hezbollah militia were sent to Yemen and did training there. So that's the only relation we can see. And Yemen, you know, most people in the West don't understand the difference between Shia and Sunni, let's say, in Islam. But, you know, the Yemenis are practically neither Shia nor Sunni. They have their own sect called the Zaidi sect. They're sometimes referred to as the Shias of the Sunnis or the Sunnis of the Shias. You know, so it's not—there is no religious kind of hierarchy order that's being given to the Yemeni resistance.

#Pascal

Yemen and Oman are fascinating to me because they kind of function outside of just that dichotomy that, you know, is the only one that probably has sunk through in the West, that it exists. What is your assessment of the role of Oman in this? Because Oman, too, has a different form of Islam, and it has managed, ever since, you know, it got proper independence in the '70s, to actually, you know,

remain neutral in the strategic sense of the term between these different factions, even with Iran. And even now we see how it basically negotiates with all sides. What is your assessment of the impact of Oman on the Yemen theater?

#Laith Marouf

You know, maybe it's another point where we can do some history there. Oman fell under Portuguese colonial rule in the 1700s. This is way, way back, and became a vassal of Portugal, you know, with their slave trade in the east of Africa, and then eventually fell under British colonial rule. And in the 1960s, there was a revolution in Oman against the rule of the monarchs there, where the British Air Force and military conducted a brutal campaign of genocide in the west of Oman, in the area where the revolution was happening. That was partially because the west of Oman and the east of Yemen are practically the same. They are like the same tribes, the same populations. And if people remember, also at that time there was South Yemen, that was a socialist country, that was also helping in this revolution.

So in a way, the only reason we see today Oman playing this role is because it's the poorest in terms of gas and oil of the GCC countries. The imperialist powers have for decades allowed it to play this role of being the diplomatic coordination hub for negotiations between various parties. We saw, of course, this happened before with Syria. This happened also, as we now see, with Iran. Is this something that the actual state of Oman is doing on its own? Is it really that independent of imperialist power? I doubt that. I personally think that it's just like how Pakistan was allowed to play negotiations with Iran while at the same time still being a junta that is, like, you know, pro-American, that did a coup against a patriotic president, Imran Khan. So, you know, I don't get fooled by a lot of this propaganda. I look at history and then I, you know, evaluate those things upon that.

#Pascal

No, fair enough, fair enough. That's why I'm asking, like, what your interpretation of it is. So overall, you wouldn't expect that Oman would have any kind of helpful impact, right, on the national liberation struggle of Ansar Allah in Yemen. Is that fair to say?

#Laith Marouf

You know, the decisions are being made on the battlefield. That's what has been the only thing that really defines what's going to happen all across Western Asia for the last three years. Everything else is, you know, kind of fielding feelers and propaganda machines. But, you know, I don't want to totally denigrate this path. It is important. It allows Yemen and the other combating parties to sit face to face and figure out the true things. And also because Oman is stuck right now between a rock and a hard place, you may be able to get more things from it, allowing more flights to go from

Iran over Omani airspace, for instance, to Yemen, or as we see the Omani state staying quiet about the Strait of Hormuz controlled by Iran. All of these are important because you don't want to have also war with Oman. That's the only, I think, strategic thing that you can get from this now.

#Pascal

Yeah, no, I just also think that for Oman, it must be a quite tough time, as you said, somehow caught between a rock and a hard place. I just wonder what they are doing. But let's get back to this topic and also the development of the war with the Saudis, because it seems to me the Saudis were actually begging the Americans to intervene, and so far the Americans said no. But we also know that Trump is contemplating another, like, great attack on Iran, like a great—I mean, whatever great thing you can still do after six months of failing. But let that aside, are you expecting that the United States is again going to directly get involved in this very Saudi affair?

#Laith Marouf

You know, the Americans were involved and still are involved. The Saudis, you know, need those weapons supplies that the Americans are giving them. The Saudis need the satellite imagery to conduct their attacks. We see the British continuing to provide air refuelers to the Saudi Air Force. You know, I lived in Riyadh, in Saudi Arabia, between 1980 and 1992. And I know, you know, I've had extended family there. I've seen how their military works. And, you know, we all saw the images of the fat cats that are supposed to be those pilots.

But so much of the pilots that are flying these jets are mercenaries from the United States, from Australia, from France, and other places. So I doubt that Saudi Arabia can conduct any war on its own. So this is an imperial war. What we're seeing is these vassals, like the Saudi kingdom, fighting these wars on behalf of the United States. Think about it this way. There was a ceasefire in Yemen. The Saudis had lost their ability to export oil through Hormuz, and they had only one way out through the Red Sea. Their exports were going all fine, and suddenly the Saudis attack Yemen. That's not a decision made by the Saudis, because that was a suicidal decision.

It's a decision that was forced on the Saudis by the Israelis and the Americans that told them, "You have to start a war right now with Yemen because we need to distract all the Axis of Resistance members in Iraq and Lebanon and Yemen away from Iran, so the United States can, if it attacks Iran again, have Iran on its own." And that's a decision that, if there was a sovereign in Saudi Arabia, they would have said, "No, I'm sorry, all our oil exports would die out and we'll be impoverished. The Yemenis would destroy our pipelines, our export ports, and so forth." And as we see, they still went and did this suicidal move. That's not in the interest of Saudi Arabia.

#Pascal

Okay, so you interpret this not as stupidity or as just a dumb decision, but as a deliberate decision taken by somebody who obviously couldn't care less about the well-being of Saudi Arabia or the population there. But, you know, there is this problem, right, that even if these places are under the empire's extended control, it depends upon these regimes to stay in power. MBS in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf monarchies on the other side. And if the population actually starts rising up, it would be a powder keg, right? I mean, they must consider something like that, and also the internal power structures, because Saudi Arabia too, by now, there's around 5,000 princes, right, that are part and parcel of this whole family clan structure. What is your assessment of the internal politics of Saudi Arabia, if that might shift anytime soon, now that the war seems to be going really in the wrong direction for them?

#Laith Marouf

Yeah, look, when we saw the war on Iran being launched, this is when it became very clear that even the decision-makers in the United States, the elite in the West, have abandoned all objectives save for the objective of sustaining the Jewish colonies' existence. You see, a purely capitalist empire would have looked at the field and said, "Wow, I have maintained control for 80 years of the oil and gas fields of the Arabian Peninsula and was able to repel all the revolutionary anti-colonization movements in the '40s, '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s in these vassals."

#Laith Marouf

And this is the backbone of my economy, the petrodollar. Well, I'm not going to risk that. But what they did is that they decided that it's more important to maintain the existence of the Jewish colony than even caring for the oil and gas reserves or the petrodollar. That's an ideological decision. So the elite in the West currently are blinded by their ideological stance of belief in Jewish supremacy and chosen people and so forth, that they're willing to destroy the most stable of all of their vassal holdings around the world, those Arabian princes that we're talking about, and risk the whole global economy. And they're still going at it. Right now, the U.S. is having shortages of diesel, and it still wants to attack Iran. That's not a decision that would be made by somebody who's purely a capitalist or purely an imperialist.

This is an ideologically supremacist kind of fanatical decision-making, and that's what's going to continue to happen. We will continue to see these vassals in the Arabian Peninsula being put into these dangerous positions. Saudi Arabia probably looks from the outside as the most stable because the other GCC countries are city-states: Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Emirates. But when you look deeper into Saudi Arabia, it has right now the biggest problems. Why? Because it has the biggest population. It's 30-some-odd million people. It needs immediate funds. That's why it's now asking for a loan from the IMF and the World Bank, because it cannot pay the salaries of their public employees. There's a diversity of population in Saudi Arabia. The North is many Syrian Bedouin tribes.

And as we saw, those populations were kind of oppressed and removed from their homes to build that Line city in Neom, and hundreds of thousands of people were forcefully displaced to create that project that had now failed. You have the whole east of the country, where the oil and gas is, which is Shia tribes that are connected to Iraq. And then the whole south is basically Yemeni. So the minute there is not enough money in the Saudi budget to shut everybody up and hire them for fake jobs and give them all these subsidies, you will have beginnings of revolt. And this is what is brewing right now. The more Yemen destroys the infrastructure of Saudi Arabia, and the more inability of the Saudis to bring in money through exports, the closer it is for the Saudi regime to collapse.

#Pascal

Did you see any chances that at some point the Saudi... I mean, the people who claim to be in power over Saudi Arabia, that those will try to maybe even defy the wishes of Washington and try to come to an understanding with Ansar Allah and say, like, look, let's cut a deal between us. We let you develop. We lift the blockade. You do you, but you let us be on our side as well. Is that something that's on the cards for you or not?

#Laith Marouf

I don't think so. The reason is, you know, much of these royalties in the GCC have been bred from birth by the imperial powers, you know, made into becoming pedophiles in the Epstein cabal, you know, drugged up and alcoholic and with a non-ending supply of prostitutes. And, you know, so I doubt somebody like MBS, who is in the Epstein files, would dare, you know, stand against a decision that the government, the imperial court wants. The other thing is that much of these royal families in the GCC, their direct security force that protects the royal family are foreign.

So, for instance, there's a special branch of the British military that's created specifically to protect the royal family in Bahrain. And so this is the same in Saudi. There is, like, CIA, Mossad, most probably also all around them. I doubt they'll, you know, if they even think about something against the empire, they probably will be removed in a second. So there's no way even for them to run away if they want to. So, no, their decisions will always be controlled by the imperial capitals. And, you know, it's hard to straighten a dog's tail, right? You usually have to chop it off if you want to. There's no way you can straighten it off.

#Pascal

It's quite interesting how you're describing that, you know, them being hostages as well to their protectors, right? But if that's the power dynamic in the upper echelons there in Riyadh and also in the Gulf states, then what else to expect? So in a sense, like, this is what they're trying also to do with Syria, right? Making sure that the current Mr. Al-Jolani is constantly at the mercy of his Western backers; otherwise, he will be physically removed from power. How likely do you judge it that this

last 80 years of colonial activity, the colonial control of the Arabian Peninsula, can still go on for the next decades? Because it seems to me that everything is crumbling now, at least at the seams. Iran definitely proved its point that it is a viable opponent. Yemen is proving so. There's other smaller resistance. There's, of course, Lebanon. There's, I mean, with Hezbollah and others, it seems that the empire is not as firm in the saddle anymore as it used to be in the '60s, '70s, and '80s. So what's your assessment?

#Laith Marouf

Yeah, I mean, this was the century of Arabic humiliation, to borrow something from our Chinese brothers and sisters, that started, of course, with World War I. And it is at the end of it, this war that started on October 7th and engulfed the whole region. There are only two possible scenarios at the end of this. Either the West abandons the Jewish colony and packs up its nuclear weapons, and there will be a liberated Palestine, and that will lead to the collapse of all of the Sykes-Picot borders. There will be reunification of the Arabic peoples that have been not allowed to unify and have been the subjects of the major brute force of the empire for the last hundred years.

Or the other choice is that we will see ourselves in a nuclear winter. There's no third choice, and that's clearly what's at stake. I don't think these regimes in the Arabian Peninsula would survive if the empire abandons them and abandons the Jewish colony. They cannot survive by themselves. They are illegitimate. There's been multiple attempts to remove these monarchies that were frustrated through foreign interference from the West. What else can we see? I think this war is going to continue for another year and a half, maybe two years. You mean one on Iran? The war in the whole region.

I see it all as one war: the war in Palestine, in Lebanon, in Iraq, in Iran, in Syria, in Yemen. It's all one war. And the point of this war is to force the final subjugation of the Arabic peoples through either a total genocide, as is happening in Palestine, and/or through total surrender, as happened, let's say, in Syria. So that's the imperialist objective: the final total subjugation of the Arabic peoples. And on the other hand, the Axis of Resistance sees this as also, of course, the final battle for them. It's a battle of existence. There's going to be either/or. There's no third option.

#Pascal

What is your assessment of, well, Israel, the Jewish colony, as you call it? Like, how much independence does it have? Because one of the main, I mean, when it comes to the nuclear question, the main question is: are the Israeli nuclear weapons actually under Israeli control or not? And in the research community, it is more or less assumed that, axiomatically, it has its own control, the political connection with the United States and the political influence notwithstanding. But the red button is in the hand of Netanyahu. Do you see it as that as well? Or do you think that behind the scenes, actually, the operational control over that most deadly of weapons is actually in Washington and not in Tel Aviv?

#Laith Marouf

It is hard right now to see the difference between Israel and the United States. That is true. And, you know, the debate hasn't been definitively won yet: is it Tel Aviv ruling D.C., or is it D.C. ruling Tel Aviv? I think there's a lot of arguments on both sides. But ultimately, look at what the Israelis are trying to do, trying to pass these motions in the American Congress to literally merge the American military and the Israeli military, and the American intelligence and the Israeli intelligence. This could actually be a blade with two sides. It could mean that the U.S. will do anything that Israel wants, but it also could mean that in the end, the United States can control the Israeli military.

So while Netanyahu and the Zionists are pushing this integration to make it so that the U.S. cannot stop supplying Israel, or to have access to the intelligence and surveillance and so forth of the American military and intelligence, in the final situation, if push comes to shove, there could be a patriotic American president that just says, "Well, yeah, you are under my control right now as your military, and I'm going to just take your nuclear weapons." So I personally want them to merge because you want the American public to understand finally that they are in charge. And if they are in charge, then they can decide what happens with these nuclear weapons.

Israel has already been defeated militarily by Hamas, by Hezbollah, by Iraq. The only thing that's stopping the collapse of the Jewish colony is the United States there, and the threat of the nuclear weapons used by Israel. This is the only reason I think the Axis of Resistance is allowing this war to take so long. It is a war of attrition to get the whole world against Israel, which right now probably 97%, 98% of the population hate Israel and don't want it to exist on the planet, and to get the Western economies, imperialist economies, to be at the edge of collapse, as we see right now, and will have to make a choice. Do they want to save themselves, or do they want to collapse the whole empire just for the eyes of Israel?

So once you get to that point, the question is, will the United States come in and take out the nuclear weapons of Israel like they did before the collapse of the South African apartheid regime? Remember, the South African apartheid regime had nuclear weapons. And it was necessary to withdraw those nuclear weapons from the hands of the white supremacists because they were threatening to use those nukes against the rebels in Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, which were occupied by the South Africans, like now Israel is occupying Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and so forth, and threatening to use nuclear weapons on others. So we're getting to that point, and it's necessary that this takes time so nobody takes a crazy decision and presses the red button.

#Pascal

So in a sense, like when push comes to shove, but the push needs to come slowly to the shove in order to avoid that kind of disaster. You know, this was highly fascinating explanation by you. Thank you so much. Is there anything that you think that we forgot to cover in order to understand also

the centrality of the Yemeni part of that one war as it is unfolding now? I think the way you see it as this one war of liberation of the Arabian Peninsula. Maybe just one more thing. Do you see any place for Egypt, any role it has? Because it's kind of this Arabian part, like Arabian population on the African continent. Maybe that one just in closing.

#Laith Marouf

Yeah, well, we saw how the Saudis wanted Egypt to be part of the Mecca Alliance, which, you know, is mainly a propaganda scheme to kind of reinvigorate hate against Shias by saying, look, the major Sunni population centers, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi, are coming together to protect Mecca against the Shias. Okay, that's the main reason that this alliance was being created, because already all of these states, anyways, are integrated in the imperial military order, and there's nothing that Pakistan or Turkey and so on can offer. But what we saw, which was surprising, was that Egypt refused to be part of the Mecca Alliance and has been sitting on the sidelines. Even its statements in support of Saudi, its public statements, are very lukewarm.

And I think this is because the Egyptian establishment is looking at the map. They see their funders in the Gulf that have backed this economy don't have money anymore. They can barely run their own economies. They are not able to export oil and gas. And right now, more and more, the Egyptian economy depends on the Suez Canal. So if Egypt goes stupid and joins a war on Yemen, the Yemeni armed forces can destroy the Suez Canal very easily. And one, two ships in the canal, you blow them up, it's closed. And suddenly Egypt is hungry, 110 million people starving. So this is why the Egyptian government is refusing to join this, because it's caring for its own survival. So that shows you, yes, there is a possibility at one point that some of these vessels switch sides. But it has to be somebody as big as Egypt.

Bahrain or Qatar, a little tiny country with less than a million people, is not going to have the courage and so on. Egypt, as a big civilizational center with 110 million, can at least stay quiet. It doesn't have the ability yet to fully oppose, but it can stay quiet and neutral. This actually forced the Crown Prince of Saudi, MBS, Mohammed bin Salman, to fly into Cairo yesterday. Usually all Arabic and Muslim leaders would come and kiss the feet of a Saudi king to give him money, right? He would never travel to another country. They would come to him. It means that his ambassador and all of the Saudi businessmen in Egypt were unable to convince the Egyptian state to do anything to support Saudi in its war against Yemen. And he had to fly in by himself to Cairo to beg. So there's, of course, everything that Yemen is doing and Iran is doing is changing the whole balance of power in the region and beyond.

#Pascal

It's a very interesting observation. Yes, I mean, the ability to remain neutral means that you already kind of wrestled a little bit of decision-making power to yourself, although Egypt is still very much downstream. As far as I see, let's not forget the last democratically elected leader of Egypt died in a

prison at the hands of the current dictator. But we'll leave that for another time. This was fascinating. Lait, people who want to find your work, where should they go?

#Laith Marouf

You can go to freepalestine.video. That's our website. And from there, you can find all our social media links. It's Free Palestine TV on YouTube and X and so forth. We're producing daily reports from the ground here in Lebanon and documentaries from all around the Mediterranean and Western Asia coming out every week. And people can donate if they like the content. We're 100% dependent on the generosity of our viewers. Again, the website is freepalestine.video.

#Pascal

Everybody, if you liked what you heard, please go and support freepalestine.video and find the work of Laith there. Laith Marouf, thank you so much for your time today.

#Laith Marouf

Thank you very much, Pascal, for having me.