

Laith Marouf: Hezbollah vs Israel: Air & Ground War Intensifies

#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Wednesday, March 18th, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother Laith Marouf from Beirut, is here with us. Welcome back, Laith.

#Laith

Great to be with you, Nima.

#Nima

Laith, let's start with the war and what's going on between Lebanon and Israel. Israel is bombing Beirut without giving any sort of warning—saying, “We're going to hit this neighborhood, that neighborhood.” What is going on in terms of the attacks by the Israelis and the way Hezbollah is responding?

#Laith

Yeah, I mean, last night around 2:30 or 3 a.m., the Zionists attacked multiple neighborhoods in the core downtown area of Beirut. They hit residential buildings—there are at least 14 martyrs, mainly families who were sleeping. One of the apartments that was hit belonged to the manager of political programming at Al Manar television, and he was martyred along with his wife. So it was a direct assassination of a journalist, a media producer. This is now, of course, two and a half years of us watching the Zionists kill journalists and media producers. In fact, after these two and a half years of war, the Zionists have managed to kill more journalists on this planet than all the wars combined from World War I until now.

This is kind of a staggering number. I think we can't even imagine how much. And this is true, of course, for medical staff as well—the largest combined number of medical staff killed. Just since the beginning of this round of war in Lebanon, over the last 14 days, they've killed more than 40 medical workers. And that's not to mention the number of children and women. On average, since the beginning of this round of war here in Lebanon, the Israelis are killing six children a day. So this is infanticide, medicide—all the things we can imagine about genocide. The Zionists seem to be the champions of that in human history.

In terms of the resistance in the south of Lebanon, it's wave after wave of attempted invasion. And even when they announced two days ago that they were launching the big invasion, that was like the sixth or seventh time they'd said that. So people should take it with a grain of salt. But even with the thousands of raids on villages in the south, the Zionists last night had to withdraw from the edges of villages they were trying to occupy. Over the last 24 hours, Hezbollah destroyed at least 10 Merkava tanks, so the number is just piling up. In 15 days since the battle started in the south of Lebanon, I think the total is close to 30 tanks destroyed.

So this is a huge number. There are already 45,000 Zionist troops on the border. They're mobilizing more, but it doesn't seem to be helping them, because the more they mobilize close to the border of Lebanon, the easier they become as targets for Hezbollah's artillery, missiles, and drones. Hezbollah keeps hitting gathering points inside occupied Palestine, in the north of occupied Palestine, and continues to fire ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and long-range drones all the way to the Tel Aviv region. And this is combined, of course, with the Iranian waves of missiles that are hitting many of those same targets. So this is kind of the overall picture of what's happening here in Lebanon.

#Nima

It seems there's some sort of coordination between Iran and Hezbollah in attacking, for example, the northern part of Israel. Do you think that's actually coordinated, or is it just happening without any real planning?

#Laith

Definitely there is coordination, and each member of the Axis of Resistance has its own set of targets that they're focusing on. Even when we talk about the Iraqi resistance—what targets is it hitting inside the Zionist colony, or inside Iraq, or in Jordan and Kuwait, as we've seen? So there is an overall plan, and each component of the Axis of Resistance has a list of targets they're prioritizing. As we see, there are bases in the north of Palestine, in the occupied Golan Heights, that the Iranian aerospace forces are hitting. Those are the ones with huge bunkers underneath them and so on. And we constantly see these massive ballistic missiles striking them from Iran.

And that's something clearly meant to help the resistance in South Lebanon face less surveillance, or to reduce the Zionists' ability to control and command their troops along the border with Lebanon. So yes, there is coordination. There are specific targets for each of the components, and they're going through these lists of targets in a clear, step-by-step manner. We didn't see Hezbollah or Iran target the main bases from the beginning. Clearly, their priority was to take out air defense and communication hubs for the Zionists. And now, as we see, Hezbollah's missiles and drones are reaching their targets much more easily, because after two weeks of destroying the air defenses of the Zionist colony and their command, control, and communication linkups, it's becoming easier and easier for Hezbollah and other members of the Axis to hit their targets.

#Nima

Nima, do you see a ground invasion of Lebanon happening anytime soon? Because the Israelis are talking about 450,000 reservists being called up to join the IDF.

#Nima

What's the understanding within Hezbollah, or in Lebanon more broadly, of the quality of these fighters? Because you have the main army, and now you have the reservists coming to the battlefield. How are they perceived?

#Laith

Well, last night we saw a picture released by Smotrich, showing him standing over his son's bed in the ICU. His son was targeted on the first day of his deployment in the north of Palestine. So if this is the fate of the son of one of the main ministers in the Zionist colony—someone who most likely had a lot of protection and wasn't put on the front line—you can imagine what's happening to the elite units of the Zionists who are right on the front lines. Clearly, they're taking a beating. They're unable to enter the villages in the south of Lebanon, even though they've destroyed them completely.

Throwing around numbers like 450,000 reservists being called up—that's a figure the Zionist colony has never, in its entire history, been able to mobilize. I think it's a number that's partially fake, basically impossible for them to reach. It's just propaganda meant to create some momentum, to make the Zionists feel they have the numbers on their side. The other thing is, the more the Zionists push troops to the border with Lebanon, the fewer they have to control the West Bank and Gaza. And we've seen the Iranian Aerospace Forces hit multiple targets in the West Bank over the last few days, as well as along the borders of occupied Gaza. So this must be worrying for the Zionists.

This is why we see the settler-colonist fascists rampaging wildly in the West Bank—because they've now become the unofficial enforcement forces there. So many Israeli soldiers are being withdrawn from the West Bank and sent to the borders with Lebanon. That's why we're seeing them now also rampaging—like raping a Palestinian man in the Jordan Valley yesterday in front of his children and then killing him, and also raping women in another village. This has become the norm now, because these colonists in the West Bank have assumed authority with the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the area. So I don't know if they're actually going to be able to mobilize such a number.

I'd add one more thing about this: the more they gather in one place—these Israeli soldiers—the easier they become as a target. You can't just bring hundreds of thousands of soldiers to the front line and have bunkers for all of them. You're not going to have bunkers for everyone. You're not going to bring thousands of tanks to the border with Lebanon and have shelters for those tanks from ATGMs or missiles, and so on. So it's a desperate move to do that. Up until now, clearly, the Israelis

have been depending on their air power—just as the Americans depend on their air power in Iran—and that's not going to win them a war. They'll have to risk the lives of these easy targets, and if they do, it will only accelerate the collapse of their armed forces.

#Nima

Laith, the Trump administration is trying to bring the HTS and Al-Jolani from Syria into the battle against Lebanon to help Israel. It seems they're hesitant to go in that direction. Do you think they're going to join? Are they going to help Israel after all?

#Laith

Yeah, I mean, there's a lot of fog of war right now that's making it hard for people to realize what's happening on the ground. But the truth of the matter is that HTS is already involved. The battle that happened a week ago in Nabi Sheet, in the Beqaa Valley, when the Zionist special forces infiltrated and were ambushed—this happened under the protection of HTS. The Zionist invading troops drove through Syria, through the northern parts of Damascus, under the protection of HTS, and then infiltrated from an illegal post, a smuggling area in the Beqaa and the Qalamoun Mountains, also under the protection of HTS. There was a huge battle where the red bandanas, or the special forces of HTS, were slaughtered along with the Israelis, who had to withdraw.

Similarly, over the last four days, the Zionists took these red bandanas—the special forces of HTS—through the occupied Golan Heights and placed them at the entrance of Shaba village in southern Lebanon. It's the easternmost village in the border area of south Lebanon, right on the foothills of Jabal al-Sheikh, or Mount Hermon. And again, the red bandanas were defeated in this little remote village that isn't even Shia. Shaba is a Sunni village. There aren't many Hezbollah fighters there, but there are fighters from the Islamic Group, which is a kind of Sunni resistance group here in Lebanon that has been targeted by assassinations and so on over the last year and a half by the Zionists. So you can imagine this extremely remote village, with only one road going into it, being able to repel an invasion from the special forces of HTS. What does this mean?

That means that HTS is really unable to change the balance of the battle, no matter what they do to appease their masters in Tel Aviv. And up until now, they're just using their special forces. One last thing I'd say about this is that HTS as a whole, with the other Wahhabi death squads they've absorbed, has a total fighting force of around 30,000. So if al-Julani decides to use anything beyond the red bandanas, he'd have to mobilize practically all of HTS to the Lebanese border, which would leave the borders with Iraq empty, and also leave the major cities—Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, and so on—and the whole Syrian coastline without their thugs controlling the population.

And this will open the door for either the Iraqi resistance to invade and liberate parts of Syria, or for an armed rebellion from the populations in the major cities or along the coast to take effect. And this will be the end of HTS. So we shouldn't worry too much about the involvement of HTS. If we do see

major involvement from them, that's a signal of how desperate the imperialists are, because they'd be risking losing the whole of Syria just to try to defeat Hezbollah—which is the worst-case scenario for them, and actually the best-case scenario for the Axis of Resistance.

#Nima

The war on Iran is bringing out something we haven't seen before. You know, the acts of resistance are emerging in ways that were unimaginable, in my opinion, before this war started. And it's not even all the power they possess. It's because we haven't seen Yemen being involved, you know, the Houthis in the Red Sea. But after all, looking at what the Iranian foreign minister said today or yesterday in his interview with Al Jazeera, he said, "We don't believe in a ceasefire. We believe in ending the war."

And ending the war means exactly that—ending the war on all fronts. He's talking about Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, Palestine, all together. It's not just about, you know, the war between Iran and the United States. And what are the levers? I think what's happening is in the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab. These are new developments, new alternatives coming into the calculation, coming into the equation on the part of the Axis of Resistance. How do you see the way the Axis of Resistance is finding its power, its strength from within?

#Laith

Yeah, when we look at the game theory of this war—when you lay out all the components and try to figure out, in game theory terms, the steps each party will take—you can see that right now the Axis of Resistance has control of the escalation ladder. It doesn't mean they have dominance in power or anything like that, but it means the Axis of Resistance is the one choosing the steps. And that's a huge advantage. The United States can bombard anything it wants at any moment, but the Axis of Resistance is choosing the stages of this war—how it's going to play out, how fast or how slow things move. And that's very important, because the United States and the Zionist colony have a high dependency first on air power, then on naval power, and after that, on land power.

And the Axis is the opposite. It depends on defense on the ground, and it has a cheap alternative to an air force—which is usually the most expensive component of any military—with drones and missiles. So the Axis of Resistance has a much more viable, you know, price tag on its military involvement financially, while the West has a much higher financial price tag on its involvement in this war. And therefore, as long as the Axis of Resistance can draw out this war, the West—the imperial powers—will lose. You know, it's 100% predictable. There's no way around it, except, and only except, if they use a nuclear weapon. And I think this is very doubtful at this moment.

But what we'll see over the next week is that the defeat of the empire will become much more glaring in everybody's eyes, and the inability of the empire to protect its assets and its vassals in the region will become undeniable. We may see the involvement of U.S. ground troops, and the staging

grounds for this will most probably be Saudi Arabia. And that's when Yemen will enter the battle. I think this is another example of how the Axis of Resistance has control of the escalation ladder. Yemen doesn't need to enter right now; there needs to be another price tag on the next stage. The other members of the Axis of Resistance—their involvement right now is sufficient to draw out and force the hand of the U.S. to bring troops here.

#Nima

Laith, what do we know about Iraq? Because Iraq was kind of new to the whole calculation of the Axis of Resistance. They weren't that involved before, but right now we're seeing something drastically changing in Iraq, showing how it can become one of the biggest elements of the Axis of Resistance.

#Laith

Yeah, I think with the fall of Syria into the hands of the imperialists, this put a lot of responsibility on the Axis of Resistance in Iraq to either fill the gap in the routes for smuggling weapons to Lebanon or Palestine, and also to raise the stakes so that the Levant is not fully under the control of the imperialists. So, you know, what we saw—and the other thing that's changed right now—is, of course, originally we heard for two years that the West is redrawing the map of the region, that there will be a Greater Israel, that Sykes-Picot doesn't exist, that all these post-World War I states will be scrapped for something the West wants.

But what we've seen over the last two and a half, three weeks is that right now there's an inversion of that. Yes, there is no more Sykes-Picot. Yes, the states created after World War I will cease to exist—but it will be the Axis of Resistance that redraws these borders and refounds new states. And so right now, in reality, there is no state called Iraq anymore. Just as there is no state called Syria, there is no state called Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, or the Emirates. They don't exist in reality. There's only the power of the players dominating the airspace and the land of those countries—the Axis of Resistance and the imperial forces.

That's the reality. So whoever wins this battle right now will be the one drawing the new states and appointing the new governors of these areas. That's one thing. And the Iraqi resistance—because of this, because it's, other than Yemen, which is far away, and the Yemeni resistance, or Hezbollah, which is kind of besieged in Lebanon—the Iraqi resistance right now is the only Arab revolutionary anti-imperialist force able to project power across the whole of West Asia: into Syria, into Jordan, into Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and so forth. Yes, Iran can do that, but I'm talking about the Arab concept.

So it's raising the Iraqi resistance into a front-line position within Arab consciousness and power. Right now, the resistance in Iraq is able to destroy American bases inside the country. By the way, the American embassy in Iraq is practically destroyed—it's been three nights of nonstop drone attacks on the embassy and the bases around Baghdad. Similarly, we saw these stupid moves by the

West, trying to get Kurdish militias involved in an attack on Iran. That stupid move backfired, because of the response from Iran and the Iraqi resistance. The Kurdish militias, just before that moment, were rising to be a possible power broker in the region.

Because of this stupid move by the West, we're now seeing the degradation of the Kurdish militias' ability to have any say—any future say—in the whole region. Right now, the Kurdish militias inside northern Iraq are in the worst position they've been in since World War I. They've practically been abandoned by any imperial sponsor, and all their neighbors want their head on a plate. Again, all these things happening in the region since the beginning of this war are dramatic, and I think it's going to take a while for people to recognize how much things have changed since the first bullet was fired.

#Nima

I received many emails from people in the Persian Gulf Arab states—mostly, I think, 100% of them are Sunni, not Shia. They're sending emails saying, "We are with Iran, we are with the acts of resistance, we are doing this and that." I think what's happening in these countries is that people are finding themselves. They realize they've been ruled by leaders who are not serving the people of the region, but somehow serving Israel or the United States.

This is the huge change. And it's not just happening right now—it's been happening since the war in Gaza, you know, since October 7th. It's been gradual, but it's growing, what's going on in these countries. People are starting to feel that this situation, what's happening, isn't going to be beneficial for the whole region. That's why they're talking—they've started talking to each other. How do you see the Islamic world coming together? I'm talking about public opinion in the Islamic world. It doesn't matter—Sunni, Shia—all together.

#Laith

Yeah, look, I come from a family that's mixed Sunni and Shia on my father's side. The Marouf family is part of the Buhani clan and the Mashahideh tribe—Mashahideh means "the ones who witnessed the martyrdom of Sayyid Hussain, Imam Hussain." On my mother's side, they're Sunni; they come from the Kilani family, and their grandfather is Abdul Qadir Kilani, the founder of the Sufi school in Islam and a descendant of Hassan. So, you know, in a Shia concept, I would be a Sayyid, okay? I would wear a black amama, okay? I'm from Al-Ulbayt on both sides.

Having said this, I think it's very clear to me, as a member of this family and as someone knowledgeable about Islamic jurisprudence and so forth, that this issue of Sunni and Shia is a manufactured thing—it's imperialist. All the Sunnis love Al-Bayt, and all the Shia follow the way of living of Muhammad, which is the Sunnah. There is no Sunni and Shia; there's only Muslim. The original difference that existed between Sunni schools and Shia schools was not about denying how Al-Bayt sacrificed or how they were blessed by the hand of God, chosen to be from the same family

of every prophet from Adam until now. The issue is how you choose the leader—that's the only thing. It's a political difference about choosing the leader.

That is not a blood libel between two sects. What we see is that what the West tried to do over the last hundred years is now finally backfiring. It only worked when you had the Saud family, with all the oil money and control of Mecca and Medina, exporting their depraved interpretations of Islam to other Muslim countries through money—buying mosques to confuse people and mobilize them to kill each other, to kill other Muslims. Well, today, things are out in the open. You know, the Saudis used to lie and say, "We're supporting Palestine." The Saudis used to lie and say, "We have a religious state, an Islamic state," while the Saud family was raping children and getting drunk and drugged up with Western elites—the Epstein class. Well, now it's all in the open.

We saw all the Sunni vassals of Trump coming and kissing the ring on his hand in Sharm el-Sheikh—from Indonesia to Morocco and everything in between. We saw them, for two and a half years, abandon the Palestinians in Gaza to genocide and even fund it and arm it, as happened with the Emirates, Jordan, Saudi, and so forth. So the power of the propaganda created by the Saud family and the Wahhabi cult on behalf of the Zionists and imperialists has just dissipated. It's zero. And it's because of how arrogant the Saud family got—thinking they could throw rave parties in the middle of the desert with drugs and alcohol, and build a mirrored Kaaba, or attempt to build one, to rival the house of God in Mecca and all those things.

So I think right now, anyone who had delusions in their heads or was confused within the Sunni spaces, Sunni countries, and so forth, is awakening to reality. It's undeniable what's happening. And therefore, it's time for a change within the Sunni schools. There's actually a chance for the rise of a new Sunni leadership that is anti-imperialist and brotherly with our Shia cousins. And I think this is true even if we put religion aside for a minute. In the Arab world right now, there's a huge black hole of leadership—specifically in the Arab world. And we may see, in the next few weeks or so, the birth of a new Arab resistance, just as we'll see the birth of a new Sunni resistance.

#Nima

Laith, it seems that one of the agendas of the Israeli government is to build the Third Temple, as they call it—and we know what that means for Muslims, for all Muslims, Shia and Sunni alike. How do you see the possibility of the Israeli government moving in that direction? And how do you see the reaction of Muslim people?

#Laith

Yeah, it's very possible that they would do that because, of course, they're crazy. And the more they lose, the crazier they get. We saw that on October 7th—the loss of October 7th, the military defeat of that day, made them go and conduct a genocide, rape people live on TV, or burn them live on TV. So the closer they get to being defeated militarily by Iran, Hezbollah, and so forth, the higher the

potential for them to do something as crazy as blowing up the Aqsa Mosque. This Ramadan is practically the first Ramadan in which the Aqsa Mosque has been closed. Even in these last ten days of Ramadan—the holiest days in the Muslim calendar—no Palestinians are allowed into the Aqsa Mosque.

We don't know what they're doing inside the Aqsa Mosque—the Zionists. There's a very big possibility that they're rigging it with explosives or something like that. We hope not. But if it happens that the Zionists actually do such a thing, I think it will trigger Muslims around the world—not only in our region—to take revenge, justifiably, against the Jewish institutions, the vast majority of which are supporting the genocides and the wars we see across the region, funding them and recruiting manpower to carry them out. You know, these synagogues in Canada, the U.S., and other places that are recruiting soldiers and so on. So what we just saw last week—the attempted attack on a synagogue in the U.S.—will become a daily thing.

And the Zionists—what they've been trying to do, because they see the world changing and turning against them—is actually to corner their own people, right? They see their younger generation rebelling against Zionism. They see that the whole world is hating them. And they see that as an opportunity to force allegiance from anyone within the Jewish community who is critical of the Zionists, by making the whole Jewish community a target. So it's part of their strategy: they want Jewish communities all around the world to feel so isolated, so targeted—in places like Canada, the U.S., and Australia—that they put all their backing behind the Zionist colony and its crimes.

So on the one hand, it's part of their long-term strategy—they want the Jewish people to be targeted. On the other hand, there's no way around it. If the Aqsa Mosque is attacked in the name of Judaism, and if the West doesn't do anything about it—which they won't—then it's up to Muslim people to defend Islam's holy sites. And without the funding from Jewish communities around the world, Israel would collapse. So the Jewish communities in the West that are funding this must be forced to stop. And that can only happen by bringing the war to their communities.

#Nima

Since the war between Iran and the United States started, we're not hearing much from Gaza or the West Bank. I think the situation in Palestine, I would argue, is the core—the heart of the problem in the region. It's not between Iran, it's not between Lebanon and the United States; it's between Palestine and Israel. So, what is the situation right now in the West Bank and in Gaza?

#Laith

Yeah, you're right. This is a core issue, of course. The Iranian leadership, in their latest statements just today and yesterday, when asked about a ceasefire, said there will be no ceasefire until the Israelis end their occupation of Lebanon and Gaza. So Iran knows that even if it gets all the guarantees or reparations for the crimes that were committed, as long as there's a genocide

happening in Gaza, there will be a return to this war. As long as the Zionists are able to carry out these genocides and crimes, there will be instability in the region and a continuation of war. So we need to see an end to that. That's one thing.

When we look at what's happening inside the West Bank—of course, I mentioned earlier the rape and killing of that man in the Jordan Valley in front of his family—there have been multiple villages in the Jordan Valley over the last 48 hours that were attacked by these hordes of Jewish supremacists. They killed hundreds of cattle, sheep, and goats belonging to families who are herders in the Jordan Valley. There's also been the execution of a whole family near Qalqilya in the West Bank, where Israeli soldiers riddled the entire family with around seventy bullets in front of their children, and one of the children survived. And these are not resistance fighters or anything like that.

It was just a normal family in their car, driving to buy Eid clothes—you know, as part of the tradition in Islam to buy new clothes for the children and the family so they can look good after the Ramadan fast. Their only "crime," this family, was that they tried to have a little happiness in their life. And that's why the Israeli soldiers killed them. In Gaza, on a daily basis, we see attacks on civilians. There was an attack on a civilian car this morning and another one yesterday. But at the same time, we can see that the number of aerial attacks on the Gaza Strip has decreased dramatically, because the Zionist Air Force is busy attacking Lebanon, or Iran and Iraq. So there's just a slight decrease in the massacres in Gaza.

But the Zionists have substituted that, knowing they're unable to carry out direct massacres because they're busy killing people elsewhere. They've replaced it with closures and shortages of medicine, food, and water in the Gaza Strip. There's been very little arrival of supplies into Gaza since the beginning of this stage of the war. As a result, starvation and suffering in the Strip have become more severe. They'll continue their crimes in any way they can, these Zionists. And as long as the world is busy watching what's happening in Iran, in Lebanon, and elsewhere, yes, the Zionists will keep finding other ways to kill more Palestinians in silence.

#Nima

Laith, the war that's happening is a war of attrition. It's not new—the war of attrition has been going on since the conflict in Palestine began. But this is a new phase, a new level. You mentioned how the Iranian missiles have depleted the inner sectors in Israel, for example, and that brings a kind of fragility on the part of the Israelis when it comes to Hezbollah moving in and all these new calculations. But do you think this escalation could lead to years of attrition warfare at a new level between the West and, you know, the axis of resistance?

#Laith

Well, all the military analysts who are keeping track of the air defense supplies the West has in this battle are saying we're around 60% depleted for systems like the THAAD, the Arrow, the David's

Sling, and the Patriots. And we're on day—what, 19 of the war, yeah? So imagine two more weeks of this. Okay, actually, imagine just one more week. One more week of this and there will be no more air defenses, period, for the West in the region. And right now, Iran—again, just to remind everybody—Iran is in full control of the escalation ladder. It has chosen up until now not to hit anything inside Turkey, for instance. At the moment, the only major radar installations and air defense systems in the region that haven't been hit are the ones in Turkey.

And that's a choice. The Iranians could have done it, but they want to keep it for a later stage, as the desperation of the West becomes clear and they depend more and more on the bases in Turkey. Over the last 24 hours, we saw the United States moving and delivering Patriot systems to its bases around Turkey, because it will need to move some of its air force there to continue the attacks on Iran. I'm bringing this up because I think there will be a moment in the next week when Iran will hit Turkey, okay? Once it's done with everything between it and the Zionist colony, Turkey will have no choice but to respond, because the West will depend more and more on the American bases.

So the other thing we need to keep in mind is that the airfields in the region are almost completely destroyed. More and more of the air sorties of the imperialist alliance are flying out of Cyprus and the Souda base, the NATO base on the island of Crete in Greece. So probably by next week, we'll see those targeted too, once everything else is destroyed. That's when we'll see the war change—after Iran targets those three locations: Turkey, Cyprus, and Greece. That's when a different stage of the war will begin, stepping up the escalation ladder. I think it'll be around the same time the US decides it's going to send in ground troops.

And without air defenses to protect those ground troops, and with the American and imperialist air forces having to fly from farther locations in Europe and Africa to attack Iran or provide air cover for their advancing troops, we'll see huge numbers of American soldiers dying, because there are no air defenses and the planes coming to protect them take too long to arrive. So this is the next stage of the war that we'll see next week. In the meantime, the Zionists and the Americans will have zero success with their military strategy to change anything on the ground—neither in Lebanon, nor in Iraq or Iran.

#Nima

Laith, I think it's a decisive moment for Turkey to make a choice. They were somehow playing both sides during the war in Gaza—the war on Gaza. And here's what the Turkish president, Erdogan, said: we all know their purpose is not just security. We all know this. Simultaneously with the attacks, the delusions of the promised land, the doomsday scenarios, the fact that all these absurdities are being brought up is certainly not a coincidence. And, you know, whenever he talks, he knows the core issue, he knows what's going on. But when it comes to action, you don't see much happening in Turkey. Do you think Erdogan has finally come to some sort of understanding that what's happening in West Asia is not going to benefit Turkey, given the role they're playing?

#Laith

You know, as an Arab person, I've witnessed throughout my life all these Arab states making statements against the murders in Palestine and for the liberation of Palestine. I mean, the royal family in Morocco chaired the Jerusalem Committee, and the royal family in Jordan are the custodians of the holy sites in Palestine. They've made so many statements over their lives, protesting the attacks on Al-Aqsa or the Christian holy sites, and so forth. And of course, as an Arab person, I knew that these words don't match the actions of these states and elites—that they were actually collaborating with the Zionists, whether it's Morocco sending their Jewish population to Palestine, or Jordan working against Syria and Egypt throughout the wars in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s.

So, Erdogan still has that margin to play the same game the Moroccan or Jordanian royals did, because his population doesn't have the memory we have of experiencing that. His regime and his party are new compared to something like the royal family in Jordan, which has a hundred-year record of saying one thing and doing the opposite. So he still has the ability to fool his people, or at least part of them, into not taking action. But yesterday, in one of the major mosques in Istanbul, the women praying there all took off their hijabs and threw them from the second floor onto the imam and the men below, in protest of the men not taking responsibility to defend Al-Aqsa Mosque.

So they're saying, "You are a shame on Islam." And if I'm Muslim, I feel ashamed because the men of my nation are eunuchs—might as well take off my hijab. This is dangerous. I think the religious elite in Turkey must have shuddered last night, must have been unable to sleep after what happened with the women in those mosques. Erdogan is playing with fire. And when the time comes that Iran punishes the Turkish state for its continued collaboration with the Zionists—against their own people and against their brothers and sisters in the region—I think the Turkish population will be as thankful as the Bahraini population was for Iran's attacks on American assets in Turkey.

And this is very important. Change is coming. I don't personally believe that Erdogan or the cabal around him will change their behavior. It's hard to straighten a dog's tail, especially after it sets. It's like when someone's leg breaks and heals incorrectly for years—the only way to fix it is to break it again. That's literally what's happening there. I don't see Turkey changing its behavior. I think the axis of resistance will force it to make that choice. And I think the population of Turkey is getting to a point where they don't listen to Erdogan anymore.

#Nima

Thank you, Laith. Thank you so much for being with us today. Please go to freepalestine.video and support Laith and what he's doing. He's the best. What he's doing is—well, we have nobody like Laith doing this. Reporting on the ground.

#Laith

You know, we just released a documentary that's really important for people to see about the Souda NATO base in Crete. We went to the base, toured around it, talked to people about its history. And now this is the headquarters for the attack on Iran, because the attacks on all the bases in the Gulf forced the U.S. to move its command centers to Souda Base. Souda Base is right now responsible for the genocides we're seeing. People can watch that documentary—it's one of a kind. We might get arrested for it, but please watch it, because it's full of information.

#Nima

Thank you. Thank you, Laith. See you soon. See you soon.