

Iran just BROKE Trump, US Bases EVACUATE as Gulf States BEG Mercy | Patrick Henningsen

Patrick Henningsen discusses the US's major cave to Iran that is only getting worse as US forces retreat in a major way and Trump is forced to address it. The story is that Gulf states have begged for an end to the war, but is this the truth or is something else happening? We break it all down. <https://www.youtube.com/@21stCenturyWireTV> Patrick's YouTube <https://patrickhenningsen.substack.com/> LIKE the video and Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong> Telegram: <https://t.me/DannyHaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritho> #iran #trump #iranwar

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. It's Danny Haiphong. As you can see, Patrick Henningsen is here to help us break down the latest developments. First, we begin with the Financial Times reporting that the United States has been making significant shifts in its U.S. military posture in the Middle East, including because of Iranian strikes, having to now, what they call, reposition soldiers and airmen once in Kuwait and Bahrain, now further afield to Jordan, Israel, and beyond. Now, Donald Trump addressed this question at the Air Force One gaggle, and you might have a hard time hearing him because actually there's a lot of silence.

#Speaker 1

Here we go. Sir, there's a report that you're moving U.S. troops out of Bahrain and Kuwait. Are troops being moved out of the Middle East? Mr. President, why...?

#Danny

I don't want to comment on that. If you didn't hear him, now Iran has taken a much stronger stance, despite all of the reports that the United States has been releasing saying that Iran is negotiating with the United States right now.

#Danny

Iran has said through its foreign ministry that this is, in fact, not the case. And Iran is still very much enforcing its control over the Strait of Hormuz, firing cruise missiles, anti-ship cruise missiles, toward a tanker last night that was trying to sail through that Omani corridor. Patrick, now the United States has leaked through the media that they have maybe made a concession on this, saying they'll leave that permanently closed, quote unquote, whatever that means. But Iran has not accepted any terms by the United States. But what do you make of these developments? We've gone from World War II-level-like strikes that the United States was supposed to launch with Israel over the weekend now to what appears to be a very confused message of retreat. What do you make of it?

#Patrick Henningsen

Well, it depends on who you believe. The Washington insiders will say that Trump has been, you know, warned off this attack because, you know, the U.S. don't have equipment. They don't have the means to defend themselves in the region, nor does Israel. I'm sure there's a lot of truth in that, just from a straight-up logistics point of view. But the thing is, you could say this is Trump's erraticism, which many claim it is, but actually, it just follows a very predictable pattern of the United States remaining engaged against Iran. Certainly, the hand that they have to play in the region is weaker and weaker with every successive Iranian strike against U.S. bases in the region. That's no doubt about it.

But are they going to give up? Are they going to allow Iran to declare victory, which they most certainly will, if the United States isn't able to come good on even a small percentage of any of its threats? And I would say the answer is no. But the U.S. has to buy time. The Trump administration has to buy time to rearm enough to wage a 10- to 14-day campaign, one could say. I mean, if they're really desperate, maybe a seven-day campaign, something like that, but a limited campaign. And they need to do this successively because the United States also has to notify Congress that they're going to continue to use military force against Iran and do so outside of the War Powers Act. So it's exactly what Trump has been doing.

What also is important is the 60-day deadline of the MOU, the first memorandum of understanding, is going to come due now. And that means that Iran had a moratorium on charging fees on shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, and that was originally part of that deal, and that's going to expire, which means not only will the straits be under Iranian control, but they will be charging. And that is just going to incense. The financial part of that is really— that's like a wound, a deep, deep wound for the Trump administration, to Donald Trump's ego, to all these claims by Rubio that that's just outrageous. People aren't allowed to charge money at these major shipping choke points.

Of course, they do all around the world. But they're just incensed that, from Trump's point of view, he's leaving money on the table. That's money he could get, theoretically, at least denying Iran from being able to accrue any revenue. It would be enough, but it would be much worse if Iran is able to actually do that administratively. So the point is this: the U.S. have a long-term strategy that is to

weaken, to degrade Iran's military and infrastructure, and specifically as it pertains to the management of the Strait of Hormuz. They've been doing that. And they've been doing it kind of under the mask of these intermittent spurts of negotiations, of trying to make a deal.

But the problem is, each time the United States has gone through this pattern of threatening massive annihilation and then backing down, or announcing peace negotiations, or announcing they've got a deal, and using that as cover to mount a sneak attack or to attack Iran, which could actually happen. Whenever Trump announces that they're making progress towards a deal, Iran knows that's when they should be on high alert, because the U.S. and Israel have shown that they will use negotiations as cover for attacks or for targeted assassinations, for that matter. So I think the Iranians are fully aware of this. So they're not able to sort of use the element of surprise that the U.S. and Israel had previously. It's very underhanded, by the way, and absolutely, from a statecraft point of view, zero honor.

And it's furthered the Iranian position, which is that they have absolutely zero expectations that the United States will ever honor any of their obligations, any kind of agreement, written or otherwise. So this just kind of reinforces that. But the United States is not going to sign a peace deal, right, with Iran, and they're not going to pursue any kind of a peace deal because, from the U.S. or the Trump administration point of view, a peace deal or a deal is total capitulation by the Iranians, and that the U.S. will come out looking, you know, clearly having an upper hand of some sort, or clearly having inflicted grave, grave damage on their adversary. And that's the only acceptable sort of deal. Anything where Iran retains control over the Strait of Hormuz, is making money, or is controlling and checking shipping in the region.

That's just going to be unacceptable for the U.S. So if the U.S. can't prevent that, then they'll back off and engage in fake negotiations, and they'll put on a facade that they're working on something when they're not, and then they will rearm and reload. And Israel has to have enough to defend itself for at least a two-week barrage. And the Iranian position is quite clear. They've also said publicly they're very aware of the political situation in the U.S. and Israel. And so why would they want to provide any ammunition for Netanyahu, for the hard right to get any support or any more support from centrists or whatever in the upcoming elections in Israel by inviting or creating a situation where Iran is lobbing missiles at Netanyahu?

At Tel Aviv, likewise, Donald Trump is looking for a victory, some type of a victory he can spin prior to the midterms. So Iran's very cognizant of not handing both Trump or Netanyahu anything that they can use to justify some kind of a move where they can regain leverage over the situation. It's a long shot for Trump, of course, and for Netanyahu in Israel, ditto. But what's interesting is the last exchange that lasted for two weeks, or whatever it was, 13 days, I can't remember, Israel managed to sit that one out. So, cost-free for Israel, and the United States took all of the hits at their bases. So from an Israeli point of view, that's actually a formula that can work.

So they'd be very happy for the United States. It just kind of shows you what a bad situation Israel's in, that they're willing to sacrifice their defensive umbrella provided by the United States. It is a very dire situation in that respect, very different from where things were a year ago or even six months ago. So, the diminishing situation, maybe that was one of the reasons why the United States was leaning so hard on Saudi Arabia to attack Yemen and also Iraq, because the conflict has clearly expanded in the last week with Iraq, with the Red Sea, with Yemen, also with Ukraine joining in to hit an Iranian ship in the Caspian Sea, extending that blockade to the north as well as to the south.

So the U.S. can pull the blockade gag once again, and then pull back and then claim they're negotiating, threaten to bomb. They can kind of, even though they've lost operational use of a lot of these bases, they can still kind of play this. They can also pressure their allies. They have total control over Saudi Arabia, and they have a lot of leverage over the Iraqi government and all of the Gulf states because they're all on the dollar system. So the U.S. still has tremendous leverage. The situation is bad, admittedly, for the U.S. in the region and for Israel. It's not great, but they still have a lot of leverage over all the Gulf states, even though they might not be getting much use out of their military bases. So this president has no choice. He's sunk in cost.

He's in there. Donald Trump can't get out of this. There's going to be no group hug with the Iranians. It's not going to happen. There's no treaty. No peace treaty is coming, not during this term, not during this administration. It's not going to happen. There will be head fakes. There will be announcements. There will be claims. They might even go back to Islamabad or some other venue for a couple of days. But ultimately, Israel has been categorical: there will be no peace deal with Iran. They need the United States in one way or another to do the heavy lifting, to take the hits, et cetera. So that's kind of like—I don't see any big changes in those relationships. So I just see this thing grinding on with a weaker and weaker, progressively weaker and weaker hand by the U.S. and by Israel.

#Danny

Patrick, some people are saying that your mic might be a little low. If you can turn up the volume just a bit, that would be great. Yeah, just to make sure everyone can hear. But we'll keep going, and I'll try to adjust as well.

#Patrick Henningsen

I'll move it a little bit closer there. Sorry about that. No, no, no.

#Danny

That's okay. You sound very clear to me. I think that's a great point. I didn't even think about, and I think not many are thinking about, that connection of why Saudi Arabia came in. But Israel has been

relatively restrained, although they have been focusing their ire on Lebanon and Gaza. Although those operations, in retrospect, in the broader scheme, have actually reduced as well since the so-called MOU period. But I wanted to pull this up and ask your thoughts on it because the Gulf countries supposedly played a big role in curbing Trump's lust for massive strikes on Iran. It says, according to The Wall Street Journal, that the Gulf states are growing frustrated with what they see as inconsistent strategy by the U.S. toward Iran.

They fear a prolonged conflict will leave them exposed to Iran's retaliation, and that it was Saudi Arabia who urged Trump to prioritize diplomacy and de-escalation, while the UAE said that they wanted an even harsher stance from Trump on Iran. Now, this is what Trump just came out with today. He said that Iranian leadership is unbelievably duplicitous. They ask for a meeting and, some would say, beg for talks to begin. And then they go on their usual blather, saying the Strait of Hormuz will be operated powerfully by them when it's already completely controlled by the U.S. Navy. The United States is a wall of steel. Nothing gets through to Iran unless we want it to, and nothing will get through unless a deal or total surrender is accomplished.

Whether they want to admit it or not, in fact, we are talking of a solution to a problem they have caused for decades. So that is Trump's latest report on the conflict. What do you make of this? And especially the Gulf states as well here, because while I do believe, and we've heard the story before, that they were very concerned about what would happen if the U.S. struck and Israel tried to strike Iranian power infrastructure, oil infrastructure. We've heard this before, and I'm always a little doubtful about what kind of influence the Gulf states actually have over the U.S. versus the opposite. So what do you make of this?

#Patrick Henningsen

Well, his tweet there just kind of reiterates most of what I said previously. The administration's not changed its colors at all. They're not seeing the light. This is just a game. In terms of the Gulf states, I don't think—the leverage goes in the other direction. The pressure goes in the other direction. The United States has total control over those regimes, and they serve at the pleasure of the Western powers, full stop. So they'll do what they're told, and they might complain. They might sort of make a plea, like, "This isn't good for us." They might be able to lobby for a delay in something or other.

But at the end of the day, those regimes are not in permanent positions, okay? They were created by the British Empire, and they've probably—at some point—they will have outlived their usefulness for the Western powers, okay? And when they do, it would be very easy to wrap up one or more of these Gulf monarchies, okay? Very easily. All you'd have to do is a military coup, very straightforward, extremely easy, and maybe find a cousin or, you know, some other royal or a general, right, and a field marshal, and that's it. And it would be very easy to get them to sign on to good relations with Israel, normalization as well.

So that could very well happen at some point. The Greater Israel Project is not a dead letter. And that's—the Greater Israel Project is about Israel becoming the financial and energy hub of the region and basically charting the destiny and the control and so forth. So they could easily remove any of these royal families, and any of these states, and the U.S. and Israel can effectively take control of the energy business, as it were, in those countries. That could very well happen. It would be very easy to engineer over the course of a year.

And you could keep a military dictator in there indefinitely. I mean, look at Sisi in Egypt. He's going to die in office. So Egypt is the ideal model to suppress Arab nationalism, to create normalization with Israel, and have an obedient client state that will do as it's told, basically be allowed to have a military but serve at the pleasure of the U.S. So I don't think that's out of the realm of possibility. And if Iran does half the job in wrecking the capability of those royal families to maintain total control or their geopolitical position, the United States and Israel can step right in at any point and, you know, provide a, quote, helping hand.

I mean, we're reaching the point where you may very well see many of the things that we saw as regular occurrences during the seventies, and even eighties and thereafter, which is, you know, the assassination of heads of state, major coups, things like this, real regime change. It's happened before. It will happen again. And I would say in the current instability environment in the region, this is one way that the Western powers can still maintain some control over parts of the region without having to physically occupy it. And I think that would be, from a Washington CIA point of view, very practical.

For Israel, it would be ideal. So if they don't play ball, if they don't do exactly as they're told— and so Saudi Arabia dragging its heels on the Abraham Accords, that's an existential threat to the regime, actually, because they, in the U.S., at least in the next two years while Trump is president, they're going to be pushing hard on that, and they have done. And I think that was the leverage they were trying to use when they were pressuring them to engage Ansar Allah, the Houthis, on that issue. They waved the nuclear deal, as we said previously, in front of the Saudis, and then quickly, as Trump usually does, withdrew it quickly with new terms.

No, no, you can have this nuclear enrichment deal, and we'll do it, but you've got to sign the Abraham Accords, you see. Trump loves doing this midstream during negotiations or announcing. So the Saudis are completely on their back heels. You can be sure of that. And I would say even worse, some of the other states, Kuwait, Bahrain. The UAE is a very successful Israeli colonization project. They've done very, very well to basically create what can only be described as East Israel in the United Arab Emirates. They have complete, I think, probably operational control in many ways over that country. But they haven't got that level of penetration in some of the other states. So we'll see.

#Speaker 1

Hmm.

#Danny

Yeah, I mean, yeah, that seems to be what has shaken out when it comes to the UAE. Most definitely, we see that almost every single time there's an escalation. It appears the UAE is the only country that is not concerned enough about the future of their energy assets, as well as whatever else they got going on over there, that they're so willing to openly champion U.S. strikes. I wanted your opinion on this, though, Patrick. Given this Financial Times report that the U.S. has moved a lot of its assets, a lot of its personnel, further and further and further west out of Iranian strike capabilities, I'm wondering if—or maybe actually they haven't moved out of Iranian strike capabilities, but they moved it further away from them.

Does this matter? Because some have said that these bases are kind of sacrificial lambs for the U.S. and Israel anyway. But at the same time, Kuwait and Bahrain served in this last escalation as basically the hub outside of Jordan—Jordan as well. But outside of Jordan, these two countries were the hub for where these strikes were being conducted from, sometimes from launchers like HIMARS directly from Kuwait. So does this matter? And if it does, why?

#Patrick Henningsen

The important one—I mean, the expansion of this to Jordan, the Kingdom of Jordan—I think that's massive, because that's—Jordan is the most important defense array directly for the Israelis in any kind of missile salvo. Very, very important. The other one is Iraq, specifically Iraqi Kurdistan. And the United States and Israel have had unfettered access to Iraqi Kurdistan. The CIA has been able to set up whatever they want to do there. The French, other European NATO countries, are involved as well in subterfuge and, you know, whatever is a staging ground for terrorist attacks in Iran.

And Iran has been very quietly—at least it hasn't gotten the media coverage in the West—but they've been pounding different targets and sites in and around Erbil and the KRG, Iraqi Kurdistan. And that was integral in the previous successes that the U.S. and Israel have had attacking Iran previously. It's very, very important. It's so crucial because it also joins up with the U.S.-occupied Syria as well, the areas that the United States kind of has operational control over in Syria. And that joins up to the Golan Heights via Al-Tanf, Jordan, you see. So they have what you could call David's Corridor, and then beyond Syria, basically a veritable runway for mounting attacks against Iran.

And that's what the—bringing down the Assad government in Syria—that was the main goal of Israel. And it was for a very long time. The Israelis knew if they were to be able to successfully confront Iran, as the Americans with them, a series of dominoes would have to fall first. And one of—the main one—is the collapse of the Assad and the Ba'athist government in Syria. So everybody who

was cheering for Assad must go, even those on the—especially those on the sort of liberal left. They were basically, in the West, even carrying water for Israel. They even co-opted a lot of Palestinians, basically carrying that torch as well for years.

So they're carrying water for Israel. A lot of them are having mea culpa now. They've realized the error in their ways. But you can see, just from a strategic point of view, how obvious that is. So all of these have been being degraded right now. And Iran has been very patient in picking off specifically very strategic—and discriminating regarding the target selection. And they're not doing things just for symbolic effect. It's been very strategic. So what they've been able to achieve is quite remarkable. The Iranians have been able to degrade, firstly, the very broad defense umbrella or envelope that provides strategic depth for the state of Israel.

And that strategic depth is gleaned from the surrounding states all the way up to include Iraq. So by degrading all of these gradually, including all the U.S. bases in the Gulf and making it more difficult to utilize all of these different positions and assets, it makes Israel more defenseless for starters and also then makes it more difficult to mount attacks on Iran. And then Iran's ultimate coup de grâce is the control, or operational control anyway, of the Strait of Hormuz, because their long-term strategy is very clear. They will not want in the future any U.S. destroyers or warships or naval assets transiting through there into the Persian Gulf. Full stop.

Not only that, just the rearmament of all of their bases and resupply of all their bases—not by boat, not coming through the Strait of Hormuz. So that's the reality. And that means, you know, the panic of people like Pete Hegseth that came into office with all of these different assets and all these different positions and resources and capabilities. And here we are, you know, two years coming up into the administration, and he doesn't have anything, not even a fraction of that. They're doing silly things now, the Pentagon. Pete Hegseth's having these sort of public brainwaves where he's saying—he's going to his troops and saying, "Our troops are going to devise creative options to punish Iran. Our troops. We have so much innovation within our troops, our warriors."

We're going to get our warriors to create some creative options for punishing Iran. We're talking about war crimes. But you can read this in just pure desperation. So Donald Trump has no cards. The United States is running out of cards. They can still play this game, as we've seen, playing with the blockade in the Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Sea. They can continue to play this game. They can use Israel and other surrounding bases as staging grounds. They can utilize Djibouti and some other places. They can even mount attacks from Europe, bombing runs. So nothing's going to stop the U. S. from doing any of those things. But they're not going to be able to do the kind of comprehensive or combined operations that they did previously.

It's no longer there. And so they still have leverage over the Iraqis with the U.S. dollar control over their economy, as well as Saudi Arabia and the others. They have all that. But, you know, diminishing returns, massively diminishing returns for the U.S. in terms of the muscle that it's able to flex in the region. Again, it's not going to stop them from airstrikes, various targeted strikes. They

have a lot of standoff opportunities that they can use, but they don't have the mass, and they're not able to sustain it for a long period of time. They won't reach those levels, those pre-February 28th levels, for a very long time. Or I would even say pre-when they launched the war against Yemen.

At that point, the U.S. was probably fully stocked for its levels of how it conducts warfare. But between the long war against Yemen, the January war, Operation Midnight Hammer, and also, you have to remember, they expended a lot of munitions defending Israel while Israel was getting pelted in June of 2025. Operation Midnight Hammer, or whatever, lasted relatively briefly, but the U.S. was fully engaged before that. And also all the True Promise missile attacks on Israel. That massively depleted the U.S. stocks on four occasions. So people don't remember that, but the U.S. military was fully engaged, fully engaged during all those times. It wasn't until they started receiving the blowback from U.S. bases after February 28th that it really became clear.

A real critical problem for the U.S. now, whereby, you know, they just have a small fraction of the military footprint in the region. So this is like a historic loss for the United States militarily, which is an absolutely humiliating historic loss for America. But again, it's not going to stop them from carrying on doing some level of either low-intensity operations punctuated by spurts of aggression, running sort of fake negotiations on and off on the side. U.S., you know, the Middle Corridor—the U.S. will not allow a Russian-Iranian-Indian Middle Corridor. They just won't. This has provided a good excuse for them to disrupt that. Zelenskyy weighed in to play his little role there.

That was kind of a warning shot to the Russians and the Iranians, and more broadly, the Chinese Belt and Road Network. The United States is still committed to derailing and sabotaging, disrupting that in any way they possibly can. And they've been very successful doing that by destroying Chinese investments in Libya. That was one of the byproducts of the war against Libya and the takedown of Gaddafi, is China took a massive loss. China also took a huge loss with the CIA and the Israeli operation to create a civil war in Sudan and partition that country, split it in two, cut off massive Chinese oil investments in the south. Cost China a lot, really disrupted a lot of progress they were making in East Africa.

And we can go on and on. Venezuela, that's also a disruption of—and you could say from an extended way—the Chinese Belt and Road going via the Central and South American routes. So that's a long-term strategy. That's not stopping. That's going to continue. The Greater Israel Project, the U.S. will not get in the way of Israel's ambitions there because it will suit U.S. hegemony. So they've still got irons in the fire on all of these long-term geostrategic priorities that are also outlined in Zbigniew Brzezinski's Grand Chessboard, published in 1997, under the general banner of preventing peer competitors from emerging—potential peer competitors post-Cold War.

And Iran is one of those competitors, as is China, as is Russia, as is whoever else might emerge as either another peer competitor or the ally of the other three. So, you know, there's not going to be an epiphany in America or Washington anytime soon where they're like, "Oh my gosh, the error of our ways. This is not the way to go out as an empire. Let's just do this more gracefully." That's not

going to happen. They might have to cry uncle on attrition. They won't cry uncle publicly, but if it's a war of attrition, Iran is in a much stronger position. Everyone can agree with that.

Just like with Ukraine, Russia is in an incredibly strong position. But Iran still—if they successfully block U.S. military access to the Persian Gulf, that's, I think, a global game changer for geopolitics. Likewise, if Russia—similarly, if Russia is able to successfully blockade Odessa and take Odessa as a new region—that's a game changer, a permanent game changer geopolitically. I would argue that's the end of NATO, really, the southern flank. So there's some similarities in what we're watching unfold here in terms of significance with regards to what Iran's challenges are and Russia's challenges are.

#Danny

Yeah, great points. And then there are other factors as well surrounding the Iran-U.S. situation. And that is also the fact that, as you said earlier in the show, Patrick, this has become very much a regional war, with Saudi Arabia now entangled in what is a counter-siege by Yemen after multiple Saudi—I won't say Israeli, but I guess not too far from the tree there—multiple Saudi escalations against Yemen. And now the report is that, according to Reuters, Saudi tankers appear to be now sailing around the African continent rather quickly, rather than using the Bab el-Mandeb Straits.

So almost like an old history lesson when explorers used to sail around the African continent, but now it's Saudi tankers doing so because they fear Yemen's retaliation. Now, the report also said that some are getting through, but most are not. And so it is perhaps an escalatory measure with the latter itself by Yemen. So what do you make of this? Where does this all fit in? And you said geopolitics are changing. Well, it's not just Iran and the United States, or U.S. and Israel and Iran, that are involved in these changes. It seems like the entire region, and then therefore the world, is being impacted significantly by all this.

#Patrick Henningsen

Well, all these are just little vignettes, and they're just evidence to point in the general direction of what would normally be a disturbing trend, which is that countries with substantial modern economies, like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, will no longer make decisions on what makes economic sense. And they're going to make decisions based on what ultimately they have to conform to what the U.S. wants. Routing shipping around the Cape of Good Hope is not good. It's not sustainable. It adds time. It adds cost onto, you know, it could be sort of a temporary situation. They might view it like that. But wouldn't a more expedient, practical thing to do be to do what they were doing, which is to have an armistice with Ansar Allah? So why can't they? And it just shows you the conundrum that Saudi Arabia specifically is in.

They're not in control. They're not making decisions that look rational. I mean, the alleged attack on Abqaiq, which is very near Bahrain, which they blamed on Iraqi Iranian-backed militias from Iraq,

and then used that for a joint U.S.-Saudi attack on Iraq, Iraqi military, Iraqi DOD facilities, when in fact there's zero evidence that any Iraqi group at all was involved in—if there was an attack on that facility in Saudi Arabia. Some say that Yemen took credit for it. Put that aside for the moment. But the U.S. clearly coordinated ahead of time with Saudi Arabia to attack those targets. That wasn't just a knee-jerk thing. Something's up. You see Saudis doing things, expanding the war on two fronts to their north and their south. How in the world is that in the interest of the Saudi Arabians on any level, economically, militarily?

They got thumped by the Houthis previously, and that meant that they pursued a practical, pragmatic relationship with the Houthis in Yemen since 2023. And they broke that in the last two weeks. Why? And I'm telling you, tremendous pressure is being applied on them. MBS is most likely compromised on some level. Some people are pointing to his relationship with Jeffrey Epstein, which is incredibly close. That might have some play in it. Israel has penetration into the Saudi palace via the Epstein relationships and so forth. But the United States has plenty of leverage over Saudi Arabia. So all these states making decisions—Kuwait, Bahrain—I mean, they must be insane. What are they doing? I mean, just signing on with the Abraham Accords is a bad decision, and some of these countries did.

And now look how this has played out. So when you have all these different countries, dubious regimes as they may be, making decisions based on pressure that's being applied to them by Western powers rather than in their own interests, these are the telltale signs of some major changes that are coming. And this is not good for stability. It's not good for the U.S. Donald Trump definitely doesn't want, on his watch, the history books to have been written that Iran gained full control as a regional superpower over West Asia, that that's on his resume as U.S. president. And so I think they're going to be playing every single potential angle, and it's a fool's errand at the end of the day, for sure. But for the United States, these Gulf states are just collateral damage.

Like I said, they could easily install a military dictatorship in any of these countries. It might take a few months or six months to organize a coup, but it can be done. And they have so much leverage over these countries, you can't believe. They could find a way to sanction them, and then all of a sudden, so they're now stuck. These royal families are stuck having to do exactly as they're told. They have no sovereignty or independence at all. They have to completely operate under the aegis of the United States, under the security umbrella of the U.S., when they're not providing any security for any of these states. And it's now known that they never would.

Even publicly, some U.S. military officials saying that they had to ration their interceptor missiles to protect U.S. lives on bases rather than the host country. So there's no protection at all being offered. It's kind of a joke. So that's not going to change. So the whole protection racket, the U.S. running a protection racket for the Persian Gulf, Iran has torn the mask off of this. It's now been totally exposed. And so that relationship, everyone can see this. This is the relationship. It's predatory. It's

for Israel's defense, first and foremost. And then it's for the United States. So whatever their geopolitical ambitions are in the region, it's for that as well. But it's not to provide any protection for any of these Gulf states. It's painted a massive target on them.

And now look at it. And the United States doesn't care. I mean, Israel and the U.S. together could easily parlay control over one or more of these Gulf states with the help of their allies. And I think that's a genuine option. I think that's probably on the table at some point. How else can they do it? If things keep drifting the way they are, the United States will be evicted from the region. Israel will be left without a sponsor and a protector. And those are just unacceptable outcomes for both Washington and the Israelis. The other option is they're threatening to pull the nuclear card, both of them, or at least you see conversations to that effect, you know, drifting around, which should shock everybody and should be very disturbing for anybody. But it's happening, so that's even an option.

But that's not a final, definitive option either. I mean, what are you going to do? A symbolic nuclear strike against Pickaxe Mountain, and then what? Do you think the Iranians are going to hoist their white flag at that point? No, they're not. In fact, they're going to double up their efforts, and more countries will come to their aid. So that option, while it's quite frightening in itself, it's not going to deliver victory for the U.S. and the Israelis. Quite the opposite. That would really mark the end. I think that would be the epitaph of Israel in the region, for sure, and for the U.S. So while it's frightening and scary, it's also going to be dire consequences if they go down that road.

So as long as this stays in the conventional frame, Iran has, as you've shown with the previous article you put up, they're dug in for a war of attrition, and they have every expectation of winning over time. And I think that's likely. That's probably the likely outcome over time. The question is, what's going to happen in the interim? And what's going to happen to these Gulf states as well? What's going to happen to Egypt? There was a provocation at Damietta with a U.S.-owned LNG conversion facility, floating storage facility, that was hit by what looked like some kind of a drone attack. People were trying to blame Iran or the Houthis. Nobody's taking credit.

The Egyptians are investigating. So now we're very much in false flag territory. And again, these are desperate pangs by, who knows, the Israelis trying to somehow drag Egypt into this, or the United States. So I think a big mistake was made there. That was a fumbled operation. I think the attack on Abqaiq in Saudi Arabia may or may not have been a fumbled operation. But the fact that the U.S. and Saudi attacked Iraq makes it technically a false flag. Even if Yemen takes credit, the U.S. and Saudi used it as a pretext, lied about the nature of the attack, and then used it to attack somebody else. Technically, that's a false flag, or it functions as a false flag. I think similarly with Egypt.

This was, I think, a botched operation. Whoever did it, probably the Israelis more likely. Israel has a very good record of false flags. They are active, and they will deploy them during times of war, for sure. And I think they have already on multiple occasions. And I think that that's also a big—something people need to be concerned about. How far afield would Israel go in launching a false flag in order to try to turn the tables of this conflict? How far would they go—to Europe, to the

United States? You know, how far? What are the limits to Israel's desperation to somehow turn the tide of this awful situation that they have created for themselves and for the United States?

#Danny

Yeah, great points, Patrick. Now, you asked a question on X, and maybe you could answer this question because I'm also curious. You asked why Donald Trump repeatedly lies to the American people and the world about having negotiations with Iran. And even in this big Truth Social post that I shared earlier, he almost admits that, yeah, he is lying because it's not happening. He's very angry that Iran is essentially saying it's not talking to the United States, when he says, no, they begged Iran to come back to the table. But this has happened multiple times now, and I'm curious what your thoughts are on why this continues to be a song and dance that Trump continues to play.

#Patrick Henningsen

Well, there are the markets, you know, and whether he himself is personally financially benefiting from it, that's anyone's argument. But I would say absolutely those in his inner circle, his family, his Wall Street coterie—he's got plenty of Wall Street operatives in his cabinet, from Howard Lutnick to Scott Bessent and many others. And oil moved, what was it, 5% on that announcement, downwards? So if you had advanced knowledge of those announcements, it could have made quite a lot of money. Institutionally, I'm not talking about individual traders, but institutions can make a substantial amount of money. So there are other markets, and that's been proven. It's criminal, but it's crass and it's unforgivable that you would create geopolitical situations that are so incendiary in order to reap short-term profits. So there's that, and I think that's just a habitual—if they have done that regularly over the last year and a half.

#Patrick Henningsen

Then that's a formula that they know. It might not even be the president, but he could easily be—he seems to be kind of out of it mentally a lot. So he could absolutely be being played like a fiddle by some of his cabinet and people around him, whereby they could just play him and keep milking these cycles and these repeated patterns and situations. And for a period of time, they'd probably say, "Well, we're locked in for the midterms, so let's make a few billion before November." I mean, that can be done quietly. He doesn't even need to know about it. But how much of Jared Kushner's input are we seeing here? Or the Witkoff and Sons. So you've got Trump and Sons, son-in-law, and then you've got Witkoff and Sons.

They're all very much involved and invested in things related to foreign policy decisions with this administration. So there's that. Then there's just the general erraticism and his—I don't know. Confabulation is a word, I think. I heard Robert Barnes trying to explain on another program how the mind of Trump works, albeit dysfunctional, and the word confabulation came to mind. I mean, but there's definitely a team there. And when they post something, someone's drafting this post. It's

being approved or decided, and then it's been made public, and they have certain outcomes that are attached to those, or certain reactions. So, you know, I don't know. He's so many times been caught lying, and fake announcements, either fake threats of annihilation that he's walked back or fake deals that didn't exist.

You know, saying, "Oh, the Iranians are begging." I think his last one you showed me at the beginning of the program, Danny: "They're begging. They're begging for a deal." He said that previously as well. "Everyone's coming to me. They're coming to me asking to hold off on the attacks. The Iranians have said, 'Please, please don't attack.'" That's a narrative I think Trump's very comfortable with. He's constructed this fake image with the U.S., with the MAGA crowd, which is completely fake, that he's in charge, that he's the boss, that he is the grand poobah, and all decisions and deals go through him. He's the CEO of the world. That's the image he likes to project out there, and nothing can be further from the truth.

And most countries and world leaders are laughing at this president, laughing at this administration, and kind of laughing in disgust at the United States as a country right now. And that's the actual reality here. I mean, we're going to—I hope we survive this, Danny, you know, as a country and a human race. We're going to look back at this, and people are going to be saying, "What on earth?" I mean, his website, Truth Details, the fact that they named it Truth Social, is such a joke. You know, it's like, it's the apex of oxymoronic branding, you know? But it's—anyway, I mean, he is using names of countries and things, so he's engaged in geography, which is good, or whoever's writing these tweets.

#Danny

Although they put Oman in quotes. What's that?

#Patrick Henningsen

Why is Oman in quotes?

#Danny

You would think Trump would be a little nicer, and his team would be a little nicer to Oman.

#Patrick Henningsen

Oman, because he doesn't recognize it as a country. Is that why he's saying "Oman"?

#Danny

Which would be, I don't know, I would think, a strategic blunder because they kind of need Oman to play ball.

#Patrick Henningsen

That would be a target for regime change with this administration, because they've always maintained a neutral status. They don't have a massive military or defense, so they're relatively exposed to a stronger power. I would not rule that out, actually, in terms of a coup or a forced regime change. Don't rule that out with this president, this rogue administration we've got in Washington, that they would make a play for Oman, or occupy, or just invite themselves into the Omani side of the Strait of Hormuz and use that as a staging ground. Not that that's going to be any better than any of their other bases, but it would force Iran to fire missiles at Oman, basically. But that would be an absolute mess, wouldn't it?

But hey, they're running out of options. But you're reading this: "Iran will never have a nuclear weapon." There's that straw man argument again. "We're preventing Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon." So they're still having to deploy all of these sort of straw man arguments, these fake arguments, to justify all of the war crimes that the U.S. has committed over the last couple of years here with Iran, to prevent them from having a nuke. They didn't have a nuke. They weren't pursuing a nuke. So, you know, this is just getting old already. But anyway, it's all there. So it's just massive desperation here.

#Danny

They'll never control the Strait of Iran. We'll never control the Strait of Hormuz. Well, they weren't necessarily controlling the Strait before the war, were they? Yeah, we're controlling it.

#Patrick Henningsen

We're going to control it. We're going to charge. Two weeks ago, he was wanting to put a 20% levy on all economic activity coming in and out of the Strait of Hormuz, after Marco Rubio was lecturing the world at how, how, how terrible it is from an international law point of view to have anybody charging for any waterways besides, you know, the Egyptians, the Turks, and everybody else. But anyway.

#Danny

Well, we have one question from the audience from Power of Spirit 100. They asked, "Patrick, what's your opinion about the Pakistanis?" Let's maybe say the Pakistani government here, probably more likely. I don't trust them at all, this military junta. So what's your thoughts? I mean, they're playing the mediator role, but of course, it's a very complicated situation. What's your thoughts on that, Patrick?

#Patrick Henningsen

I think the Pakistanis—I think they've been constructive, and they appear to, in good faith, have tried to play a positive role as mediators and in hosting negotiations. That's a big responsibility. They've done that. That's great. We can give them a lot of plaudits. I like Pakistani people in general. They're amazing. Do I trust the government and think that they're always playing above board? I don't think so. The U.S. exerts a lot of pressure and leverage over this government in Pakistan. So while they're able to be somewhat independent on a certain level, they also will succumb to U.S. pressure.

I mean, it was only a couple of weeks ago that they were, you know, dangling a begging bowl with Washington, asking for a currency bailout stabilization package of 20 billion for the Pakistani rupee. I mean, what's that amidst all this? I mean, that's—so when you see those sort of situations, and then, of course, the United States giving the order for them to arrest and imprison their leader, Prime Minister Imran Khan, that's also coming from the U.S. as well. So how much—I think that more the person's question is: how much faith can we put in Pakistan that they're going to kind of be a real bona fide leader and a force for good in the region and within the situation here.

And I would say I'm not going to put a lot in it. I'm very encouraged that they've stepped up, but they could also be, with the right amount of pressure from the U.S., they could also be a disruptive force as well. They could drop the ball and do something catastrophic in these negotiations if something's not communicated correctly, et cetera. U.S. intelligence intervenes in the right place, with the right distortion or blocking a certain message or communicating a key point. So how much do we trust them? How independent are they? They are a military dictatorship at the end of the day. I mean, that could be not an issue, or it might be an issue. So I don't know.

I'm not—I've got mixed feelings about Pakistan for different reasons. So, but I'm going to welcome any positive overtures. They have a good relationship generally with the Iranians. They are very close. They do a lot of diplomatic and consular partnerships around the world, and they are natural allies, natural trading partners. So one hopes that that's going to be the guiding, you know, principle with Pakistan's involvement for any of this. But unfortunately, you know, they're in trouble financially, Pakistan. They've got their problems. And, you know, the United States is always there waving those dollars. You know, they can just spin up another \$20 billion from the Federal Reserve, send it over there with interest.

#Danny

Yeah, and we also know that the United States really wants to break that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor that is so massive now. Last question, maybe in two minutes or less, Patrick. Is Turkmenistan a U.S. proxy? Is there any possibility the U.S. could attack Iran from Turkmen territory? Don't cover this much.

#Patrick Henningsen

That's an interesting question. I mean, you have to remember the riots in Iran, the cells that were set up inside Iran and also where they were making drones, and a lot of this was Afghan refugees. People don't realize Iran was one of the biggest—they took in the most amount of Afghan refugees probably of any country. That's their neighbor, Afghanistan. And the U.S. and Israel exploited that, used it to attack Iran from inside. And so Turkmenistan is also bordering Iran. I don't know very much about the history between those two countries, but I will say that, you know, CIS countries, former Soviet countries in this sort of area—you know, one would say Tajikistan is an example—they might be more, possibly more, under the influence of Moscow and Washington, one might say.

So that's something to consider for the former Soviet sphere. That's something to consider there. But could the U.S.—and have they used Turkmenistan as a staging ground for other operations? They have, actually. They've also cooperated with Russia in the past on certain operations. It might have been anti-terror operations. So Turkmenistan has been in the frame previously. It's a massive country, very hostile terrain as well. But, you know, you can hide a lot in a country like that. So I don't know. I don't know enough about it. I'll have to study it. But it could be an interesting question.

#Danny

Could be. Well, on that note, Patrick, I think that's a great place to stop here today. Everybody, be sure to hit the like button. You can go to the video description and find both Patrick's Substack as well as 21st Century Wire YouTube, where he does a lot of great work, including the Sunday Wire, which everyone should tune into every Sunday. Yeah, hit the like button. Tomorrow I'm on—what is tomorrow, Tuesday? Tomorrow I am back on live with Sharmi Narwani. That's 1 p.m. Eastern time. Patrick, anything you want to say before we close up here?

#Patrick Henningsen

No, no. I think we covered a lot of very interesting subjects. I look forward to your conversation with Sharmine. She's fantastic, the editor-in-chief of The Cradle, great media outlet. So I'll definitely tune into that and see what she has to say about all of this. So, yeah. But very interesting developments this week. We can only hope for the best, pray for the best, prepare for the worst. That's the situation that Iran certainly is in. So we're sort of in the same boat out here in punditry land watching.

#Danny

Exactly. Yes, everyone, hit the like button before you go. In the video description, as I said before, Patrick's work, 21st Century Wire, and his Substack, where you can support him. And be sure to like and subscribe to the YouTube channel there. In the video description, all the places to support this channel are there as well: Patreon, Substack, and much more. Actually, I think I got the time wrong

tomorrow, August 4th. I think it's 12 p.m. Eastern time because she will be hailing from Lebanon. So, 12 p.m. Eastern time, a bit of an earlier show. But be sure to check us out August 4th. All right, everybody, hit the like button before you go, and I'll see you tomorrow. Bye-bye.