

# [Iran International report: Zarif accused Soleimani of directing Iranian foreign policy](#)

Sun, 2021-04-25 20:25

LONDON: Iran's foreign minister said he was forced to sacrifice diplomacy in favor of operations by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, according to a leaked audio recording.

The three-hour interview with Mohammad Javad Zarif, which was [obtained by the London-based Iran International television channel](#), reveals the extent of the IRGC's control over foreign policy.

Zarif said Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Guard's Quds Force, which is responsible for overseas operations, had a direct hand over broader foreign policy.

Soleimani was killed in a US airstrike in Baghdad in January last year. As one of Iran's most powerful figures, he oversaw the regime's proxy militias in countries like Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

According to Iran International, Zarif said Soleimani's influence meant he had to further a diplomacy that served Iran's military operations in the region.

"On the other hand, I have never been able to ask Soleimani to do something that would serve my diplomatic moves," he said.

He accused Soleimani of ignoring his pleas to refrain from using the Iranian national airline for transportation to Syria.

He said Soleimani's pressure led to a dramatic increase in flights to Damascus.

A number of Iranian airlines have been sanctioned for ferrying fighters and weapons into Syria to support Bashar Assad during the conflict.

The recording was an interview with journalist Saeed Laylaz in March but intended for publication after President Hassan Rouhani leaves office in August, the channel said.

Zarif said Iran prioritized its war operations over diplomacy and that his role in determining Iran's foreign policy was "nil."

He added that a visit by Soleimani to Moscow immediately after the 2015 nuclear deal was made was an attempt to destroy the agreement.



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Iran threatens to throw out UN nuclear inspectors as IRGC parades terror capability

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## [UAE begins first flights to support counter-terrorism operations in the Sahel](#)

Sun, 2021-04-25 18:55

LONDON: The UAE has launched “logistical support flights” as part of French-led counter-terror operations in the African Sahel.

The first flight took off from Abu Dhabi watched by Maj. Gen. Saleh Mohammed Al-Ameri, commander of joint operations at the Ministry of Defense, and

Xavier Chatel, France's ambassador to the UAE.

Maj. Gen. Al-Ameri said the UAE's efforts would contribute to achieving security and stability in the Sahel region.

Chatel thanked the UAE for its contribution in backing the efforts of the international community and France in supporting operations in the African region, state news agency WAM reported.

The operations include several flights scheduled to transport humanitarian aid.

France has more than 5,000 troops deployed as part of operations to bring stability in the Sahel countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

Meanwhile, Mauritania received medical and food aid from by the UEA, including 10,000 vaccines against COVID-19 and 60 tons of food, the Mauritanian News Agency reported.



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US defense chief's rare Algeria visit points to Sahel region threats

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# Egypt's El-Sisi receives coronavirus vaccine

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1619358742949928800

Sun, 2021-04-25 13:48

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has received a coronavirus vaccination under a nationwide vaccination drive, his office said on Sunday. The statement from the presidency did not give details on the type of vaccine El-Sisi received.

Egypt has started administering doses of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine under the global COVAX agreement to provide vaccines for lower-income countries, as well as jabs produced by China's Sinopharm.

Awad Tag el-Din, El-Sisi's adviser for health affairs, told a local news channel on Friday that around half a million people in Egypt had been vaccinated so far.

The number of coronavirus cases has been steadily rising in recent weeks and the health ministry reported 912 new cases and 39 more deaths as of Saturday.



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## [Egypt's El-Sisi meets with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince in Cairo](#)

Author:

Sat, 2021-04-24 22:31

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi received the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

During the meeting, El-Sisi expressed Egypt's keenness to continue strengthening bilateral cooperation with the UAE in various fields, and to

increase the frequency of meetings between senior officials from the two countries to coordinate responses to developments in the Middle East region.

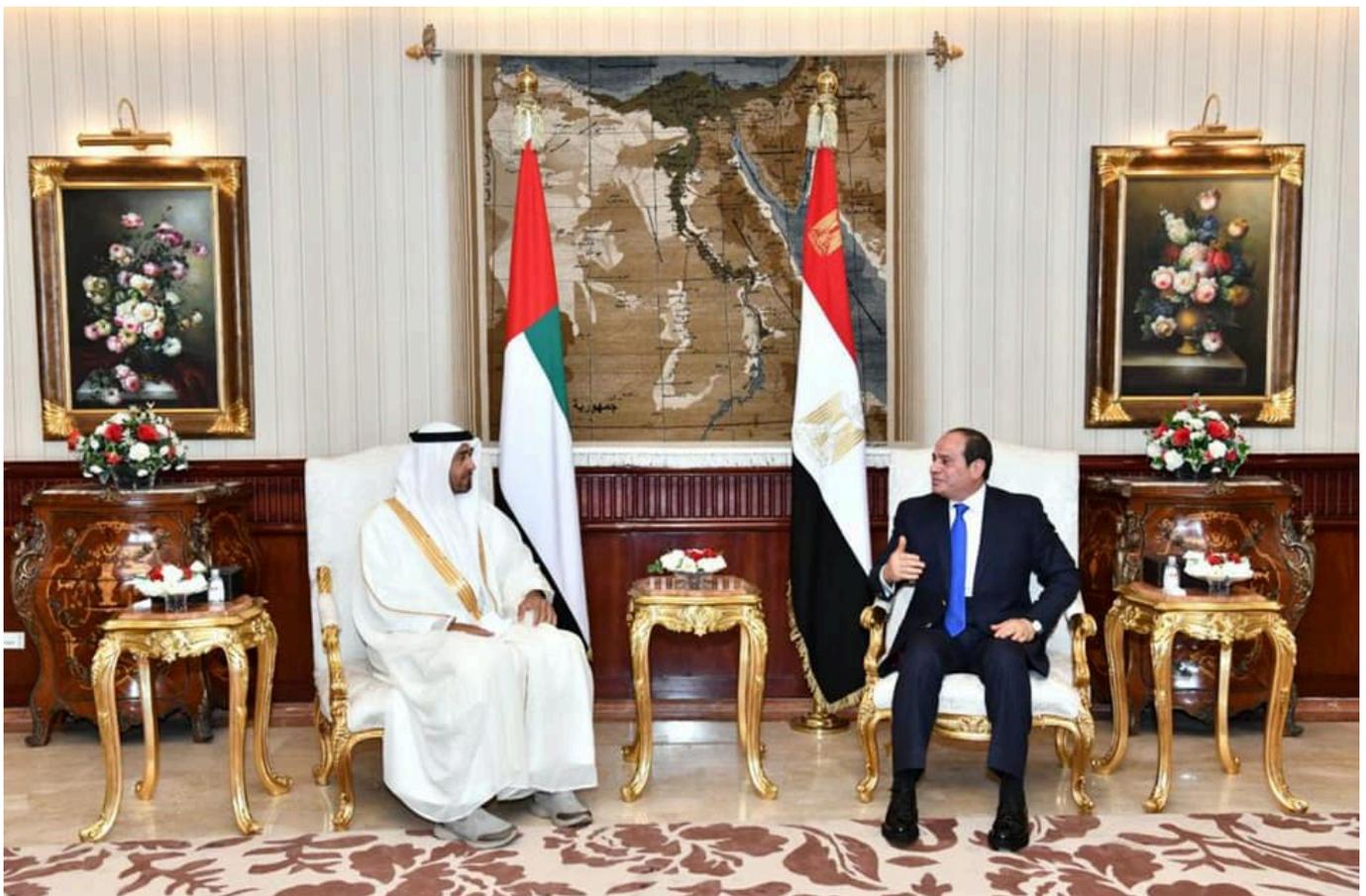
Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan praised Egypt's pivotal role in the region, and the great development witnessed by Egyptian-Emirati relations in the political, economic, security and military fields.

He also stressed his eagerness to further deepen Egyptian-Emirati relations.

Discussions between the two also addressed a number of regional issues, including the Renaissance Dam and ways of resolving the ongoing dispute.

The Egyptian president Abu Dhabi crown prince agreed that political settlements were the only solutions to a number of ongoing conflicts in the region, as well as the need for developing a comprehensive vision for Arab capabilities to meet challenges facing the region and increasing threats to regional security.

El-Sisi stressed Egypt's commitment to its firm stance towards the security of the Gulf and the rejection of any practices that seek to destabilize it.



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Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan arrives in Jeddah

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## Houthis slammed for recruiting primary school students for war

Author:

Sat, 2021-04-24 22:07

AL-MUKALLA: Yemeni government officials and local human rights activists have accused the Houthis of brainwashing and training primary school students for war.

Their criticism came as videos on social media showed pupils wearing military attire and inciting each other to take up arms to fight the Houthis' enemies.

In one video, filmed at a Sanaa primary school, a child pretending to be a soldier appealed to another child to send him into battle so he could fight the enemies of Islam and Muslims.

"We must sacrifice so that the future generation lives in dignity and honor," the first child told the second, who was pretending to be the mother. The "mother" later told him to fight with "the House of the Prophet," a reference to the Houthis.

Officials said the videos showed the scale of Houthi indoctrination and the group's exploitation of children. They said the videos supported long-held accusations that the rebels were recruiting children to fight in the war.

The Houthis had also made changes to the education curriculum and were turning schools into military training camps, according to Education Minister Tareq Salim Al-Akbari.

"We repeat our condemnation of militarizing schools and students and exploiting educational facilities under Houthi control in their war against the state," the minister told Arab News, saying the group was seeking to pass its radical ideologies to students through school books and activities. "They have injected sectarian changes in the curricula that have nothing to do with the Yemeni identity and culture."

Officials said the Houthis had added some chapters to primary education books that glorified the group's founder, Hussein Al-Houthi, and Shiite figures.

The minister warned that the Houthis were raising a generation of extremists who would pose a threat to Yemen, the region and the world.

“The impact of the Houthi indoctrination of children is disastrous. It brings up a generation carrying sectarian ideology, away from the Yemeni peace-loving identity.”

Activists who saw the videos also expressed concern.

Zafaran Zaid said that schools in Houthi-controlled territories had radicalized children.

“Schools in the areas controlled by the Houthi militia have posed a serious threat to the mentality and psyche of children,” she tweeted.

Ali Al-Bukhaiti, a former spokesperson for the Houthi movement who switched sides and left Yemen, said the Houthis were exploiting schools to spread their ideologies as a way to keep the younger generation under their control.

“Watch how the Houthis cultivate violence in children through school,” he tweeted. “They rig their minds with superstitions to direct them to the front of death.”

Rights groups documenting Houthi abuse said the group had recruited thousands of children since the beginning of its military expansion in late 2014, with hundreds dying in battle last year.

Addressing human rights activists in the central city of Marib last week, lawyer Huda Al-Sarari said that 1,410 children, aged between 10 and 15 and recruited by the militia, had been killed in fighting in 2020.

She added the Houthis had set up 52 military points for indoctrinating and training children, and that they had incorporated more than 40,000 children into the war during the last seven years.



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45 Houthis dead in raging fighting in Marib province