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00:00:05,370 --> 00:00:12,150

Good evening, everyone, welcome to Middle East Centre. My name is Michael Wilson and the director of Middle East Centre,

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00:00:12,150 --> 00:00:22,560

and it gives me pleasure to introduce you to the eighth and final Friday seminar series of Hillary term.

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00:00:22,560 --> 00:00:32,820

Thank you. Welcome to all of you joining us here in Oxford to welcome to everybody who's joining us online, our friends and colleagues elsewhere.

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This is the last of the series this term, and for the last two weeks of the seminar series, we focussed on crises in the region,

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but regrettably rather fallen away from the public eye, despite the fact that they are very regrettably very much ongoing conflicts and crises.

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Recent events in Eastern Europe, of course, have only pushed discussion and coverage of events even further from the international attention.

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But at the time, at the same time, I think they are also remind us in a very reminiscent of the crises.

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Indeed, as those of you who came to our events on last week,

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there were clear parallels between what is going on in Eastern Europe and what is going on in the two countries we're looking at.

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Last week we looked at Syria this week where we looking at Yemen with four and perhaps even

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since the events in Ukraine represented the biggest humanitarian crisis on the planet.

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00:01:39,340 --> 00:01:44,820

And despite this fact, Yemen has not attracted the attention and the coverage deserves.

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00:01:44,820 --> 00:01:49,750

I know where Middle East sentiment coverage as much as we should.

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Now, much of this neglect is attributed to the fact or certainly to the argument that there's a relative dearth of people

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00:01:57,490 --> 00:02:04,900

with specialist knowledge of the country outside of Yemen and therefore very pleased to have us with this head tonight,

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00:02:04,900 --> 00:02:09,100

someone who is a genuine expert on Yemen. But moreover, is in doubt.

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00:02:09,100 --> 00:02:16,690

Oddly, the leading expert on Yemen in the UK, a good and long standing friend of the Middle East Centre,

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00:02:16,690 --> 00:02:21,430

Helen Lackner, has worked on and written on Yemen for nearly 50 years.

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00:02:21,430 --> 00:02:30,790

She has written and coached, edited no fewer than six books on Yemen, including most recently Why Yemen Matters in 2014 Yemen in Crisis.

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The Road to War in 2019, which is a new edition, is coming out this summer.

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00:02:35,260 --> 00:02:40,570

Yes. Yeah. And also later this year, Yemen poverty and conflict.

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00:02:40,570 --> 00:02:48,220

So we really have a speaker who is uniquely qualified to talk about the ongoing crisis in Yemen.

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00:02:48,220 --> 00:02:54,010

Helen has a number of his books I mentioned. I think you have copies of all available, if you will be interested.

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00:02:54,010 --> 00:03:00,460

Last chance, last chance to get them zaharias and presumably signed by the author if necessary.

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00:03:00,460 --> 00:03:04,720

Yes, right? But therefore, with no further ado, Alan.

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00:03:04,720 --> 00:03:12,310

OK. Good evening. Thank you very much for coming and competing with all the other events that are happening locally.

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00:03:12,310 --> 00:03:16,720

Let alone getting away from the latest news on Ukraine.

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00:03:16,720 --> 00:03:22,570

I just want to say one thing about Ukraine as we are all flooded at every news bulletin from the

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00:03:22,570 --> 00:03:29,170

beginning to the end with dreadful human interest stories and how awful it all is for the Ukrainians.

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00:03:29,170 --> 00:03:38,530

I think people suggest just trying the case just simply change the name from Ukraine to Syria and Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen,

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00:03:38,530 --> 00:03:46,690

Congo and maybe a few others, and realise that all those people are suffering just as badly and have done for a lot longer.

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00:03:46,690 --> 00:03:52,000

If you look at the death toll in Congo, I mean, it's beyond belief. Over the last 20 years.

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00:03:52,000 --> 00:03:56,980

So I won't go on because, you know, this is a an incredibly sad topic.

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00:03:56,980 --> 00:04:01,960

And as far as I'm concerned, nothing further will be said on this topic tonight.

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Very briefly, I want to go over a few dates and somehow there's a few anniversaries.

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One of them that really shocked me a couple of weeks ago that we shouldn't have done,

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00:04:11,950 --> 00:04:22,630

which marked the fact that Abdul Jabbar Mansur Hadi has now been president of the internationally recognised government for 10 years.

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00:04:22,630 --> 00:04:27,670

Now, that isn't immediately apparent from the way he has governed the place or what he has done there.

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00:04:27,670 --> 00:04:31,270

But I thought this worth noting. I think it's also worth noting,

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00:04:31,270 --> 00:04:43,390

given the earlier talks in the last term in particular that now are in the 11th year after a very major set of popular uprisings took place in Yemen,

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00:04:43,390 --> 00:04:51,250

and they were partly involved in the resulting war, which has taken place since.

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00:04:51,250 --> 00:05:00,670

I think also, you know, 2014 was the year the Houthis Saleh put a coalition or whatever alliance took over summer,

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00:05:00,670 --> 00:05:08,140

which lasted for three years, because by December 17, the Houthis killed Saleh, and that was quite an important thing.

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00:05:08,140 --> 00:05:12,370

And then there's two sets of agreements that have been signed or something

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00:05:12,370 --> 00:05:17,470

that have taken place with one of them was actually never signed since then.

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00:05:17,470 --> 00:05:20,260

That was supposed to contribute to peace.

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00:05:20,260 --> 00:05:28,990

And they are the Stockholm Agreement in December 2018, which was not signed, and that he had agreement in 2019,

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00:05:28,990 --> 00:05:38,830

which was supposed to bring about peace and cooperation between the internationally recognised government and the Southern Transitional Council,

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00:05:38,830 --> 00:05:42,430

which is one of the southern separatist organisations.

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00:05:42,430 --> 00:05:55,270

And the last anniversary is that later this month, we will have the seventh anniversary of the internal internationalisation of the Yemeni Civil War,

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which means that the suffering and killing in Yemen has now been going on for a full seven years.

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So I think this is kind of something that I thought was probably good to start with.

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00:06:08,700 --> 00:06:14,800

Now, very briefly, because I don't know to what extent people here are familiar with Yemen or not,

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00:06:14,800 --> 00:06:19,740

so I may be saying things that people know too well, and maybe some of us don't.

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I want to start by saying who is fighting whom and who is involved in the war.

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00:06:24,360 --> 00:06:29,670

So basically, we have on one side, the internationally recognised government of Hadi,

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00:06:29,670 --> 00:06:37,470

which is officially based in Aden with most of its main ministers, are sitting in Riyadh and a few elsewhere.

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And it is supported by what's known as the Saudi led coalition, which is indeed Saudi led.

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But where the UAE is playing a major role,

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00:06:49,020 --> 00:06:55,050

I think the UAE until very recently had a successful public relations operation by

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letting it be called always the Saudi led coalition and keeping in the background,

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00:07:01,920 --> 00:07:08,670

whereas in fact their involvement has been, if not as intense as that of the Saudis.

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00:07:08,670 --> 00:07:19,840

It's also very important, and they also amongst the major decision makers on the outside of Yemen, and they are fighting the Houthis now the Houthis.

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00:07:19,840 --> 00:07:25,150

Sailor, who lives as I've just explained, but since December 2017,

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00:07:25,150 --> 00:07:35,770

it is exclusively the Houthis and the Houthis do not only have a very strong and strengthening military capacity,

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but they are now ruling and governing and they are indeed governing and they are indeed governing in a particularly unpleasant manner.

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00:07:43,960 --> 00:07:54,670

But that doesn't stop it from being real. About 70 percent of the Yemeni people now there are other groups involved in the war and that.

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00:07:54,670 --> 00:08:02,620

One who is led by Patrick Saleh, who is the nephew of ex-President Ali Abdullah and who has his own forces,

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00:08:02,620 --> 00:08:08,380

which were previously mainly in the West Coast and have recently moved elsewhere.

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00:08:08,380 --> 00:08:17,080

The Southern Transitional Council, which is one of these southern separatist movements and which is dominant for various reasons

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00:08:17,080 --> 00:08:22,210

which we could go into later in question time and then various other regional groupings.

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00:08:22,210 --> 00:08:28,300

They are the Tehama front and various other southern groups, etc. in the background.

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00:08:28,300 --> 00:08:36,190

And all of these are militarily in the hands of arms trade, which is extremely important,

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00:08:36,190 --> 00:08:44,170

also diplomatically and also to some extent, tactically with with intelligence information available.

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00:08:44,170 --> 00:08:51,280

Basically, the US, the UK, France and other Western states who are opposing the Iranians,

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00:08:51,280 --> 00:09:01,480

who are providing some technical assistance and some sophisticated weaponry to the Houthis and in the background

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00:09:01,480 --> 00:09:09,880

also maybe sometimes from the United Nations and women who are trying to mediate and bring about peace.

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00:09:09,880 --> 00:09:19,150

So that's it. So militarily, very briefly, the current situation is that there's basically a stalemate.

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00:09:19,150 --> 00:09:28,960

There's been a stalemate now for many years. There's occasional moments when something's changed in the in the second half of last year,

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00:09:28,960 --> 00:09:37,690

the Houthis appear to be making massive progress in their attack on my head, which had now been going on for two years.

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00:09:37,690 --> 00:09:43,780

But they were then repelled in November December by the arrival of some other troops from elsewhere.

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00:09:43,780 --> 00:09:53,870

So basically, one has a situation where the movement military movement is not that significant up to now.

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00:09:53,870 --> 00:10:03,830

You have, you know, the the focus on the fighting for quite a long time in the last few years has been around Marib at the moment this month,

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00:10:03,830 --> 00:10:08,270

it appears not to be. That doesn't mean that it won't be next month.

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00:10:08,270 --> 00:10:13,760

So these things are changing very regularly, and I'm not sure we want to go.

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00:10:13,760 --> 00:10:19,640

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the ongoing struggle between the

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00:10:19,640 --> 00:10:23,840

Southern Transitional Council and the internationally recognised government.

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Now that again actually has a fair amount of stalemate in the terms of physical control.

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00:10:30,830 --> 00:10:41,590

But it's so it's at least as active in terms of and constant skirmishes and conflict as the situation around Marib.

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00:10:41,590 --> 00:10:48,190

Now to talk about negotiations and peace, which is something that people do hear about,

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and we have every month a meeting of the United Nations Security Council that addresses Yemen, where the United,

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00:10:56,140 --> 00:11:04,810

the special envoy speaks and usually the humanitarian person speaks and sometimes somebody when a

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00:11:04,810 --> 00:11:12,580

person who is employed or who is connected with the United Nations Hodeidah agreement and speaks,

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00:11:12,580 --> 00:11:23,110

and they basically always deplore the lack of progress of it's worth pointing out that we now have a new U.N. special envoy since last August,

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00:11:23,110 --> 00:11:31,600

who was previously the special envoy, the ambassador to Yemen of the European Union.

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00:11:31,600 --> 00:11:42,340

He has taken a different approach from his predecessor, who himself had not achieved very much, to put it mildly.

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00:11:42,340 --> 00:11:52,600

In his three years of tenure, but thanks to his great success, he's now been appointed the chief of the whole humanitarian situation in the UN system.

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00:11:52,600 --> 00:12:01,960

So while this is basically no significant progress has taken place in terms of ending the fighting and very

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00:12:01,960 --> 00:12:10,900

few people who are familiar with Yemen are expecting any significant progress in in any kind of a hurry.

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00:12:10,900 --> 00:12:20,710

It's worth asking why isn't this war ending? And I think of basically three or two reasons and the third, which is the conclusion,

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00:12:20,710 --> 00:12:24,880

which is first, that the fighting groups still think they can win.

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00:12:24,880 --> 00:12:31,930

The WHO says if they think of where they were in 2000 or even where they were in 2010,

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00:12:31,930 --> 00:12:43,660

when the last war against Saleh took place and where they are today can see a clear upward trend of increasing power and increasing control,

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00:12:43,660 --> 00:12:52,240

and therefore they are not inclined to to basically to withdraw or to give in.

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00:12:52,240 --> 00:12:53,530

And on the other hand,

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00:12:53,530 --> 00:13:03,790

the internationally recognised government is in a position where if it if it agrees to any serious changes to any serious peace,

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00:13:03,790 --> 00:13:08,290

it will instantly and automatically sign this death warrant.

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00:13:08,290 --> 00:13:14,860

And therefore, it's not about to do that. On the other hand, at the same, we'll have at the same time,

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00:13:14,860 --> 00:13:24,100

because do you have a situation in which there are a small number of war profiteers who are doing extremely well out of this war?

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00:13:24,100 --> 00:13:30,670

And they are not only people who are trading in weapons and such objects that very much.

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00:13:30,670 --> 00:13:39,100

One of the big focus of this fighting of the profiteering is connected with fuel and fuel supply.

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00:13:39,100 --> 00:13:43,090

And that's a very long and complicated scene that I won't go into.

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00:13:43,090 --> 00:13:49,180

But I think it's something that I always say it is that it is shocking and

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00:13:49,180 --> 00:13:55,090

shameful and any as strong a word as anybody can think of to look at the complete

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00:13:55,090 --> 00:14:01,450

indifference that all these warmongers have to the conditions and disastrous



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00:14:01,450 --> 00:14:06,820

living conditions of the vast majority of the Yemeni population and those,

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00:14:06,820 --> 00:14:18,490

you know, repeating it doesn't change it. Unfortunately, now, because of the military war has not been and any sense and roaring success.

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00:14:18,490 --> 00:14:26,080

The internationally recognised government has basically developed and started a financial and economic

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00:14:26,080 --> 00:14:36,910

war and is hoping to to defeat the WHO sees basically through economic and blockade effectively.

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00:14:36,910 --> 00:14:37,810

And, of course,

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00:14:37,810 --> 00:14:48,370

that economic war and this and its implications again cause more suffering to the population and precious little to the leaders on any side.

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00:14:48,370 --> 00:14:54,640

But the main features of this war were basically started in 2016,

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00:14:54,640 --> 00:15:04,690

when they transferred the central Bank of Yemen from summer to Adam, which resulted in having two competing central banks,

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00:15:04,690 --> 00:15:08,980

both of which are operating, one of which has things like the Swift code,

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00:15:08,980 --> 00:15:15,580

while the other controls the details and the information, and all the main operations that are needed.

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00:15:15,580 --> 00:15:25,810

The main impact of this has been that you now have a incredibly vast differential in the exchange rate to the

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00:15:25,810 --> 00:15:34,720

dollar for the Yemeni people in the area under the algae control supposedly and the area under the U.S. control.

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And here it's important to remember that Yemen imports about 90 percent of its base.

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00:15:41,260 --> 00:15:50,830

Foodstuffs I this basic grains and staples, let alone massive amounts of fuel, so you now have at the latest count a few days ago,

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00:15:50,830 --> 00:16:01,870

one USD is worth 600 Yemeni rials or give or take one in New Zealand, whereas in the rest of the country, it's now worth one thousand one hundred.

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00:16:01,870 --> 00:16:05,980

It rolls up to one of the at some point last December.

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00:16:05,980 --> 00:16:12,820

So the cost of living, the cost of surviving for Yemenis is incredibly high.

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00:16:12,820 --> 00:16:17,680

And another aspect, of course, of this war is the payment of salaries.

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00:16:17,680 --> 00:16:29,620

One point two million Yemenis, teachers, administrators, health staff, etc. And they pay the salaries you would try inadequate to the best of times,

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00:16:29,620 --> 00:16:35,090

haven't been paid or have paid only very occasionally since that happened.

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00:16:35,090 --> 00:16:42,790

So since 2016. Now you'd think that in the areas that is not controlled, but it is.

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00:16:42,790 --> 00:16:55,810

So we have, you know, and both of the houses and the others are running oil and gas black markets, which again benefit a few people.

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00:16:55,810 --> 00:17:05,680

So and of course, the anti-U.S. groups are very dependent on financial and other support from Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

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00:17:05,680 --> 00:17:15,970

The Houthis are dealing with this by since they have very little access to foreign currency by basically taxing anything that moves.

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00:17:15,970 --> 00:17:25,330

And that includes humanitarian aid, and it also includes having a multiplicity of taxation and customs points throughout the country.

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00:17:25,330 --> 00:17:31,250

Again, we don't want to go on forever, so I shall move on to the next one.

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00:17:31,250 --> 00:17:33,290

This is really.

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00:17:33,290 --> 00:17:46,490

Looking at why we have such a fundamental conflict in Yemen and this first slide is focussing on the issues which have to be addressed in Yemen,

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regardless of the war or no war, peace or no peace.

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00:17:51,560 --> 00:18:01,220

These particular factors will remain major constraints and are very important to, you know, Yemeni development.

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00:18:01,220 --> 00:18:14,360

And so first, we have the limited natural resources and economic potential water scarcity, which is well known but is very important.

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There's been a mismanagement of agriculture and fisheries resources.

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00:18:18,800 --> 00:18:26,300

The country has a low level of industrialisation and it meets supplies of oil and gas.

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00:18:26,300 --> 00:18:31,190

Had the war not occurred, oil would have more or less by mouth by now.

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00:18:31,190 --> 00:18:36,920

Gas has some potential, I think, 17 trillion something or other.

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00:18:36,920 --> 00:18:40,730

And that's, you know, although it has reasonable potential,

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00:18:40,730 --> 00:18:50,960

it is limited basically by a the cost of the infrastructure to export it and b the fluctuation of gas markets worldwide,

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00:18:50,960 --> 00:18:57,220

particularly if we look in the foreseeable future ignoring the current emergency.

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00:18:57,220 --> 00:19:03,790

Climate change, which of course, also includes the issue of water that is becoming an increasingly important factor,

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00:19:03,790 --> 00:19:12,820

and I'll talk about that briefly later on. Another factor is that Yemen still has a rapid population growth, which is almost three percent per annum.

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00:19:12,820 --> 00:19:17,080

So we have a doubling of the population in 50 and so in 20 years.

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00:19:17,080 --> 00:19:24,040

And finally, and I think that's extremely important is the low level of skill and the low quality of education in Yemen.

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00:19:24,040 --> 00:19:34,270

Solving and responding to the earlier list of problems I've given can be done very effectively and has been damaged and buying

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00:19:34,270 --> 00:19:43,270

a highly skilled labour force that can take initiatives and operate in the kind of economy developed by in the 21st century.

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00:19:43,270 --> 00:19:54,010

This low level of education and still high levels are even of illiteracy mean that it's very difficult for Yemenis to benefit from this.

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00:19:54,010 --> 00:20:04,930

More quickly and in a more temporary way, the silence autocratic regime left a legacy of divisions.

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00:20:04,930 --> 00:20:15,760

The ill management of unit of the process of unification and after 1990 certainly contributed to the southern separatist movement is divided and rule

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00:20:15,760 --> 00:20:29,020

policy again contributed to the current fragmentation and the prevention of new political forces has basically also affected today's situation,

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00:20:29,020 --> 00:20:37,900

where there's very few new people prefer to be involved in the in the discussions or anything.

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00:20:37,900 --> 00:20:46,390

And of course, the regime was known to be very corrupt. But I must say corruption is a feature that the new relevant today.

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00:20:46,390 --> 00:20:54,430

At the economic level, I think there was a clear concordance between the neoliberal economic policies of Saleh,

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who was in favour of basically providing financial and other support to the clique of his friends and therefore enriching a small group of people.

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00:21:04,690 --> 00:21:11,950

And the neoliberal policies of the international financial institutions they were there was no conflict between these two.

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00:21:11,950 --> 00:21:22,390

And again, obviously none of these things were focussed on addressing the needs of the poor of the Yemenis or Yemenis in general.

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00:21:22,390 --> 00:21:26,740

So again, I shall try and be brief on this one.

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00:21:26,740 --> 00:21:31,150

I think it's important to note that you know what's been going on for seven years.

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00:21:31,150 --> 00:21:37,630

Yemen has been going on for millennia and dealing with it all in one hour is will guarantee



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00:21:37,630 --> 00:21:43,570

missing out and forgetting a fair number of important things that need to be said.

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00:21:43,570 --> 00:21:44,560

So as I just said,

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00:21:44,560 --> 00:21:55,630

one of the main causes of underlying causes of stresses and tensions in Yemen are the very high level of poverty and social fragmentation.

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00:21:55,630 --> 00:22:00,640

Yemen is the poorest country in the Arab world. I mean, what we're talking about pre-war.

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00:22:00,640 --> 00:22:04,990

Needless to say, it hasn't improved and social fragmentation.

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00:22:04,990 --> 00:22:15,010

As I've just described, there was a series of six wars between the Houthis and the Saleh regime between 2004 and 2010.

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From 2007 onwards, there was a separatist movement in the South, which has developed and is ongoing.

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00:22:21,880 --> 00:22:31,240

You had a whole series of tensions between the formal political parties in the in the early parts of the of last decade,

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00:22:31,240 --> 00:22:37,780

mainly between the Saleh G.P.S. General People's Congress and the GNP.

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00:22:37,780 --> 00:22:46,850

The Joint Meeting parties, which was a conglomerate of the Islamist and tribal Islamic Party with all of the other important parties.

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00:22:46,850 --> 00:22:53,410

So it included some Zaidi parties, and it also included the socialists and the nationalists and the Baath.

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00:22:53,410 --> 00:23:02,770

And they were kind of forming a kind of coalition. You could say that there was increasing tension around the elections and electoral law.

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00:23:02,770 --> 00:23:07,930

And again, these are things that you know, we can't deal with in this amount of time.

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00:23:07,930 --> 00:23:18,550

There was a succession crisis in the Salafi camp, and I think it's important to note that, you know, the existing political parties 10 years ago.

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00:23:18,550 --> 00:23:29,560

And indeed still today, we're very well, you know, to find differences in proposed political policies between them was really not that easy.

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00:23:29,560 --> 00:23:35,230

I mean, yes, you could say Islam had an Islamist trend, but you know, they were.

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00:23:35,230 --> 00:23:43,780

I mean, the allegiance to any party in Yemen was not fundamentally based on the proposed policies of state parties.

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00:23:43,780 --> 00:23:50,380

I mean, the nationalism, the nationalist by their name. But you know, none of these parties had real policies.

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00:23:50,380 --> 00:23:57,190

If one goes into the history of the JPC, it's very clear that that it's not.

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00:23:57,190 --> 00:24:02,830

It wasn't the one thing which I think could have helped the Republic of Yemen avoid fighting or certainly

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00:24:02,830 --> 00:24:10,270

improve its overall economic condition would have been the into disintegration in the Gulf Cooperation Council,

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00:24:10,270 --> 00:24:13,150

which would have many advantages, I think, for all sides.

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00:24:13,150 --> 00:24:21,780

It was systematically excluded, and I think that also contributed to, you know, it was another, we could say, proximate cause of the war.

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00:24:21,780 --> 00:24:27,570

Now, I want to just talk very briefly about the humanitarian crisis.

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00:24:27,570 --> 00:24:31,110

So the humanitarian crisis, as Michael just said,

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00:24:31,110 --> 00:24:40,800

is described as the worst in the world and there's been a lot of that has been quite a bit of criticism recently about its management.

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00:24:40,800 --> 00:24:50,880

And there's the there's also currently a an internet and an evaluation of the overall intervention,

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00:24:50,880 --> 00:24:57,210

and it's fairly clear that it whole, you know, it could have been done a lot better.

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00:24:57,210 --> 00:25:04,830

It said it may not be the worst in the world. I think if you really look at what's happening in happened in Syria over that decade.

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00:25:04,830 --> 00:25:12,990

You know, it's it's also pretty bad. However, there's no doubt that the humanitarian crisis is extremely serious.

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00:25:12,990 --> 00:25:18,330

In Yemen, there are 16 million people who are, as they now say, food insecure,

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00:25:18,330 --> 00:25:22,710

which means that they are hungry and 20 million who need some kind of support.

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00:25:22,710 --> 00:25:26,760

I was just looking at some figures from the WFP and others,

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00:25:26,760 --> 00:25:35,580

and they claim that they did a great job in managing to provide support and food distribution for about 11 million people.

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00:25:35,580 --> 00:25:39,050

So that leaves five million who didn't get anything in recent months.

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00:25:39,050 --> 00:25:49,080

So we are talking about a situation where there is not a famine in Yemen, nor is there likely to be, but there is a very major crisis.

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00:25:49,080 --> 00:26:01,260

And that and you know, not only is the food situation grave, but also medical situation, infrastructure and all other aspects are very serious.

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00:26:01,260 --> 00:26:07,230

It's also important to differentiate between what is done under the UN system through the

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00:26:07,230 --> 00:26:14,730

Humanitarian Response Plan and what is financed by people of Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

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00:26:14,730 --> 00:26:26,190

The Saudis have a thing called the King Salman Relief Fund, which also does put money into the UN system, but also operates a lot independently.

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00:26:26,190 --> 00:26:31,050

And the UAE operate primarily through the UAE Red Crescent.

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00:26:31,050 --> 00:26:41,340

The UAE Red Crescent has is reputed to be operating in a very partial based system in a very biased manner.

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00:26:41,340 --> 00:26:53,250

The King Salman fund is also to some extent operate in primarily in areas where we are on the IRG side,

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00:26:53,250 --> 00:27:02,760

or at least not on the Houthi side, but they also provide a fair amount of funding to the UN system, which is used everywhere.

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00:27:02,760 --> 00:27:08,220

If you look at the I mean, without going into the details of each yes,

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00:27:08,220 --> 00:27:18,810

funding the main year where there was a high level of funding a 20 19 when 18 seven percent of the humanitarian response plan was funded,

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00:27:18,810 --> 00:27:22,800

which was the best in Yemen and possibly one of the best in the world.

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00:27:22,800 --> 00:27:29,370

I mean, usually humanitarian response plans tend to be funded at around 60 to 70 percent.

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00:27:29,370 --> 00:27:39,090

The reason 2019 was so highly funded is because both the Saudis and the Emiratis put in a significant amount.

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00:27:39,090 --> 00:27:43,380

I think about one and a half billion between them. If I remember, right?

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00:27:43,380 --> 00:27:54,990

If you look at what's happened in 20 and 21, you can see that the funding has been much lower even from a lower basis, lower requirement basis.

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00:27:54,990 --> 00:28:01,450

I think that's very, you know, it's very important because there are many issues.

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00:28:01,450 --> 00:28:07,250

Of course, the houses have been accused, I think, very correctly of.

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00:28:07,250 --> 00:28:12,230

Influencing the list of beneficiaries of making sure that the, you know,

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00:28:12,230 --> 00:28:17,090

putting taking people off the list if they don't like them, but even without that,

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00:28:17,090 --> 00:28:25,550

the lists that have been used have been very out of date and they have not been updated for a whole host of political reasons,

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00:28:25,550 --> 00:28:33,200

which can be blamed on, I think, all parties concerned. I think another element that is the problem trust.



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00:28:33,200 --> 00:28:41,720

I mean, the vast the overwhelming majority of humanitarian assistance is going into basically food security.

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00:28:41,720 --> 00:28:48,890

So it's both food distribution and cash distribution, which is mostly used for food purchases.

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00:28:48,890 --> 00:28:50,870

Another thing which, you know,

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00:28:50,870 --> 00:28:59,450

operating on an emergency basis is one thing and reasonable when you are in a few days of an emergency or even a few weeks,

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00:28:59,450 --> 00:29:06,440

that when you're getting to year seven, some of it is beginning to look a bit permanent and that, you know, different approach.

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00:29:06,440 --> 00:29:16,760

It could be much cheaper and more effective, and particularly in things like domestic water distribution and medical assistance and things like that.

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00:29:16,760 --> 00:29:24,620

But if you look overall at the situation, most years have been underfunded.

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00:29:24,620 --> 00:29:31,310

And it's also important to note that if you look at the death toll in Yemen, which is, you know,

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00:29:31,310 --> 00:29:39,320

getting worse by the end of twenty twenty one, estimated to be three hundred and seventy seven thousand people,

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00:29:39,320 --> 00:29:46,280

the vast majority of these people have been people who have died directly or indirectly

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00:29:46,280 --> 00:29:54,140

from lack of food and malnutrition and aspect that are not directly war related.

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00:29:54,140 --> 00:30:02,290

And that's partly connected with the blockades. It's connected with all these other factors that I've just mentioned.

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00:30:02,290 --> 00:30:14,110

So I'll finish with a few words on the environmental issues. As mentioned, you know, we've had water is a very, very fundamental problem in Yemen.

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00:30:14,110 --> 00:30:18,790

This level of scarcity is very high.

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00:30:18,790 --> 00:30:28,570

Again, it's a situation that should not be regarded as one size fits all because it varies enormously from area to area,

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00:30:28,570 --> 00:30:34,960

both in terms of the type of water that's available and the quantities and what it can be used for.

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00:30:34,960 --> 00:30:41,290

It's worth remembering for those who are not familiar with Yemen, that Yemen has no permanent reserves,

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00:30:41,290 --> 00:30:46,810

has no lakes, obviously hasn't got any glaciers are melting or anything of that sort.

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00:30:46,810 --> 00:30:55,930

All the only, basically, it's groundwater and rainfall prior to the war, and probably not.

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00:30:55,930 --> 00:31:02,020

That changed since one third of the water used annually was not replenished.

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00:31:02,020 --> 00:31:08,530

So it came from fossil aquifers and therefore it's being mined and will no longer be available.

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00:31:08,530 --> 00:31:18,460

Another thing that's important to remember is that the distribution of water and the distribution of the population are not,

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00:31:18,460 --> 00:31:26,200

you know, and not complementary. So one of the areas that have the highest population densities, which are the mountainous areas,

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00:31:26,200 --> 00:31:33,550

are areas where water is very difficult to stock and retain, and therefore they're more dependent on rainwater.

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00:31:33,550 --> 00:31:41,530

Which brings us to the next aspect of the will of the climate situation, which is that with climate change,

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00:31:41,530 --> 00:31:48,820

rainfall has become both more unpredictable in timing and more unpredictable in quantities.

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00:31:48,820 --> 00:31:54,910

So while you still have a large number of people who are dependent on rain fed agriculture,

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00:31:54,910 --> 00:31:59,410

they cannot, you know, they used to be able to plant the seeds in March,

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00:31:59,410 --> 00:32:06,940

and they knew the rain was going to make and plant the seeds in March, and they might get flooded next week or the rains might not come at all.

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00:32:06,940 --> 00:32:09,010

So you end up losing everything.

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00:32:09,010 --> 00:32:21,730

And not only is the unpredictability and timing, but also the the, you know, the types of downpours have become increasingly violent and short,

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00:32:21,730 --> 00:32:30,740

and therefore the absorption of the water into the into the ground water into the shallow aquifers does not, you know,

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00:32:30,740 --> 00:32:37,600

it doesn't happen because if you have this and the terraces have been destroyed, basically everything gets washed away.

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00:32:37,600 --> 00:32:43,630

So, you know, you have that problem, then you have some problems of floods and droughts.

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00:32:43,630 --> 00:32:48,340

See, there's no water, nothing grows and there's nothing available to be drunk.

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00:32:48,340 --> 00:32:56,200

And you know, if you look at floods again, you have a few, if not every, five or six or seven years in specific areas.

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00:32:56,200 --> 00:33:01,300

If you look at last year, you had three or four major floods in most of the country.

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00:33:01,300 --> 00:33:10,030

I think that's pretty unprecedented. You've also had new massive storms that have happened and cyclones again, much more frequently.

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00:33:10,030 --> 00:33:16,810

We don't give people time to recover from that from, you know,

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00:33:16,810 --> 00:33:23,440

the previous flood by stocking up on food or stocking up on drains, you know, before they get the next one.

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00:33:23,440 --> 00:33:28,630

So that really aggravates and reduces what they now call resilience.

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00:33:28,630 --> 00:33:33,580

And I want to talk briefly about this affair ship now.

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00:33:33,580 --> 00:33:42,760

While the English word Sasha is most certainly the most inappropriate terminology to just discuss this particular ship.

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00:33:42,760 --> 00:33:50,920

You may have heard about it. It's the first. So she's just floating but floating something.

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00:33:50,920 --> 00:33:54,670

Basically, it's a floating storage ship,

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00:33:54,670 --> 00:34:01,300

which is seven miles off the coast in the Red Sea and which contains 1.1 million

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00:34:01,300 --> 00:34:06,370

barrels of oil has been there is falling apart or it's not falling apart.

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00:34:06,370 --> 00:34:11,650

It could blow up, it could sink, it could rust any time.

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00:34:11,650 --> 00:34:16,110

The situation has been extremely serious now for many years.

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00:34:16,110 --> 00:34:21,110

There's been big efforts to try and deal with this.

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00:34:21,110 --> 00:34:28,630

The U.N. has tried very hard, but again they had different departments in charge of the issue at different times.

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00:34:28,630 --> 00:34:41,140

And basically until now, nothing was done because ultimately the squabbling between the WHO and the IRGC prevented anything from being done.

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00:34:41,140 --> 00:34:48,730

The squabbling was based over what would be done with the sale of this 1.1 million barrels of oil.

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00:34:48,730 --> 00:35:02,210

It ignores the fact that after sitting seven years in all, previously five or six years in basically disintegrating tanker, the value of this oil is.

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00:35:02,210 --> 00:35:08,210

Debateable and certainly would not command the price per barrel of the cost of

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00:35:08,210 --> 00:35:13,970

oil either today or even when it was at its lowest point in recent months.

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00:35:13,970 --> 00:35:20,780

In addition, of course, to the fact that officially it would be embargoed and wouldn't nobody be allowed to buy it now?



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00:35:20,780 --> 00:35:27,290

This situation may have changed. I'm saying May, because it's happened before that.

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00:35:27,290 --> 00:35:32,210

That appeared to have been agreements to solve it and to do it.

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00:35:32,210 --> 00:35:42,020

But I think it's possible that this time it might work because an agreement was signed this week on the fifth whenever.

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00:35:42,020 --> 00:35:46,610

Between and that's the interesting point that was signed between the U.N.,

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00:35:46,610 --> 00:35:51,560

which is basically in charge of dealing with this, the Houthis who control it.

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00:35:51,560 --> 00:36:01,250

And the third party is a very big business company responsible for importing most of Yemen's grains.

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00:36:01,250 --> 00:36:06,050

So the internationally recognised government has not been involved in this at all.

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00:36:06,050 --> 00:36:10,490

They could try and sabotage it, but they've said that they will.

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00:36:10,490 --> 00:36:15,140

They want this problem solved, so it will be embarrassing if they do.

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00:36:15,140 --> 00:36:22,910

But it does prove and it also that the agreement basically formally gives the WHO sees what they want,

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00:36:22,910 --> 00:36:28,190

which is they don't want this oil to be removed. They want the oil to remain under their control.

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00:36:28,190 --> 00:36:37,520

And this agreement, so it says that the ship, a new tanker, would be brought and this oil will be transferred to that new tanker.

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00:36:37,520 --> 00:36:45,380

And then what happens in future remains to be discussed. So I think it's important because it might show a solution.

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00:36:45,380 --> 00:36:50,780

It's also important because this is a threat that for all those who have been at all aware of,

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00:36:50,780 --> 00:36:55,790

it could not only destroy living conditions all over the Yemeni coast,

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00:36:55,790 --> 00:37:01,640

but depending on the wind in the season, way up into the Red Sea and possibly the whole of the Red Sea.

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00:37:01,640 --> 00:37:10,220

You know, it's a very I mean, if it and it could still happen if it either sinks or explodes, it will be a very, very, you know,

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00:37:10,220 --> 00:37:16,850

all the previous ones that we've heard of Exxon Valdez or whatever their jokes compared to what would happen if this thing collapsed.

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00:37:16,850 --> 00:37:21,380

To conclude, I just want to say that I apologise for not covering more things,

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00:37:21,380 --> 00:37:25,130

and I've thought there are many things while talking that I should have covered and that I have.

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00:37:25,130 --> 00:37:30,260

So maybe some of you will ask questions do that. And I look forward to the questions.

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00:37:30,260 --> 00:37:37,160

I do want to remind everybody that the Yemeni people continue to suffer from this war and this situation,

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00:37:37,160 --> 00:37:44,390

and there's no no immediate prospect for improvement, which is something that I think is extremely sad.

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00:37:44,390 --> 00:37:50,600

Just one final thing I know anybody who's read Yemen in crisis will note that I start by saying,

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00:37:50,600 --> 00:37:56,030

I hope that when you read this book, things will have war will have ended.

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00:37:56,030 --> 00:38:00,380

And I'm just about to write an updated preface for the second edition.

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00:38:00,380 --> 00:38:05,330

I'm going to repeat that. I said that five years ago, and I'm probably going to try and say it again.

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00:38:05,330 --> 00:38:09,860

And I hope that next time, if they have any third edition, I won't have to say it.

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00:38:09,860 --> 00:38:14,990

Thank you. Thank you very much. Had another sobering view of Yemen.

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00:38:14,990 --> 00:38:27,241

The thank you particularly for looking at the environmental and economic.