

Transcript

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Let's start with how the house is evolved. The house is somehow have been always able to work on different tracks in their the political movement, let's say. Or is it an insurgency?

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They work as a social movement. In fact, it started as a revivalist movement. Today. The revivalist movement, early on in the 90s and and then it's from there to branched out into an armed insurgency.

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But the social the social movement is still part of of the group, one way or another, a third track, in addition to their armed insurgency hats, is the political formal political hats. Basically, they were engaged in party politics.

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In the 90s, they formed the party, a small party at Huck Hossein al Hosi, who was the the leader of the of the of the movement.

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Was a Parliament member at the time and they also join the opposition against Salah in something called the joint Members party in in the 2000s, just before the uprising.

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And so they were also engaged in that political dimension and also they were very active in the national Dialogue Conference, which followed the transitional period after the 2011 uprising and the brokered deal that was.

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Quite short before we, we slip slipped into a conflict. So it's important to understand that the whole things are multidimensional.

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And they use these different hats in quite creative ways.

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At the moment and I want to also talk about their motivations and goals in the mid in the midterm to midterm and also in the long.

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Although for the long term I will not kind of project too much because.

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I think they can evolve as we as we go and I don't want to say too much about their long term goals more than what they already state.

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But for the short and mid term, we have seen that they, you know, they were for a long time, a domestic group. They had domestic issues, they were very much part of that domestic context in Yemen.

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As I said during Saleh's time.

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Through their.

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As a social movement and then their insurgency period and.

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A long period of war with the regime in the 2000s that that started 2003 and ended 2010 just before the uprising and there and then the the the integration into the 2011.

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Squares and revolution and and all that.

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At the moment what they're doing is three things.

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They're working on three theatres, 1 is the domestic and I will explain exactly how they're doing that now in their current kind of power position and then also with the regional and international opponents.

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Pose and then regionally with their friends. Basically the other groups that are aligned with Iran and that share an alignment in ideology.

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Domestically, the Houthis are acting like a state.

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In some parts they govern a population in a very strict manner.

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And they they are able to control that the part that they're holding and they control basically something like 60 to 70% of the population. It's a little bit difficult to determine exactly the percentage because the laws and there's a lot of Idps.

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But let's say around 60 to 70% of the population. And in terms of territory, it's a smaller territory than the other groups that that control the east and the southern parts.

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But the population is is is significant.

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Their tactics basically are extractive. They extract a lot from the population in terms of taxes. They are very effective tax collectors and they they don't give anything in return for the taxes that they they extract from.

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A population that is already quite in a dire situation, so this this creates a relationship that.

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It's it's quite unique because to do this you need to really use all your oppressive tools to to be able to do that and and they use that to the maximum.

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They also engage in surveillance in quite advanced ways, and rumour has wishes that they learned a lot of these methods from Hezbollah. Of course, Hezbollah was an important mentor for the houses, and they provided a lot of Technical Support and advice.

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But they also took control of the public institutions when they entered and captured the capital Sanaa.

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And when they did that, of course they took also control of all the intelligence files and so on from the former regime. So they have a wealth of data that can allow them to surveil the population in a in a very strict manner. And they use new technologies to do that as well.

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They also induce fear among population, so now it is very, very risky to say anything if they dig out an old Facebook post or Twitter post or something like this, you can disappear. They have been. They have been engaged, been engaging in mass arrests.

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Yes.

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Mass detentions.

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In the past few months, but from before.

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4 But since May, basically they detained something like 20 UN staff, including someone from the the UN envoys Office. So the person who's supposed to be mediating.

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One one of his staff was detained and they are still disappeared. They were able to contact their families once and some of them couldn't. No one knows where they are. There is no legal process that started and since then they have been also televised confession.

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With some of the people who have been detained from earlier on kind of confessing to being a part of an espionage network and also naming some of the collaborators who are people that we know very well from from the civil society and.

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And other intellectuals. So there is a sort of a purge cultural purge in society to put anyone who has been working with any.

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Let's say UN or Western body or who had.

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Been educated outside of the country to put them on the spot.

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This is coming with the social stigma on the families of the people who have also been part of.

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Because they are being accused of being, you know, connected to a spy. So this is a little bit different than previous political prisoners who, you know, people usually sympathise with their families and so on. This is very different.

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And finally, they reject completely to engage with any Yemeni political opponent or rival they don't recognise.

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And of course, they accuse them of being puppets to the Saudis or the Emiratis, or so maybe there's there's a case there, but this also tells us that they're not willing to engage with any Yemeni rival. And so this brings us to an idea that they always like to be to present, which is this quest for sovereignty.

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From a context of non sovereignty, basically there's, I mean Yemen is completely, you know, open to so many parties and and the Houthis are also very, very align, you know, very close to the Iranians. They receive support from them. So they're not completely independent, let's say.

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And so there is this tension between sovereignty and non sovereignty that they are playing with and they justify a lot of this approach that they are.

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Using to as part of enforcing a notion of solvency.

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In terms of their goals internationally and regionally with their opponents.

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Number one, they want to, you know they're there. They have reached a point where they were able to make their opponents lose all appetite to combat them, to find them. So the Saudis no longer want to engage in any military activity.

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Activity with the against the Houthis, they have been completely consumed by a ten year of military operation that has become a failure and they are. They are relying on this as.

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Of pressuring these opponents to concede to their demands, and so on. Of course we know that there's there are huge economic projects that Saudi is trying to put forward within its 2030 vision.

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And the houses know that this is a very sensitive spot for the, for the Saudis, they they of course did a lot of drone and missile attacks across the border and and this this really scared the Saudis because they they felt they felt that their economic assets.

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Were at risk and the stakes were too high.

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Too high. And so they decided to go into another track with the Houthis, which is, let's end this war. Let's get out and let's make sure that we can secure the country so that we can continue their economic aspirations.

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And so this loss of appetite to combat them is something that the Houthis are worked towards and they are. They're exploiting now to the maximum.

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And in terms of what they're doing now in the Red Sea is that they're basically antagonising the international community in, in, in various ways and very obvious ways, but still relying on the idea that the Saudis don't want to go into war with them anymore. And so they will have their back.

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Indirectly, and we can get into some examples here on how this was done in specific ways and then finally the third track which is.

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Regionally with their friends, let's say.

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And this is basically where it becomes very clear that they have.

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Strategically try to graduate from that domestic position to a reasonable actor.

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And if you know, if you look at this trajectory, which is not a very long period where they were really confined in sada in the north of Yemen, and then advanced to the capital Sanaa, and then tried to advance a bit to the South, but were pushed back and now they are.

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A regional actor to recognise.

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With and.

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What they did basically is something that is quite characteristic of them, which is that they turn a challenge into an opportunity. And I don't say this because I'm a fan in any way, but because this is something that we should acknowledge, they they, they are playing the long game.

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They are strategic, while all their rivals are not including Saudi Arabia, they all lack strategy and vision. But we see that the whole sees.

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Have a vision and they have. They play the long game. They are willing to wait and use strategic patience. As was mentioned earlier in the day.

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To prove a point. And So what happened is that now with the Reza, the seven October, the Reza War and the attack on Hezbollah on the Hezbollah leadership in particular.

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They although this hit them very strongly because they're very close to Hezbollah and as I said, they are their mentors and it's also very personal relationship. And and this was a big hit for them. I think at the not only at at the level of kind of brothers in arms but also.

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Personally to.

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Abdul Malik and Hosi, who was very close to Hassan Nasrallah. But they saw that here there's something that a there's there's an opportunity for them to.

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Show their credentials not only to Iran, but also to their peers within what for no lack of other words, we we call the axis of resistance or proxies. Or you know I we can talk about.

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About these names later, but I think it's it's a matter of perspective and the function of the of the, the, the.

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But here we see very clearly that first they very quickly moved into this Red Sea campaign. Shortly after the 7th October. So the first initial attacks were just 10 days later.

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And then in November, they launched the formal.

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And this campaign has been going up, you know, the the the attacks fluctuate, but it's it's quite high intensity, I would say. And this has led to.

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Almost a halving of the you know, the traffic in the Red Sea has gone down to half.

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And countries like Egypt and so on have been hit very badly by by this economically, and so they know exactly that. This is a very sensitive sector, a small drone hitting and may be targeting and not not really hitting or, you know, whatever.

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Can create a lot of havoc in in in the commercial sector that is very sensitive where insurance companies, you know, charge very high premiums. If there is this type of risk and this kind of.

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A whole sector in a sensitive.

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But it's also creates, you know, other alternative routes that can become permanent and it can change the region in a very radical way if it continues for a long.

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But they understood the sensitivity and they they really tapped on it in a country that has no naval force, although Yemen is, you know, on on a long coast. But naval forces non existent.

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And it also tells us that they have been working on this for a long period before 7 October and there has been some attacks in the Red Sea before that and also a use of, for example, the software tanker that was holding oil and was.

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Risking an environmental crisis, and so they already tested this situation before and want want the opportunity came, they quickly jumped on it.

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But we also see that they are trying to present themselves also as an added value to.

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In the sense that they can have an important role in the Horn of Africa and in the African continent, and we've seen this in very close collaborations with the Shabab, and this also tells us about how the Shia group, it's not their the bridging between the Shia and the Sunni groups is there. There is an idea that is trans.

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Fun Islamist and that that crosses the borders and even even.

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And with with the Shabab, it's not. It's not just a convenient exchange, but it is really a collaboration. There have been high level visits to to Shabab from the Houthi leaders. Beyond that, we are also witnessing.

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Commercial and trade exchanges between other groups who are active in in the region, non state actors or whatever we want to call them.

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And so this is proving utility to Iran and associated groups in a way that I think is very novel. And I think it's, you know, we can, we can, we can see how creative the hotties are in in that front.

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Now it still comes back to the idea of sovereignty and non sovereignty because they are.

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Asserting a notion of sovereignty in a domestic level domestic level, they are like, you know, they're able to get some kind of recognition from regional and international states.

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Even if not officially, but de facto in the sense that Saudi Arabia realised that the only way out of this mess that it got itself into in Yemen is to go directly into talks with the Houthis and to concede to Houthi.

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Demands to all of them, actually and without any reservations, and so this de facto is recognition, even if it's not, and they also stuck to their point that they will not.

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Go into talks with other Yemeni rivals.

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And so this is a way of carving a kind of sovereignty.

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That is, I think, worth studying.

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And understanding its its dynamics. And then again this role that it's that the the movement of the group is playing in solidarity with other aligned ideologically aligned groups and with the idea of.

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Global solidarity for Gaza and for other.

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And this has also been a very successful PR stunt for them because.

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Just before 7 October in September.

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The month before.

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The Houthis up until then, have been enjoying a period of about 1 1/2 year. Something like this of.

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Relative peace there has been a truce. The front lines have gone somewhat quiet.

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But then they realised that this is pushing the population to demand more because there is no more pretence of.

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War and aggression, and so they can. They can demand services, they they they want more. And in September 26th of September, the anniversary of the Republican revolution, which is seen to be an the Republic.

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By some seen as an antithesis to the.

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Who some you know, perceive as coming to restore an earlier period of the amendment. And so people went out to the streets.

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In spite of the fear inducing tactics and the the brutal way of the Houthis, they went to the streets and started to demand more. And so there was a lot of and.

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Think this took the whole tease by surprise.

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And they realise that actually, peace is not really working very good for us. Maybe we we need something to keep everyone busy all the time and.

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Just in November, they were supposed to go into the agreement with Saudi Arabia. The the terms of the agreements have been agreed on negotiated with the with the parties and the UN was informed about it.

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To then take it forward as the after the, the Saudis and the Hodis go into the agreements and this was supposed to be in November.

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So the healthiest decided that this can all be posed and we can go to the Red Sea and try something else. And that's exactly what they did. And so it worked for them.

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Internally, in the sense that they were able to shut down the the the popular demand for services and basic needs.

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They were able to shock and surprise Saudi Arabia that conceded a lot for that agreement and thought that the houses will jump on it because there wasn't very significant financial aspect to it.

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That was quite controversial, but they also knew that the Saudis will still want to go into that agreement, even if they go and do this adventure in the red.

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And so in terms of calculation, I would say.

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This is very effective.

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Calculation.

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In terms of its relation with Iran and other groups, they have become almost completely.

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It shows that they have also been very, very much integrated, I mean and the hoses are quite distance geographically and in other ways from the other, from the groups in Iraq or Hezbollah.

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And for Iran, it was like really low investment, you know, group that can put pressure on Saudi Arabia or needed it limited hegemony in the region. And it worked for its advantage without too much investment.

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But they I don't think anyone they expected more from the whole season than us. But now that it has become completely integrated in again, let's say for simplicity purposes.

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The axis of resistance is that.

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It is now losing a little bit of its sovereignty that it's continuously trying to.

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Associates to Iran because what they are doing now has direct impact on Iranian national interest and of course, Iran was very much willing to give the hoses free rein to do whatever they want as long it was.

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In the in the southern Red Sea, in their domestic arena, but now that.

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Its own interest is at stake. We see that the Iranians are putting them on a leash on some in some aspects, and so here they're also, you know, they have indirectly lost some of their autonomy. And I can close here and we can open.

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Can we?

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I see. Sure. So this is an afterthought, but.

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The first this is a caricature.

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A young Yemeni artist, he was.

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He was quite active during the 2011 uprising and he's very creative, but now he's full time working with the as a cadicat tourist for the for the Hoshies and he he has a lot of these types of caricatures. And so he he put this one in his page.

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Which shows like the the Red Sea as a the sword of of Yemen to fight.

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Another way to show how they are quite good in their PR stunts is.

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This guy, I don't. If you anyone has seen them, but he was.

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He.

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Viral on TikTok and other places and I think he was then banned from TikTok but it was the hot pirate.

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I don't know.

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And I would say like he beat certify or?

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I.

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And yeah, this is picked up a lot and and I think he also got a lot of he got into a bit of trouble about it because he was.

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Accused of being a little bit.

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Feminine.

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And then this is.

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This is, I mean it's. I don't think it's a very famous person or anything like that, but it's also just to show how they are popular all the way to to Pakistan and beyond. And so this is a Pakistani.

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Twitter, who who wrote about this?

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And if you know if one does really a proper scale on the social media you'll find from North Africa to to East Asia to of course Europe and and the US, I was sitting yesterday in the airport next to a priest.

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An Italian priest and he he knew I was there and he said, hey, the houses are great because what's?

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In Gaza is terrible and I was like what?

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So it tells you something, and I mean.

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There are many stories about this, but.

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But at least whatever they're doing in terms of propaganda is working in the advantage. And then I also found this yesterday.

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By Mcqualis, who, who is kind of, you know, making a claim for the healthiest, and then finally.

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Wanted to share this.

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But anyway, they have this very interesting.

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Type of art that that's like music called the Woman. I mean, it's the woman. Means something else, but they have appropriated it for this war music. And they're very kind of high beat.

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Type of songs they're all like fighting songs, and I heard from an Egyptian friend that her spin class teacher in Egypt plays them in the class, and so they're really all over. And I think this is also worth kind of trying to understand.

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How this happened? Because this is a group that.

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You know, came from the mountains of Sada.

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And I can close them. Thank you.

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Morning.