

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

Marshawn Sager here. Welcome to the realignment's new weekend edition. A bunch of listeners and friends wrote in with questions about Israel, Hamas, Gaza and the unfolding war. So Sager and I got together on Friday to record this episode. Since great questions kept coming in over the weekend, I recorded some additional responses this Sunday morning. We both really liked this format,

so expect these weekend discussion AMA and review episodes to keep coming. To be frank, people have also asked about Sager's absence from the main interview show. We started the podcast as a once a week in-person recording in DC, right when we were just starting out in our careers in 2019. It's been more than four years and in that time, our careers themselves, him leaning hard into YouTube and the newsbeat and me taking my new role at UT and work in Think Take World

seriously along with our ideology and availability to record a multi-week interview show really has just diverged. That said, we still love working together so these weekend episodes and expanded and rebooted Supercast AMA section are the perfect way to integrate him back into the realignment. So if you miss Sager, in this format, tune in on Sundays. He won't always be there but will be more than firmly consistent. Last but not least, the Sunday editions will feature, as this episode does, a paywall section for our Supercast subscribers. Supercast is the main way we pay for the show and our production team. Think of it as an upgraded version of Patreon. We've included a bunch of free

AMA in this episode but if you'd like to hear the full version of this conversation and my response to the questions, go to realignment.supercast.com or click the link at the top of this episode in your podcast player's show notes. If you have any questions you'd like for the next AMA, go to the Supercast website and sign up. You can also of course send emailed questions into realignmentpod.com but those will not be guaranteed to be included and you might not hear our response

because they will probably be paywall as well too. Now on to our conversation.

Marshall and Sager here. Welcome to our Israel Gaza crisis response weekend episode. God, we could put this out on Sunday and huge thanks to the Supercast subscribers and everyday subscribers

who sent in questions for us to discuss. We'll hit a few on related to the zero topic, especially in the paywall section of this conversation but we want to jump into things.

So Sager, let's just kind of set up with you first. What is your opening reaction to the past week's events? I guess that's a tough question because I've been doing it for an entire week. All of my like initial emotional reaction I guess is spent. I mean I think people should just understand that I've been probably working along with my whole crew for 12 to 15 hours a day to just like verify information and track and so you get into kind of an unemotional state.

I feel like most other people are digesting whereas we have much little time to digest and instead try and help people understand at a very immediate level what is going on. So to be honest with you like that's just how I'm processing everything and I think that's just very different than most people. No, that's totally fair and actually this is a great question to you to answer first. Hey guys, with this conference escalating and the amount of information that seems to be posted I'm curious how you guys have been betting your information.

Institutional trust is diminished. I feel as though trust in social media has also diminished

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

and with E1's takeover of Twitter, there's definitely a part of that there.

If you don't trust institutions and you can't trust randoms online, who can you trust?

Nobody, that's my answer. You cannot trust anybody and that's why it's so difficult.

So the current BP standard is three to four verified sources, independent, governments don't count, individual outlets don't count, viral videos especially don't count, front of sources, if it's especially incendiary, three sources for normal. That's our current standard on video, on facts. Of course, that's a little bit different whenever we're talking about like IDF said X or US government said Y but that's currently where we're at and I urge you all to do the same thing. Ukraine really was a, Ukraine was nothing I think compared to where we're at right now. This is the worst I've ever seen it in terms of trying to sift through exactly what is going on and what is not. So many of these accounts have just been so blatantly irresponsible

and they're just throwing stuff out there. This also by the way gets to one of the core problems with Twitter blue is I know what's going on. These guys are engagement farming because the more reach we eat and all those other things, they're literally getting paid in order to do and the more blue accounts that interact with their stuff, then they're going to make even more money. So look, this is the classic click phenomenon which Elon professes to not want to feed into in terms of clickbait and inadvertently has created a literal monster. One of the most popular segments Marshall that Crystal and I have done this entire week is debunking false information and it just reflects how everyday person, this isn't like the everyday person is not sitting there believing everything, the everyday person I believe is sitting there overwhelmed and inundated and without any mooring, which is really, it's tough. It's a very tough environment.

I like your breaking points editorial standard. I'd say for actual people here stick to the standard of what are the New York Times and the mostly journal saying especially. Yes, I know people are going to get ticked off about them being very specific when I say that. You know who's not posting clickbait about the headings or having to double back all the time, the New York Times and their journalists. So just on a baseline level, I've been using them as a standard for these different things because I in some of my first tweets this week, I definitely think that some of the beheading occurred at this point, but I definitely was too cavalier in buying even mainstream people on Twitter saying that this thing happened because once again the New York Times isn't reporting. That's a good one to go into Marshall because at first you have and I can do a taxonomy of this event if you want. Here's the other thing. I wish I didn't even have to do this, but I think it is important because this is exactly why all of these things matter. And as I think I told you privately, why is it not enough that they're just burned and shot? Like we could leave it at that, but look, the claim is the claim. So let's go through it because this is my job. It all originates from an I-24 news reporter who is an English-Israeli journalist outlet. They claim to hear it from one person on the ground who is in the IDF. Never is a name source. They report it. It goes instantly viral because I-24 posts it on Twitter. Then beheaded babies becomes canon. At that point, it is quote unquote verified by CBS News and then later on by CNN. All of this verification, though, by the way, has come only and solely from the IDF, such that the LA Times, CNN, The Guardian, CBS have now all retracted the baby's story. And just so people think that I'm don't think I'm exaggerating, the White House itself had to issue a clarification saying that they have seen no independent confirmation. The IDF and Israeli official government sources have

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

never yet claimed beheaded babies. They have now moved to quote unquote beheaded civilians. So I concur with you, I do believe that some civilians were beheaded whether an actual baby was beheaded

or not. I don't, I'm not sure if it happened or not. Let's just put it that way. We haven't seen independent confirmation. And this is the danger because now that is the meme. That's a cultural meme that has gone around there. Notice I'm not saying this is like lies or anything. This is classic Fog of War stuff, but it's a good example of why people need to be careful.

No, and look, this is once again, this goes to the Fog of War bit, a serious part of the debate over the beheadings is were they beheaded purposefully? Yeah, in the sense of an ISF beheading or were babies just so shot up by close range weapons? Great question.

Obviously their heads are great, which again is part of why this isn't about and this is why I think this is actually it's I think it's easy to debunk if this were just purely a lie.

This would have been debunked days ago, but this is so complicated that I think people need to act accordingly, especially with the the more extreme claims. But I just want to I want to say something which is very important because people have been asking for our personal perspective on this. Here's my top line perspective, the Middle East and Israel Palestine, especially the definition of nuanced topics, you're going to talk about, well, this war happened and that war happened. Well, in 48, the Israelis and the policies and policy means were offered states, but like what percentage of the population was really there beforehand. And actually, then the knockout happened and really we need to go back to Sykes-Picot in 1970.

But you actually have to do that if you're trying to have a fair nuanced conversation.

What Hamas did with the attacks on civilians, the scale that they did and the kidnapping took this from the realm of the nuance and brought it to the realm of elimination, which has happened twice before, I think in our lifetimes, case number one,

9-11. Let's have a conversation. Let's pretend it's September 10th, 2001. We could have a whole conversation about, okay, what was the US war in Afghanistan in the 1980s? Okay, we are in Saudi Arabia and there are parts of Saudi Arabian society that aren't actually okay with that.

Okay, this, this, this, this, and then all sorts of different discourses. The second that al-Qaeda flew two planes into the Twin Towers, one plane into the Pentagon, and then one plane was crashed by the passengers in United Flight 93 in Changsville, Pennsylvania. At that point, we went from a world of nuance to a world of elimination against the al-Qaeda and the Taliban who supported them. Finally, you have the case of ISIS. 2013, we just left Iraq. We, and you know, you and I agree on this, we destroyed Iraq. It was a terrible decision. We were ultimately responsible for much of what happens in that country, obviously, but we're out. There's zero appetite to extend our presence there. Well, a group called ISIS comes, you know, from the portion of the country next to Syria. They then behead a bunch of people, light folks on fire, kidnapped nurses and commit acts of rape. That went from a war where we're going to have a nuanced conversation

with American responsibility in the region to, okay, this group has cross-blind gone eliminationist. So my point here is that what's going to underline everything that I say on this podcast and what all out of my coverage moving forward is that Hamas, given what they did this past week, they transitioned from an Islamist terrorist group that does fulfill certain state functions. They're an elected government. So they, you know, they did pick up the trash. They did have

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

schools, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. That's kind of what we used to talk about Hamas. They are now in the category of ISIS. So we can critique, we could support what Israel is doing, but my real bias is going to be that if you do not understand that Israel is rightfully treating Hamas as an ISIS level threat and an actual problem, then if you don't have that baseline level of empathy, I don't think you're going to understand the actual issues that are going about. You know, it's interesting Marshall, because I actually don't think the, okay, I'll put it at least this way. Crystal is kind of my standard. And I would say that she's about as good faith as a genuine leftist Palestinian sympathizer could be. And she actually agrees that Hamas needs to go. So I don't think that I think within the realm of acceptable discourse from left and right, I do not believe that there is an actual disagreement, just as there wasn't with ISIS, that Hamas leadership, and even at an operational level does not need to be totally and completely destroyed. I think that all of the critique and the outrage, and eventually where it will all settle, is on the way that Hamas is destroyed. And I think that's totally fair. And I think that's kind of where we are at right now. And I agree. Look, I mean, let's, and this is always the difficulty, like to what extent to these Harvard morons represent a genuine political coalition, like this bullshit. I mean, I'm not saying it isn't, doesn't exist at like a very small elite level, but like 68% of Americans support Israel, only 20% say any even close level to like sympathy towards Palestinian, Palestinians and then the rest just like don't know. So in terms of like American politics and or even geopolitics, the actual critique is all going to cut. It's actually just like 911. It's a great example. Destroying al-Qaeda. Nobody disagreed with that. What people did disagree with was a transition to occupation of Afghanistan, transition to democracy, the way in which we eventually do that. But the end, the actual result goal, I don't think was really ever a dispute. And never really people had major disagreements. And actually where things went right for them was whenever they transitioned away from that. And I do actually think Israel is in peril of doing that. In fact, I absolutely think they're doing it right now. Well, I don't think Israel is doing that right now, because let's go to the 911 example, because it's actually a very important one. George Packer wrote a great piece in the Atlantic today. I'll link it in the show notes. It's about how this is as rose 911 Israelis were killed. And, you know, at a population level, that is the equivalent of 30,000 to 40,000 Americans dying in a similar attack. And there's been a bit of pushback on doing that sort of math, because people are like, hey, that just turns this into casualty Olympics. What's the purpose of it? The purpose of doing that math, I think, is to contextualize this for people. 3,000 Americans died on 911. And then we proceeded to organize the next 20 years of American life based on responding to that. So I think actually saying what would we do if 40,000 people died is very important. So where does Afghanistan go wrong? It's kind of interesting that you said your point around no one really disagreeing about Afghanistan, because I think we've actually had a problem emerge of late, which is that Iraq and Afghanistan have been merged together in the popular consciousness in a way that's actually not helpful. So Will Stansel, he's a very online like left poster, was kind of arguing with some leftists, and they were pointing out like, oh, you say you were a big anti war person in the 2000s. But did you oppose the war in Afghanistan? And it's like, and I said this very specifically, I was kind of arguing with people, I said, look, treating the war in Afghanistan as if it was one 20 year war is a disastrous analytical mistake that's going to be more confusing than

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

reviewing because there are actually three or four different wars in Afghanistan. Here's the first war 9 12 2001 to December 31 2001. That is the period where light footprint US CIA, paramilitary officers go into the country, partner with the Northern Alliance and kick the Taliban effectively out of Kabul and force al-Qaeda into the mountains of Pakistan across the border. You always have operation and a condo on the US Army side. That's one part of the war. Okay, that's over. Then we go to the next part of the war. This is before Iraq. We're debating, okay, what's going to replace the Taliban? Because that's an important question. They have a loyal Jirga. They pick Hamid Karzai. Okay, so what's the US war going to look like halfway between that period and what happened moving forward? The Iraq war goes about even though we haven't got a Salah bin Laden, you know, the Taliban is still kind of there, even though al-Qaeda is still a threat. We do that transition transition transition. You guys get the point I'm trying to make here treating this as one war that people individually could have opposed on the whole isn't particularly coherent. So here is the concern for Israel. I think going into Gaza is completely justified under the this is your 9 11 framework. But here's what Israel would do that freaks me the F out. What if Israel were to do the equivalent with the US did and said, Hey, we had an intelligence failure. Always people died. Our government, Beebe's government is kind of holding the bag here. So we get in a bunch of trouble. So here's what we're going to do. We're going to reconceive Israel's notion of what security looks like. So look at us. We watch Tomas, the last Gaza war happened in 2014. We sat for almost 10 years and let this threat fester. We're going to go in, we're going to take care of it, but we're not going to stop there. We're now going to go in Lebanon again, because guess what? We are letting the threat of Hezbollah go again, and we're not going to repeat that. And actually, now that we even talk about it, Iran clearly played a role in all of this. They're currently perceiving a nuclear weapon. We're not going to let that threat fester. We're going to escalate with Iran. That is what I fear because what the story I just told is the literal equivalent of what happened at the US. You're right. But here's why literally is where I depart a bit because I agree. I think Israel needs to go into Gaza. And I think some leftist actually probably would disagree with me. I agree with you. I do think the way that they're already going about it sets the stage for exactly what you're talking about. Collective punishment for 2.2 million people is just not going to work in the eyes of the world. The Islamic population. It's important to find the difference between collective punishment and going in. Yeah, sure. So the immediate siege, the denial of water electricity and was it food, water, and electricity immediately cutting off in terms of internet service, which is also cut off very soon as to when you and I are talking is a collective punishment on the people of Gaza. Whereas going into Gaza, let's get the second battle of Fallujah or maybe it was the first. I forgot which one it was. I think it was number two, where we basically told the civilians of Fallujah, we're like, get out. Anybody left? Free fire zone. In my opinion, what I think the best possible solution for Israel and the United States, frankly, which has a tremendous interest in making sure that this doesn't spiral to what you do is we have to get the civilians out of Gaza and give overwhelming options to stop international pushback and Islamic pushback, which will come if they do not do that. The Israelis currently do not care enough about public opinion, which is a massive mistake, by the way, because they are currently on the road and they've already done it. They've ordered 1.1 million people, including many like families and

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

children to evacuate in 24 hours. That's impossible. That would be like the entire DMV having to evacuate. I should note, they have, and I think this, I think what I know, but I know what you're about to say. They corrected, they did, they have heard this recording time changed it to an amorphous amount of time to get out. The 24 hour time. They said that on background, and they did not, yeah, well, so it hasn't been withdrawn, it was stated. And then on background, they said, yeah, maybe it'll take a little bit longer. My point is 24 hours is the headline, and that's the headline that they wanted in order to spark panic. But regardless, they are currently in a situation where they're not asking them to go to Egypt, and it's not even an option. They're basically just telling them to flee to South Gaza. Gaza itself is already the third most densely populated place on earth. Also, Hamas is not actually doing or allowing in some cases, some of these people to leave. So once again, this gets the problem with nuance. And this is why I agree with you. I think Hamas needs to be militarily and operationally destroyed from being able to mount attacks on Israel again at this level. If I was in Israel, I would support that. The issue for me, also on this side of it, is mass humanitarian and civilian slaughter will not be contained to Israel and Palestine. I just simply, I do not believe, given already the scale of people taking to the streets in Jordan, that Hezbollah, the Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and the entire Arab world will sit by and watch 100,000 Palestinians die. And whether that is Hamas' fault or Israel's fault is actually immaterial to the net effect, because the net effect is a wider expansion of the war. And Marshall, I already am, here's what I am so worried about. What I'm worried about is like I just laid out. And we already know, because here's the thing, the Israelis, Naftali Bennett has literally gone on television, basically said, I don't give a shit about Palestinian civilians. And I look, I'm not going to say I agree with that, but I understand where they're coming from, given at this point, as you laid out like the elimination of sentiment. The problem is, if that happens, and you and I both know this, the IDF did not do well in the 2014 war. They also did terribly in the 2006 war. This is going to be a massive military Hezbollah. You're referring to the Hezbollah. 2006 Hezbollah war, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, that's what I'm talking about. Yeah, exactly. So they didn't do well against Hezbollah. Hezbollah is 10 times stronger than they are in 2006, than they were in 2006. 2014 was a disaster for the IDF. They basically had to pull back and result to carpet bombing. So we'll see, militarily, whether they're, you know, actual street to street city fighting in tactics have improved. Personally, I'm doubtful just because it's such a brutal way to fight. The issue is going to be, in my opinion, what I'm really worried about is that Palestine will become a magnet for global jihad. And what I mean by that is exactly what happened against the United States in its war in Iraq, where our soldiers suddenly discovered that it wasn't just Iraqis that they were fighting. We're talking about Syrians. I mean, it's basically the ISIS effect. It's going to be a magnet. You know, the ISIS caliphate was a magnet for basically disaffected Islamic people who were, you know, radical from all over the world. This is an emotional issue at that level because of the holy site of the all Aqsa mosque, plus the Palestinian cause is just like much more deeply rooted into global Islamic consciousness. My point is that the escalation spiral here is so, so high. The best and most important vital, in my opinion, even national security interests for Israel and for the United States is to ensure that we do not get to that situation. And I think it's very, I don't see any signs that we are going to avoid it because the Egyptian, by the way, the Egyptians are a piece of shit, and they really should get called.

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

Because like, I want to, I do want to say this, because Israel obviously controls the vast majority of borders and entrances into Gaza, but there's a border controlled by Egypt. The Egyptians have shown, and this is actually, this is good because this gets a deep frustration I've had with the Israeli skeptical parts of which is just the Arab world. That's like the same thing. The lack of pressure on Egypt, because the lack of pressure in Egypt to actually do something to resolve this is just is just deeply, deeply, deeply frustrating. They like, look, Marshall, they like it. And that's the deep secret. The Egyptians, here's a plot twist for everybody who hasn't been over there. They all hate each other. The Gulf Arabs hate the Egyptians. They think they're dirty. The Egyptians think they're better than everybody else because they quote unquote created civilization. The Egyptians hate the Palestinians. Even actual Jordanian citizens also hate Palestinians because they think that they took over their country. It's complicated is my point. The issue right now, and this is where US deployment, America is the only country that can make this happen. We have given \$80 billion in aid to Egypt. We basically backstop the regime from a security level. Egypt and Israel are like two supposedly of our closest allies. Blinken needs to get his ass to Cairo immediately, and we need to open a humanitarian corridor. If we do not, if we do not, the Israelis are going to go in, there will be mass slaughter and the scenario I laid out is going to happen. I especially given the videos that are coming out of Jordan and the streets of Amman, they're not going to sit by and just watch 100,000 killed. And people think I'm exaggerating, but go look at the casualty figures from urban combat. I mean, when civilians are embedded within this. And again, whether that is Hamas' fault or not, we're not talking about just or not. The casualties that people are going to take in this war are outrageous. I covered the Battle of Aleppo is a very similar thing. A lot of the urban battles of the Syrian civil war, that's what it's going to look like. It's going to be 10x Fallujah. It's going to be, honestly, it's like up there, it could be up there with like Stalingrad in terms of street to street fighting. This is the worst case scenario for what all of that could look like. And all I will say is that it will not remain restricted to Israel-Palestine. It's impossible given the political orientation for all of these governments. And then we're in it, but now it's spiraling. And I don't know what that looks like. I think the escalation chain easily leads to Iran. I think the escalation chain could lead to more terrorist attacks here at home, abroad on American stations, Lebanon. I mean, don't forget, I mean, is it the fifth fleet? We've got a shitload of service members are sitting over in Bahrain. What happens there? I just saw a Qatari foreign minister, our energy minister today say that they would cut off natural gas to the West if there is a full scale collective punishment. And plot twist, because Russia is no longer a natural gas supplier to Europe, they are heavily reliant on Qatari LNG in order to heat. And also, we are in October and we're headed into a winter. So, you know, I mean, just like the oil embargo came back to bite us hard, even though, you know, we didn't really have anything to do with what happened at that time. The same type of scenario could happen. It's just that it's just like Iraq. There's always 40th order consequences. People should not construe me saying that Israel should do nothing. Okay, I didn't say that. I said, I agree. I agree. I say, you need to be deeply prudent. My worry is that just like after 9-11, we thought we didn't have actual, well, okay, at this point, we've had 20-something years of baked in knowledge. Like we have to, everything I just laid out, I'm just a guy, you know, I'm only 31 years old. Like we just, we've lived through the war on terror. I can just see easily these pitfalls. I don't think people are thinking about

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

them because people are emotional. But, you know, we got, we got to be careful here. Otherwise, we could be in some deep problems. Let's take some questions. Good one to get out with. Cancel culture. Can you both give your own definitions of cancel culture? Would Bill Ackman's actions regarding Israel and Palestine meet that definition? Great question. This is a super frustrating topic for me because on the one hand, I think Reina Workman, they wrote a whole lady who lost her job. Explain who she was. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So Reina Workman was the, is, actually was, because she actually got removed as the head of the NYU Student Bar Association. College kids are very knifey. She was the head of the NYU Student Bar Association. And in that capacity, she wrote a deeply, deeply, deeply awful anti-Israel pro-resistance take. This wasn't a take that did, you know, like we said at the start of the episode, there's nuance. There's plenty of nuance that doesn't support Israel. There's no one who doesn't support Palestine. She just threw it all out. She basically said, I support resistance. He justified the killings. She said, let's basically have more of this, all these disastrous things. I saw that statement. I tweeted beforehand. I was like, look, she's going to get fired because she had an offer from a law firm to work full time. So I said she's going to get fired. And I said, guess what? I actually support and think that's entirely okay. Here's my line on this. The law is a service industry. You're well paid, but ultimately you're a service person. You as an associate, you're not bringing in business. You're literally there to work like a dog 80 to 100 hours a week to do business for clients that have come to your law firm, the reputation of your firm. It's a small world. This deeply, deeply, deeply matters. So her putting that aggressive of an opinion out there in such a public manner without thinking of the consequences directly is a liability for the firm withdraw the offer. If you want to call that cancel culture, sure. But I actually think that unironically, some leftists were right when they said when people say cancel culture is bad, they're basically saying consequences are bad. That's the consequence. Here's where this would go too far. Ryan has been punished if she's expelled. Life's been ruined. If someone follows her to whatever job she gets after this and tells that employer, wait, seriously, her law firm hired her and you're hiring her now, that's actually bullying. That's evil. I think she needed to be taught a lesson. I think consequences are important. But I think that's where cancel culture comes in because there's something deeply, it's weaponized. It's weaponized and it's evil. For me, it's five years from now. Yeah, I think even in the next six months, she needs to get a job in the next six months. If she were a freshman, I'd get that, but she needs to have a cheat. She's some random person from set from, and my quick thing on this, and this is where Bill Atman gets complicated. A, people probably saw this on Twitter, there was a bus driving around Cambridge and near Boston, obviously, where it had the pictures of people who were affiliated with some of these anti-Israel statements. That crosses the line very, very, very quickly. It quickly emerged that unshockingly, most of these organizations are led by power hungry people who issued their statements without actually checking them. Rhino actually got removed as head of the NYU Student Bar Association because she didn't check this through everyone. She just wanted to get a bunch of attention and put it out there. I think that pro-Israel people who transition into bullying of silly, stupid college kids who were subject to a deeply irresponsible higher education system that didn't educate them about responsibility and how to manage, that's just stupid. That actually approximates bad faith cancel culture. I said on the show, and genuinely, this is like

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

my nuanced take. I said, look, you're a law student. You are old enough and smart enough to know that the things you say are going to resonate into your workplace. Your prefrontal cortex is relatively developed. You have existed a little bit in the real world. And the idea that you could go work at a majority Jewish firm and put out a statement basically saying Israel was asking for it, then you're just a fucking idiot. And I was like, well, that's how it goes sometimes.

And like you said, that doesn't mean I support cancel culture. To me, cancel culture is, oh, so-and-so said something bad seven years ago and should get fired. That's bullshit, as you said. And I actually even said, I said basically what you said. I said, this bus, I was like, look, you got 18, 19-year-olds on there, fucking freshmen say stupid shit sometimes. For me, that's a total cross the line moment. I'm like, you got to leave these kids alone. I genuinely think that if you were an undergrad and you had anything to do with this, I'm not saying that you, I'm not saying you should be absolved. I'm just like, I'm going to give you a lot more leeway. That said, though, don't be surprised, Mr. undergrad, should you be on your Instagram and post in about Israelis deserving it, and then you apply for a job at a Jewish firm and that person doesn't want to hire you. Well, you know, that's life. You know, a lot of people, whenever I was starting out, a lot of us scrubbed our Facebooks just for, you know, to minimize the risk. And I graduated from college 10 years ago. So we were smart enough then to have that standard. So you should be smart enough now. You guys are the ones who actually grew up on the internet. I didn't even have the internet until I was really like a teenager. So just be smart. You know, if you know what he says, you can't believe something. It's just, yeah, if you're going to outright publicly, if you're going to come out, you're going to say terrorism is justified. Well, you know, I think you should have consequences for that. So and you know, the thing is, Marshall, I don't know if you've seen the viral clip to some of those Israeli protesters who were like, yeah, like kill them all, just like destroy them, level the, you know, kill a million people and all those people, I'm like, well, well, you know, I'm like, it's the same about those people are also being harassed. And I'm not saying I encourage harassment.

I'm just like, if you were going to go on camera and you're going to go and say outrageous things and call and justify the deaths of people who are out there, do not be surprised then. Whenever you get, uh, if you have consequences for that, when you're public, I'm mindful of everywhere that comes out of my mouth, whenever microphone is on. And it's not because I'm afraid and it's because I understand people who are listening to this, you're going about your day, you're trying to process stuff. It is imperative. And I have a deep responsibility, personally, I really think about this a lot. I'm sure you do too is like, we have big responsibilities to people who lend us our time. So anyway, I think we'd all be better off with thought about it that way. Totally next question. This is from Edgar in Marshall Sager. Quick question. What happened to the left in Israel, even before this current government, the major parties in Israel have been either center, right, far, right or right as the entire voter base shifted to primarily right wing parties or are there no viable left wing options? The reason why I ask is that as a Colombian American, I've seen Colombian voters make a similar shift as a result of the narco years, the Civil War, which up to recently, the right versus far right dominated the political landscape. I think the quick answer to this is security politics happened. Here's what people have to understand. This is part of the nuance

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

to the Palestine story. Israel withdrew from Gaza. Obviously they're still surrounding Gaza, but Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. That was a very, very tough decision. That was a decision made by the center, right government of area of Chiron. That's one of those Nixon goes to China moments. They've removed over 6,000 Jewish settlers in the face of pretty big resistance from those settlers. They made a really tough decision. Well, in response to that decision, which once again, from the center, right, you actually saw the Gazans elect Hamas. Now, once again, when this word is more nuanced, I am not saying because the Gazans elected Hamas in 2006, they deserve all the punishment in the world almost 20 years later, but it's just a note that in the Israeli political sphere, the second you gave Palestinians more freedom, quote unquote, they elected not Fata, not like one of the more complicated and moderate parties, but the most radical party that sent shockwaves to the Israeli political system. Imagine a war where Nixon went to China in the 1970s. You know, he's only he could do it. Only you could do it from the right. And then the next year, China declares war in the United States, that would obviously push American foreign policy and domestic politics closer in the right wing hawkish anti-China direction. So that's kind of what happened that the left was just left with a political landscape. They were doesn't work, but this is actually where this gets fascinating. This is why BB's in big trouble, because the whole deal with BB was if you elect the right to support the right wing coalition, you get security. Whereas this ad you could watch from 2015 on YouTube, where BB it's the whole joke is, oh, I'm not going to an Israeli accent, but they're like, oh, we're hiring a BB sitter. They're like, oh, you mean babysitter? They're like, no, BB sitter. And then Benjamin Netanyahu walks in, they're like, BB, you're our baby sitter. He's like, yes, I'm the security guy. So now that he's been set up in this way, I think his coalition's in a particularly dangerous position. But yeah, soccer, what's your articulation of the Israeli life? Yeah, he's dead. He's totally dead. And actually been covering a lot of that on the show, because that's part of the thing's annoying crap out of me is that the conversation in Israel is 10x better than the conversation here. Here is just like complete blindness. There's no nuance inside Israel. They're like, yeah, fuck Hamas, but also fuck BB. And I think the reason is, you know, probably the most people in our audience have ever been to Israel, they have no civil liberties over there. They all have to serve in the military. They live in a deeply collective society. And they have sacrificed immense amount of their personal freedoms for national security. And in fact, the foundation really of the modern Israeli state is we will keep you safe. So when you have sent your kids into the IDF, you've given up your years of your life, you literally cannot go into a mall in Israel without getting wandered down airport securities, a fucking nightmare. It's like that for huge portions of Israeli life. And you live with this from the day you were born. And the social contract is I'm giving up all this shit, but I get to be safe. And so then, like you said, you lose per capita 20 something thousand, you know, 40,000 or whatever citizens like we would have had on 9 11, I think it would be equivalent for I think it would be equivalent for if we had another 9 11 attack in 2004, like post Patriot Act, there would have been a like the American political system would not be able to reckon with that. And that's effectively what happened. If in fact, though, it's even more so, just because literally post Yom Kippur, they're like, everything we do is about keeping you safe. And people bought that, like you said, I mean, you know, they also made a lot of mistakes. I think BB and a lot of

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

them by prop in a pomass and by basically encouraging people to support them because they didn't ever wanted to do it. You know, the other part of the story too, I think that you missed is the demographic part just about the massive rise of the orthodox and the ultra orthodox population. I realized that because so many Americans do not know or have never been there, they simply cannot fathom how stratified and diverse the Israeli population itself is.

Yeah, no, that's a great summation of it. Next question. My name is Jesse. I graduated from a Northeastern private university and attended and graduated from a post graduate degree program in the D.C. area. I'll try to sum it up a little bit. When I was both institutions, especially when undergrad one, I experienced tons of antisemitism and intangible sentiment. Do you think that there will be institutional changes at universities when it comes to allowing or supporting these clubs, which preach decolonization, liberation, for example, students for justice in Palestine, democratic socialism, America and others? And how do you think the larger American society will respond to these now public displays on campuses? What do you think, Sucker? I don't know. I haven't thought about it because at the same time, for all of the donor pushback and all that, the Harvard president still came out with a statement and said, we support free speech, which, by the way, is a bullshit. But just to go to show you, they still got the institutional cover in the end. And also, I think that sentiments again are going to shift very quickly. The moment that you see mass civilian deaths in Gaza, I think a lot of that will come right back. So I don't necessarily think the grand reckoning that some people have said are going to happen is going to happen.

Let me put it this way. What do you think? Coming from University of Oregon has a huge SJP presence on it for a variety of structural reasons that we'll eventually get into in a different podcast. But I would argue that with the firing of Reina that we referenced earlier in this episode, I think the overton window for just for a loud speech in American society is definitely closed. I don't think two years ago, Reina gets fired for what she did. So that's kind of what I mean here. So I agree with you at an institute. And also, let's get real. The reason why I'm optimistic about American society is I think we just collectively lost our mind during the 2010s. And obviously, it's hypocritical for Harvard to now say, well, we're ultimately the free speech campus. But actually, I think it's I think it's actually good for that to be the standard on campuses. So yes, they're being hypocritical. The worst excess in the 2010s. But like, if this means we're slowly moving back to the norm, I'm okay with that. I do think, though, that there was clearly a rabid amount of violence in the statements. But I don't think it's going to be kosher to be literal moving forward. I think that's the way I distinguish it. You're not going to get bannings of SJP or DSAs. But clearly, everyone in their cousin, they're not going to be on this Twitter. Everyone in their cousin knows it was so stupid to say, quote, anything is okay in the face of resistance. That is not going to be sustainable long term. That's not because actually, the what the schools are going to say in that case is, well, that's not free speech saga. That's a call to violence. And that's a threat. And that's that's that's going to be the way we're going to get there. Okay, I'm low on your battery here. So I want to get to these last ones. Yes, two state solution. You describe, do your shortest version of this is like a test for us. Can you describe why we are where we are regarding this two state solution in Israel and Palestine? My quick answer is going back to what I said earlier, this is all about the Gaza pullout going badly, because the Gaza pullout went so

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

poorly. And Hamas was elected. The right wing parts of Israeli politics that had no interest in a two state solution were given manna from heaven for the next 20 to 30 years, and we're then able to position all increasing freedoms for Palestinians as representing fundamental security risk to Israel. Then you combine that with the Gaza has below war and look, the real thing when I'm resuming

back here, the worst part and this is the part right through the worst for Palestinians, Egypt, Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, they don't give a shit about the Palestinians, the actions that we can you and I could talk about settlement excess all we want, which I think it actually should be talked about. But those external factors did not need to happen. They're not driven by those factors that effectively killed the two state solution from my perspective. Yeah, and that's so obvious. Look, the two state solution died that the Bush administration pressured them to have elections. And then it also further died, as you said, whenever BV and the right wing Israelis were like, great, now we're just going to support the hell out of Hamas and make sure that the world always sees all Palestinian quote unquote liberation. This earlier people are going to be confused. What do you invite BV supporting Hamas? Well, there's a lot of evidence in the past that the Israelis and actually BV himself, I have to go back and find it. I don't have in front of me. In 2019, he said anybody who doesn't want to see I'm paraphrasing, who doesn't want to see independent Palestine or two state solution should be thankful and should support Hamas. So there's, we talked about on the show, previous Haaretz reporting, which is in Israel. It's kind of like what their New York Times, I guess, Israeli. It's the most mainstream left publication. Mainstream left publication, which is actually they're the ones beating this right now about how there's been decades of policy from the right wing parties in Israel to both secretly encourage support for Hamas and in some cases even like help them in both the lead up to the elections and since then in order to keep their power because they're the most convenient cudgel, if you will, for saying, no, look, we can't do peace because of that over there. I'm not saying that it's their fault and that they created Hamas. I'm just saying that they were a very, very convenient actor to be the other side. And I will reiterate what you said. The Arab world or at least the Arab governments, because the people do care,

but the Arab governments do not give a shit about Palestine. That said, the Arab people do care a lot about Palestine. Having spent a decent amount of time there, this is a very, very, very emotionally. I mean, it's just like American Jews in Israel. That's how they feel. And so, yeah, I mean, gorge your spirits because it's going to be a tough one the next couple of months, I think. Last two questions. Number one, grade, Biden's response. You had to give Biden the letter grade and how he's responding to the conflict. Would you give him extra credit? What do you think Trump's response would be? You go first. I think Biden, well, I think Biden gets an A. Like everyone knows him, the Biden stand of this space, but that's okay. Biden gets an A. Biden was direct. I think he was strong. I think he clearly ignored. This is Biden's best in the sense that he clearly ignored the parts of his coalition, no matter how small, but take disproportionate amount of energy in the debate. Crazy SGP activists. I think Biden should bring this energy to a variety of other issues where people think that he's further in line with the furthest left parts of the Democratic Party. That's very strong. I think he was correct to say he supports Israel.

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

I think the real question, this goes to your opening statement, Sagar, is Biden's response needs to be graded not in the first few days where it's purely something that could be pressed together with smart speech writers, but it's actually going to be, okay, seriously, I know you made reference to BB that democracies don't unduly harm civilians. I know you said that that's an important addendum. That's clearly you referencing, but when things start to turn and the US starts getting pressure, what is Biden going to do to maintain his support for Israel? But also, because once again, like there's it, look, everyone, I'm deeply pro-Israel on a couple of different levels, but there are Israeli members of government who are referring to the Palestinians as animals. I think there's a part of the Israeli character, which is especially, just not made for TV, especially isn't considerate of the broader political realities that the United States needs to navigate, and they need to care about those things. So how Biden navigates that? So let's say A, for his initial response, we'll see how the next two weeks go. What would you say? I think Trump would basically not do anything that Trump would say things more aggressively than Biden did, but I think he wouldn't do anything differently than Biden has done. Maybe, you know, he would definitely do, he would definitely amorously talk about how maybe we'd send special forces in to rescue people. I'm not saying he wouldn't do it because the Biden administration for now has ruled it out, but he would definitely say, well, maybe we'll do it. I'm not giving Biden an upgrade yet, just because, well, I don't know. I mean, he's been, the Blinken and Biden rhetorically have said, Israel must support the rules of war or laws of war or whatever. Like you said, if I don't see a humanitarian corridor, then I will give him a D minus to a D, because that's it, we're fucked. And I just, I know we will get pulled into this shit longer. And so if they are not smart enough to do that, then I'm, I would give him a D minus to an F. If, if, I'll put it this way, if the Palestinian casualties go north of 10K, it's a huge failure on his part because he could have tried to do something. It was inevitable. And look, like there are people in the NSC, they're smart. They're looking at communications. By the way, this whole normalizing Saudi Israeli relations, guess what? Saudi Arabia had its very first call ever with the Iranian foreign minister. And what do you think they talked about? It was about Palestine. So this is the worst possible thing that could happen from a US perspective in terms of aligning the Middle East against us and balancing our geopolitical interests around this is the chief job of the president. And so I hope, I hope that they try, but I don't think that they will. So I withhold judgment though, for now, because it's possible. People keep saying that we're having diplomacy with Israel, Egypt, like you said, the Israelis are like, well, maybe not 24 hours. So I will withhold judgment until I see it. But I don't think it's gonna happen. And last question, Israel conflict, how much does religion factor? Hi guys, from your perspective, how much does religion weigh in on the Israel conflict? From an atheistic perspective, I feel like once you have a religious argument, it's almost impossible to convince someone out of their emotional ties to it. I love this question because it is a very direct question. I think a lot of people probably just have in the back of their mind like, oh, this is like an intractable religious conflict. I actually don't think I can move it this way. You could argue that Hamas's actions are due to the fact that they are a radical like Islamist group in the same way that ISIS is a radical Islamist group. So you could tie religion to that. But I think the actual questions that are at hand here don't necessarily have anything to do with religion.

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

I don't think Hamas thought this was gonna go as far as it did. I bet they thought this was much like, because here's the thing, we made reference to the Hezbollah war in Lebanon. What happened was

they sent some raiding parties into northern Israel. They kidnapped a couple. They kidnapped, they killed a couple, kidnapped a soldier. Israel then goes into Lebanon in the war. Basically, Israel loses in the sense that Hezbollah survived as much when they thought they did.

So I think Hamas thought they're like, hey, we're gonna send a raiding party, we're gonna kill some border guards, we're gonna capture some prisoners. I do not think they thought this was the level of existential conflict they were going to basically knock off there. So that's why I think we should talk more about strategy and tactics and interest. And guess what? We're trying to damage the Israeli-Saudi relationship. Those don't necessarily have to do

a religion versus just geopolitics in general. What would you close with?

I think the only extent to which this has to do with religion is to the outside coalitions who are not directly in the countries and how they're interacting with the conflict. As in, it is more religious for the people who are not in Israel and Palestine than it is actually inside of Israel and Palestine, if that makes sense. In terms of deep Islamic sympathy with the Palestinian cause, because of the al-Aqsa mosque and Jerusalem, deep Jewish American or Jewish Jews anywhere, sympathy with Israel. But inside Israel-Palestine, this is basically a root conflict that goes all the way back to 2005 and disputes over two-state Hamas, the validity of that government, terrorism. And yeah, I mean, even the war that Israel is fighting here, this is a modern war for Israel.

Prior to this, they fought nation-states. Now, in the last 20 years, they've only fought non-state actors. And that's why we're just in a totally different situation. I don't think it's as religious, per se. Here we go. Great. Having you join for this Q&A. Hey, also, as I mentioned, got a bunch of good questions over the weekend. And I hopped on this morning to answer some of them before I get into the supercast. First question. Hey, Marshall and Sager, this is a morbid question, but unfortunately a realistic possibility. What is the possibility that the world, more specific world leaders, give the green light to the extermination of the Palestinian people? Doesn't seem like anyone of real power is stepping up to try to stop Israel from genocide. And a sick way of looking at it from a world leader's perspective is that the quickest way to peace is maybe removing one of the parties from the picture. Hopefully this won't happen, but it feels like it could. Been a big fan of the two of you for the last couple of years.

Thanks for the great work and please keep it up. So I'll start with some

really good news. It's just being reported on Twitter. So maybe this won't hold by

I think this is a good start. If you are concerned about the plight of the Palestinian people, Israel has announced that they are turning the water back on going into Gaza. There's a bigger debate we could have about what constitutes collective punishment and those sort of issues.

But at a core level, the Palestinians are going to get some of their suffering alleviated on the broader question. Let's just cut to the chase of it. Hey, I do not believe in any way whatsoever that Israel's objective here is to commit genocide against the Palestinians. The Israeli objective here permanently end Hamas as the governing entity as the governing entity in Gaza and is a broader threat to Israel. I think where one could be concerned is the price in Palestinian lives that Israel is willing to go through pay to accomplish that goal. But that

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

is completely different than genocide. And I think we should be very, very, very careful about throwing around that word because it has a very specific meaning to the second part of the question in terms of world leaders. No, there are no world leaders who would at all give Israel a green light to commit genocide. One of the answers that Sager gave earlier in this podcast that really serves as the real explanation of why that's true is the last thing any world leader wants is an escalation of this conflict. If Israel were to unilaterally escalate from anti Hamas collateral damage and actually escalate into direct ethnic cleansing and murder, which is what genocide actually is, you clearly would get Iranian intervention. You could see a total revolt in the West Bank. And of course, Hezbollah would come in from Lebanon. Part of the reason why the Biden administration sent an aircraft carrier to the Middle East into the Mediterranean is to keep Iran from entering into the conflict. So key thing to remember on the genocide question, A, it's not an Israeli objective, but B, every single world leader in the region clearly doesn't want this to escalate into a regional conflict. Therefore, there will be extreme pressure on Israel to not let acceptable to not allow collateral damage to escalate into something broader and indefensible. Next question. Hi, Sager and Marshall. On Thursday, Chris had made an incredibly salient point on breaking points about radicalization of future generations in Gaza. They haven't heard being discussed and would like to hear y'all respond and expand on this. Many have cited the youthfulness of Gaza, along with the populations in capacity to leave the country or safely seek refuge in international humanitarian aid shelters due to direct and indirect bombings as a tragic aspect of this conflict that will undoubtedly result in many child casualties. But it is also a fact contributing and compounding future radicalization of the next generation in the region on this specifically. Number one. As individuals close to and in contact with Washington insiders, is this at all seen by officials in Congress or their staff? And if so, is there any way to interpret the hyper-inflammatory words of those like Marco Rubio and Richard McConnell as anything but knowingly advocating for wide scale and indiscriminate slaughter? Some would say calls for genocide to prevent this generation from coming to fruition, thus essentially taking the stance of quote, mulling the lawn further than ever before, rather than better analogized as pulling grass from the roots and completely overturning the soil they once sat upon. So I'll answer this part of the question first. I definitely think there have been Republican leaders in our political system and parts of the Israeli right that have been far too aggressive, cavalier and eliminationist in their rhetoric. I will say though, you know, having known a decent number of the insiders you're referring to, I would say that aside from just the really poor language, the clear objective here isn't treating Palestinians as people who should be eliminated as a whole. It's clearly a analogy or at least a conception of like thinking of this now as a World War II style conflict. I think that's the tough way to put it, but I think that's how they see it. They probably, in their aggressive statements, see this akin to look, you know, in World War II, the United States needed to defeat Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. And as part of that process, there were severe, severe bombings that killed hundreds of thousands, if not millions of civilians. And that is the nature of war against an intractable evil opponent. So when they make their aggressive statements, I don't believe they're speaking in terms of genocide or elimination. They are speaking in terms of we should accept World War II levels of collateral damage

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

as a necessary result of removing Hamas from power. So you can, you can disagree with that. You could think that that rhetoric is too aggressive, but that's how someone should understand the mentality of folks who are speaking that way. It's World War II. It's not the Balkans or any other sort of genocidal conflict. Second part of the question, too, the radicalization of generations, seen in the Middle East after American wars, seems to have been a traverse parallel of new Western generations born after 1911, in a sense being deradicalized away from neocon empire building, government rhetoric. We've already seen a quite heterogeneous, yet predominantly critical response by Israeli citizens towards their government's past and current action in the face of ample warnings. But would you all expect to see a shift in politics in Israel that would reflect a similar shift in internal politics as seen in the West towards softening their past positions on inflammatory actions that have seen to be contributing to the malice of Palestinians? Apologies if any of the framing of my question comes off as one-sided. This is not my intention. And there are ferocious and violent actors on the side of Palestinian support, both Hamas and their fervent supporters from the population. But it is clear to me that a lot of this is downstream from modern Israeli policy, and thus in a sense I feel it is right that Palestine should be framed as more passive actors, thus capable of effectively gardening change internally than many attempt to cast them as being able to sincerely nick. Now, well, here's my quick response to that, Nick. I think the quick response is, and I definitely feel this as an American Jew. I think most people in Israel, separate from their feelings towards the Netanyahu government, are not going to be talked into believing that we should interpret Hamas's specific actions as purely being downstream from Israeli policy. What Hamas did over the past week was so clearly escalatory, was so clearly unstrategic, so clearly didn't have an effective end game, that if you are an Israeli, your conclusion, this is why we spoke earlier about how everything Hamas has done has damaged the two-state solution, your conclusion is going to be, oh wow, they don't just dislike our policies in the West Bank, or dislike the situation in Gaza, they actually want to eliminate Israel as a state, and are a permanent threat to Jews. And once again, it's one thing to attack Israeli border guards, it's another thing to kidnap grandmothers and children. And that's the way I think a lot of people are going to feel about this, and when I see American Jews especially get radicalized by the events of the past week, it's really the dynamic I just spoke to, which is all actions taken were so disproportionate of any objective and end game, and so clearly didn't help ameliorate any of the problems that we just went through in terms of Palestine, that you're not going to conclude, okay, we could fix our situation with Gaza and Hamas if we took a different policy in the West Bank. That's just the personal take on it, but I think a lot of people in Israel and in the American Jewish community would agree with that. Next question, I understand the outrage regarding the death of Palestinian civilians, but what should Israel have done? How do you negotiate with an organization, Hamas, who calls for the elimination of Israel and the murder of all Jews? Hamas can't be demanded to be treated like a legitimate government, but act like a terrorist organization, and then be shocked when they are treated like a terrorist organization. Thank you for considering my question, love your show, Leon. Yeah, I mean, Saga and I answered this at the start of the episode. They being Hamas, transition themselves from just a complicated organization, terrorist group, plenty of those

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

in the Middle East, they've transitioned into the ISIS equivalent, and when you are the ISIS equivalent, your ability to negotiate, your ability to be handled, I think in a pure, fair, rational, post Westphalian nation state manner is just completely gone. When it comes to the deaths of the Palestinians, the standard that I'm approaching is Hamas needs to be eliminated. Hamas cannot rogaza. Hamas is not a legitimate and justifiable opponent of Israel. And I think as Saga said earlier in the conversation, he says crystal is on board with the idea that Hamas has to be taken out of power. I'll be honest, I'm pretty I'm kind of suspect of that. I it's easy to say after everything Hamas did that Oh, yes, of course, of course, they can't be in charge, they can't rule. But what I suspect of crystal is the more and more you get into the facts of the matter, the facts of how you would actually move them from power, I think she would get increasingly squeamish. Understandably so, but I just think that the test for me isn't. Are you in favor of removing this ISIS like thing? The test is okay, when that gets hard, when they are trade offs, once you actually get into the fog of war, what are you willing to justify? Okay, having said that, here's my standard for civilian casualties. Hamas uses civilians as human shields. It's part of their tactical approach. This is what you do when you are the weaker power against stronger power. There's clear precedent in both the war against ISIS, the wars against imperial Japan and not the Germany that civilian casualties are a consequence of modern total war. The key thing though is consequence and collateral damage. If Israeli actions over the long term transition into not just we are eliminating Hamas position or an asset and civilians are killed, that is a horrible consequence. But at the end of the day, it's worth it in terms of our objective of settling this with Hamas once and for all. That's justifiable. I think completely okay within the moral universe of war. It is not okay though to broadly see this as an act of punishment against Gazans who in the telling of certain people in Israeli politics haven't revolted against Hamas, allow Hamas to rule them etc etc etc. civilians cannot be punished directly. That's also why we could debate the water and the blockade but that's why I think it's an encouraging sign that Israel supposedly per this morning has turned the water back on into Gaza because I think it's a demonstration of the fact that they understand that if their policies in Gaza are seen as being designed to punish rather than remove Hamas from power, this won't be a sustainable long-term solution to the Hamas problem and could bring other actors into the region. So the first question that I would ask when it came to turning off electricity, water etc is okay are you doing this because you could explain to me that doing so makes it easier to remove Hamas from power? Okay I'm open to it but clearly and I think this is why the water was turned back on we're going to separate water from electricity. Clearly water from a pure survival perspective it's unclear how all of the humanitarian catastrophe that would emerge from the long-term lack of safe water that wouldn't remove Hamas from power. I think electricity and internet services are actually a little more straightforward in terms of no clearly you're not going to give Hamas the literal tool it needs to prosecute the war, create propaganda etc etc etc so I hope that the news on the water continues because I think there's a pretty straightforward way to differentiate that. Next question is international law relevant? We're hearing lots of talk about war crimes. Does international law apply in Israel and Gaza and on American forces operating internationally? Is the United States or Israel a signatory to any international organizations that have many full abilities to enforce international law? If so how are they enforced? What are your thoughts about the future of international organizations like the UN, the International

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

Criminal Court and are they significantly different than organizations like the EU and NATO? Great question so yeah let's take this question in reverse so number one the main difference between

the EU and NATO and international institutions like the International Criminal Court and the United Nations is that the EU, NATO and their regional equivalents across the world are specific ideology and regionally organized institutions they're not universal so the purpose of the UN ideally is to represent all the nations of the world in a collective body. The purpose of the International Criminal Court is for there to be an international actor that can adjudicate legal proceedings and forest standards of justice etc etc etc. We are dealing with the awkward fact that international organizations effectively do not work when you have an international

scene that we have today in the sense that you clearly have a huge divide between the United States and China you clearly have a block forming Russia, China, Iran and their proxies that are very clearly not aligned with the interests and the intentions of western blocks the EU in some respects NATO 100% so in that sense if you're having competing regional actors and different power blocks you are not going to be able to come to an accord on what universal standards of justice are so something that I thought was very helpful is that when how brands of the American Enterprise Institute came on the podcast to talk about the UN and what lessons we could take from the first Cold War this episode came out during my Ukraine series back in February 2022 he said look like we should understand that the UN and other international organizations are effectively bodies where the US and our allies can articulate things Zelensky can address the UN you could have the big UNGA meeting in September but that is different than accepting the idea that this is a body that's capable of resolving international conflict which you know on a baseline level is deeply deeply frustrating because the UN should be understood as part of the Rooseveltian post World War II order they were supposed to help adjudicate international conflicts in a way that the League of Nations failed to do obviously the divisions of the world and I've just made some of this is not possible so we should understand that the UN and the ICC and other institutions will be used by various actors so once again the the axis I refer to of Iran Russia China they'll use the UN to argue their points but the US and Israel are obviously not going to abide by the ICC the International Criminal Court if it's being utilized to basically attempt to hold them accountable we're basically in an era where it's going to be up to regional institutions like the EU and NATO and alliances like the alliance between the US and Israel and US and European countries to hold nations accountable so that's just the key fact of Israel is let's say Israel's proposing to do something just completely out of control or unethical the the Biden administration and the broader West response to that it's going to matter more than a vote at the United Nations which once again if you're thinking of this in the sense of these post war institutions they're supposed to improve the state of the world that's a failure but it's also a reality that we should accept two other questions evaluating civilian collateral damage kind of enter the version of that's probably just say it more succinctly this time love the show especially in times like this you provide some nuanced context to the expectations of responsibility on the nation responding to an attack when it comes to civilians especially when it's clear that they're being used as human shields any civilian death is tragic but if terrorists get an effective green light to use in the shields due to maximums definitions of war

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

crimes it makes a coherent response very difficult what's a good framework for understanding what's

too far and what's part of conflict lastly Marshall's wedding tux was a lead thank you yeah I appreciate that I posted a picture for my tux on twitter you all know sorenite takes suits very seriously so that was a fun thing to do no so here's just the the quick summation civilian deaths cannot be purposeful they cannot be conceived as punishment they are justifiable if they are a consequence of an opposing force their government using civilians as human shields or as basically a deterrent to justify their actions so if Hamas is launching missiles at Israel from an apartment building and Israel strikes back and that kills civilians under this framework that is a justified and understandable result versus Israel is deeply frustrated and angry and vengeful from the attacks and just attacks an apartment building without any military justification that is going to cross the line under the framework final question before I get into the paywalled section here Israel conflict who represents Europe the USA as Biden Putin as Russia

China Xi Jinping is yours bb but who represents all of Europe that a poland or an eastern european country can't go against macron is their past figure you would have said no this is super interesting I would basically say that and this is why it was interesting to do an episode on France a few weeks ago macron's intentions after he came into office in 2017 were clearly too effective to become the president of Europe to build this third way outside of the US and China outside this you know emerging superpower competition he tried to do this at the start of the war in Ukraine that has clearly failed I think on a personal level he ran into some trouble he didn't have as much ability to coalesce here behind him as he thought and clearly the world and the circumstances and tough choices that emerged just weren't conducive

to actually doing that so right now there basically isn't any one leader or president of Europe and that's just because Europe is as a whole is just too it's too big of a divided block you just have you know you have the British the British left obviously you have Eastern Europe which is different not just history because that's superficial and obvious but you know different intentions in different contexts than Central Europe or Western Europe you have Southern Europe which tends to be

poorer and it's going through migration issues so it's just not possible for any one leader or anyone country to lead Europe in a unified manner the question second part was is there any past leader who could fill this role I just don't I just don't think so because once again this is where the the European Union project has run into trouble the past decade or so it's just unclear that there is a unified European project that when it comes to these outside issues has so enough consensus that any one leader could represent everyone's interests even on internal EU matters like economic policy that's incredibly increasingly difficult so no I just don't think there is any one any single one leader who could achieve that which means that to a certain degree the EU project has to dial down its ambitions because it has to see itself as a regional um a regional power bloc that has on the one hand definitely you know ended the whole thousand years

of war which tore the country which tore the continent apart that's the enormous like impressive accomplishment really matters the border policies are helpful the economic policies are helpful but

[Transcript] The Realignment / Weekly Recap and Audience AMA - Free Edition | Marshall & Saagar on Gaza, Hamas, and Israel

it's just not going to be a third power bloc outside of the western american led order that many such as macron wanted to achieve okay so many great questions appreciate everyone for sticking through this it was very helpful we're looking forward to doing this more now i'm going to get into the supercast exclusive section of this episode once again if you'd like to hear the full response to the questions about to give you can go to realignment.supercast.com or you could click the link in your show notes you could subscribe for five a month 50 a year or 500 for a lifetime membership it's how you pay the bills around here and it's kind of fun to do this so looking forward to continuing to dial this up and bring great information and content to you all especially outside of the traditional realignment format