

Netanyahu to Visit Egypt on Official Trip: A Cold Peace Warming Up?

by Hugh Fitzgerald



While in one direction – toward the Gulf – Israeli and Emirati and Bahrain businessmen are making deals, expanding trade, encouraging investments in each other's countries, promoting tourism in both directions, now that the two Arab states have agreed to normalize ties with Israel – in the other direction, toward Egypt, with which Israel has had a "cold peace" since 1979, a major warming may at last be taking place. Israel and Egypt already cooperate on security matters, as General El Sisi forthrightly said on "60 Minutes." They collaborate in containing the Muslim Brotherhood, which remains a threat to El Sisi's regime, and to Israel as well, since Hamas is merely the Gazan branch of the Brotherhood. They also help each other

by sharing intelligence on other Jihadis, including remnants of ISIS that have regrouped in the Sinai.

Egypt regards with alarm the attempts by Iran to create a "Shia crescent" from the Gulf to the Mediterranean by employing a network of proxies and allies, including the Houthis in Yemen, Iran-backed Shi'a militias in Iraq, the Alawite-led army of Bashar Assad, and Hezbollah in Lebanon. And Israel, which recognizes Iran as a mortal threat, shares Egypt's deep anxiety about that Shia crescent. Egypt and Israel are thus doubly allies, against both the Muslim Brotherhood and against Iran.

Egypt has joined with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain in attempting to isolate Qatar, a statelet rich from natural gas, that gives succor and support to the Muslim Brotherhood. Qatar provides a platform for Yousuf Qaradawi, the Egyptian-born cleric who has lived in Qatar for many decades. Though not formally its head, Qaradawi is the undisputed spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood; he broadcasts from Qatar to a worldwide audience of 60 million; he's the most influential Muslim cleric now alive. Qatar is also being shunned by the same four states because of its continuing friendly ties with Iran. Egypt's participation in this anti-Qatar alliance has brought the country closer to the UAE and Bahrain, both of which have recently normalized ties to Israel, and to Saudi Arabia, which is edging ever closer to following the trail blazed by the Emirates and Bahrain. Thus Egypt and Israel not only share enemies (the Muslim Brotherhood, assorted Jihadis in the Sinai, and Iran), but also friends (the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain). It's not surprising that Egypt may now be intent on warming up that "cold peace" it has had with Israel for 41 years.

The report on Netanyahu's upcoming visit to Cairo is discussed [*Jihad Watch*](#).