

BONUS TAKE: Iran EMBARRASSES US Navy in Strait of Hormuz, Russia & China Step In

In this Bonus-take, Danny Haiphong exposes the lies behind CENTCOM's assertion that it controls the Strait of Hormuz and why Trump is unwilling to confront Russia or China in intensified economic war on Iran. Thank you to the membership community for supporting this channel!

#Danny

Welcome back to a bonus take. Danny Haiphong here. And we are going to break down the reality versus the myths when it comes to the Strait of Hormuz. What is actually going on? Because Admiral Bradley Cooper, the head of CENTCOM, the U.S. Central Command, just came out and said that the Strait is completely open. It has been demined. The U.S. military and the U.S. Navy have done incredible work to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. And now everything is good and everything is fine. Well, is it? What is the truth here? Let's get into first what CENTCOM had to say and how he framed it, because I think it really is instructive on how this is far more PR than it is reality. Here we go.

#Brad Cooper

Hi, I'm Admiral Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Central Command, here with an operational update on two ongoing missions in the Middle East. Many of our 50,000 U.S. troops operating across the region are doing outstanding work executing the naval blockade against Iran while maintaining commercial traffic flow through the Strait of Hormuz. As recently announced, the U.S. military has achieved a major milestone in the Strait of Hormuz. We have successfully cleared sea mines in the strait's international shipping lanes that were laid months ago by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

#Danny

We don't actually know if there were mines in the Strait. There's a heavy indication that there might be. But up until this day, everybody, Iran has been hitting cargo ships and other vessels in the Strait of Hormuz all the way throughout the period since it has closed the Strait. And we have not really gotten any indication that mines have been what these ships have been tripping over and detonating and then getting damage caused to them. So again, so even the very premise is questionable, given that Iran has capabilities to stop shipping without the use of mines. But here we go.

#Brad Cooper

Internationally recognized transit routes in the Strait are free of Iranian mines.

#Danny

Oh, I forgot to say that the Strait was open before the war. So the United States started the war of aggression with Israel and now bore the consequences of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. And now this is being framed as a major victory, that it's reopened. But as you'll see, it's not actually reopened. Here we go.

#Brad Cooper

Sea mines, thanks to the incredible work of the U.S. military. Let's take a look at exactly what this means. Here's a nautical chart of the Strait of Hormuz and surrounding seas. It's frequently used by mariners around the world and clearly identifies the internationally recognized traffic separation scheme, which you see labeled on the chart as TSS. A traffic separation scheme is a highway system for ships on the ocean. Here on the chart, a dividing line is shown and placed between lanes with opposing traffic directions to keep ships safely apart in the narrow waterway. These are the long-standing lanes international shipping has historically used to transit the Strait of Hormuz. And over the past few months, our forces meticulously and quietly cleared them of sea mine threats using a combination of Navy divers, Navy SEALs, and U.S. air power from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

#Danny

This is key, everybody, because this is supposedly the proof that it happened. And we heard from Axios weeks ago that there was an operation, a stealth operation to move ships through the Strait. Now we're being told by CENTCOM that they've been working directly in the Strait of Hormuz, probably in what some have told me, as I've been asking the question, how did this happen? Well, they're saying, well, maybe off the coast of UAE, maybe off of Manama at the Fifth Fleet. Well, the Fifth Fleet has been completely obliterated. But I guess they could be sleeping on the rubble there while they're conducting this operation in the UAE. Of course, we'd be playing with fire if they did this. But this is the proof that CENTCOM offers of the fact that the Strait of Hormuz is open. And you saw that they gave those routes that ships are supposed to take, right? And I'm going to show you right now, actually.

Let me share that. Here you have the Strait of Hormuz monitor. So this is one of the many tools you can use to monitor activity in the Strait of Hormuz. 181 days-plus into this war, and the monitor of the Strait of Hormuz is independent. It's not government-funded or anything. It says it's closed. And now there's only one ship in transit, with 185 vessels waiting. And here you can see the route completely empty, basically, right? There's no ships coming outbound or inbound. That means the Strait is closed. Okay, so you're going to see the numbers that they have, which completely

contradicts what CENTCOM has, which completely contradicts this basic fact that there are no ships going through. And the one ship, the three ships that might come out daily out of the Strait, are likely from the Iranian corridor, right? The Iranian-controlled corridor. So let's get back to the video.

#Brad Cooper

The circumstances were challenging and dangerous, to say the least, but we got the job done. Bottom line: today, international shipping lanes are open, and momentum is building. Over the past several months—lies, complete lies—but let's continue. U.S. forces have assisted nearly 1,500 commercial vessels in transiting the Strait by providing coordinated protection. Those ships were carrying nearly 750 million barrels of crude oil destined for global energy markets, which is a massive volume. And while American forces have supported 750 million barrels of crude oil leaving the Gulf, Iran has exported zero oil from its shores since we resumed the naval blockade in mid-July.

#Danny

That's all I wanted to show you in this video because that gives you all you need to know about what CENTCOM is saying about this. But again, back to this tracker. There's one ship right now in transit, likely from the Iranian corridor. The news is coming out of Oman that the deal between Iran and Oman actually excludes the southern corridor that Oman was supposedly allowing the United States to use to push some of these vessels through. So that's closed as well. But this claim that Iran also isn't shipping any oil out of the strait, or the fact that Iran isn't able to export any oil at all, is a lie. Or at least this is a lie, according to Iranian sources.

And this is the top security official in Iran, Mohsen Rezaei, who is the Supreme National Security Council head. He said that they have broken through the naval blockade throughout this period of the ceasefire, the MOU period. Actually, this probably dates all the way back to the April ceasefire. Seventy to eighty million barrels of oil, according to a statement that was carried on by the president. So, and here's another tool to understand what the situation of the Strait of Hormuz is like. This one's a little bit harder to read for those who aren't familiar with, you know, with shipping and how to understand it, because I'm not one of those people either. But look, this is the Strait. Okay, look at both sides of the Strait. Huge clusters of ships.

Now, not all of these are necessarily cargo ships, or at least cargo ships that are meant to go through the Strait of Hormuz. But you do see this corresponds with the Hormuz Monitor of 180-plus ships outside of the Strait, not going through, inbound or outbound, waiting, and zero essentially coming out. And here's the one likely in transit. That might be the one. I don't know. But nevertheless, this is an empty ship. If this were not empty, if it was not controlled by Iran still, it would look more like this from the Hormuz Monitor, but there would be ships moving along the highway, as CENTCOM was trying to explain to us, with absolutely no proof that there is any activity actually happening through the Strait of Hormuz.

So, again, this is trust-me-bro reporting coming from the vaunted U.S. military. Well, the mainstream media throughout this Iran war period has played, of course, a dubious role and a duplicitous role. It has justified the war in Iran throughout. It has given cover to Israel and U.S. war crimes, of course. But it's also gotten fed up with this war in large part because the war has had devastating consequences to U.S. prestige, U.S. power, U.S. hegemony, and its overall position in the world.

So Trump has promised a short war, promised us a short war, says the Washington Post. Six months later, he has few good options. And I'm pulling up this article because I want to go to the Strait of Hormuz commentary, okay? Because they quote Trump. Trump, who said, "Iran is right now, they're not paying their troops, they're in deep trouble," right? And he said they have very little capacity. He said, "Last night we took 24 boats to the strait. We're taking them through all the time. It doesn't mean we're finished with the military, but we are. The strait is open." What does that mean, right? But this is what the Washington Post goes on to say. More than 100 ships traversed the Strait of Hormuz on average a day before the war.

Just five went through on one day this week, according to Kpler, a commodities and shipping tracker. U.S. officials say the true number is higher because some ships have been turning off their transponders to avoid getting hit by Iran, but oil supplies have remained tight and prices well above the pre-Iran-war levels. So, they're even mentioning in the Washington Post that shipping vessels that are publicly able to be tracked are incredibly low, which means that this is a lie. CENTCOM is lying to us. But you can even just go on AI, go to Google, especially Google AI, and type in, you know, "Is Iran completely blind?" Because that's what the Trump administration is claiming. And you will find that it will tell you, no, it's not.

They will repeat, as AI often does, talking points from the United States, Washington, and CENTCOM, saying, "Oh, well, their radars are diminished." But they will also admit that it's not completely blind, because in the last 48 hours alone, there have been multiple tankers hit. Not today, as of the recording of this video, but two days prior, there were tankers hit by Iran. So obviously they know that these tankers are going through and have other ways to track vessels beyond just the AIS tracking systems. The going dark cannot protect these vessels alone. And the fact that there are so many waiting indicates that, yes, there is a lot of reason to believe that Iran, these ships, and the insurance companies that pay for their transit, that subsidize their transit, they aren't willing to bear the cost of what Iran is still capable of doing.

So the Strait of Hormuz is closed. Actually, this is the reality. And the myth is that CENTCOM is promoting a narrative that it's completely open, that the U.S. military, its Navy SEALs, and its incredible operations across this whole war reopened it, when the fact is, is that it was open before the war, and it was the war that closed it. And ever since then, 180-plus days, the United States has been the key reason why this key waterway is choked up and why there is a massive economic crisis already underway, both in the United States and around the world. So D-Day is also going badly,

everybody. So right now, the United States has been unwilling to sanction Chinese and Russian banks and institutions that do business with Iran. And I'm going to play a little clip of Trump admitting this and justifying it.

But they are now going after smaller fish. Here you have the U.S. moving against an Egyptian bank in the UAE over Iran ties. It says here the Treasury Department is moving to sever an Egyptian bank's UAE branches from the U.S. financial system as part of efforts to pressure Iran to end the war in the Middle East, which is a U.S. war. But you got to pressure Iran to end the war, I guess, right? Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network proposed a measure revoking Banque Misr's UAE correspondent banking access to U.S. financial institutions, according to a statement on the Treasury's website on Friday morning, August 28th. Banque Misr is Egypt's second-largest bank.

The move comes after Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent made a major announcement against a financial institution this week as part of efforts to pressure Iran, with the already six-month-long conflict with the Islamic Republic dragging on with no end in sight. After Bessent's announcement on Monday, markets and foreign governments are waiting to see if the U.S. would sanction a Chinese bank, since China buys more than 90% of Iran's oil and has put out defiant statements in the wake of a new U.S. sanctions push. While Treasury called Banque Misr a key financial lifeline for the regime because it allegedly processed around \$1.8 billion for 103 companies that could potentially be part of Iran's shadow banking network, the move struck some analysts as underwhelming.

The sum of \$1.8 billion over two years in suspected illicit activity is a rounding error compared to the transactions handled by Chinese banks for the benefit of Iran, said a former U.S. sanctions official and founder of Capital Peak Strategy, likely a venture capital fund. So look, the United States has essentially backed off, tacoed, right? It's tacoed away from China and Russia in large part because it would be heavily embarrassing for the United States to be rejected openly and directly, right? It's one thing to threaten and then China say, "We are against sanctions," and Russia to say, "Well, we're not going to follow sanctions." It's another thing to target China and Russia directly in their institutions and then they don't listen anyway.

And then you have to punish Russia and China. And how is the United States really going to do that? They've already tried the Ukraine conflict against Russia, and tens of thousands of sanctions against Russia. They've already tried military encirclement against China, tech sanctions against China, tariffs against China. I mean, we can go on and on and on. Political propaganda across the spectrum against both countries, trying to diplomatically isolate them, to turn them into international pariahs. And what has it done? It's only strengthened their prestige around the world. And now both countries sit atop a multipolar world that is actually gaining in strength because of policies such as this. So this is a huge loss for the United States again.

So the United States has lost the Strait of Hormuz. They've become the problem for the global economy, as the U.S. empire has always been. The U.S. empire is a facilitator of global economic crises. Look at the 1990s, the Asian financial crisis that was facilitated in large part by Soros and the

United States. Look at the 2008 economic crisis. Again, a U.S. global economic crisis that impoverished millions upon millions of people. And then we can go on and on on the 2020 COVID crisis. Every economic crisis is really a function of the U.S. financialized economic system and the empire that undergirds it. So let's look at what Trump had to say about this, because he's been questioned about this over and over and over again. Here's what he said.

#Donald Trump

You have to understand, for everything they do, we do also. You know, somebody was saying about China, "What about China? We hear they're spying." We're spying on them too. That's the way it goes.

#Speaker 1

Why not sanction Chinese banks, though, who are doing business?

#Donald Trump

Well, who said I'm not? You said, why not? I mean, who said I'm not? You don't know what I'm doing. Well, I don't have to announce everything, do I?

#Speaker 1

No.

#Danny

I don't have to announce everything, do I? That's Trump's response to this. Not a very powerful-looking response, but that is his response. I don't have to announce it. So that basically claims that he is doing this in the shadows. A shadow sanctions regime, anybody? I mean, it's a joke because China is the most important economy in the world. Do you think China wouldn't know that it's being sanctioned by the United States in this way? That their banks wouldn't know this? And if they knew this, that they wouldn't publicize it, that they would keep it secret themselves. Well, maybe they could keep it secret because they don't really care and they could find other ways to subsidize.

I had Professor Richard Wolff, economist Richard Wolff, on the show. He said, you know, banks can just create another institution outside of the system, connect them to their bank, and then funnel the transactions that way, and then have that bank conduct the transactions and funnel the capital, the money, back into the original bank. So there are many ways to get around this. But nevertheless, China is a strong opponent of economic sanctions for years upon years and years. Why would they keep this secret? It's obvious that he's lying. There's no, again, another lie. The United States is not sanctioning Chinese banks, and it's not going after Russia or Iran.

So embarrassing this has been for the United States that they sent the CIA director to Moscow, and all of the media reports—just go look at them. Type in CIA Ratcliffe, Russia, CIA Ratcliffe, Moscow. Every single report, from Politico to CNN to The New York Times, they all say the same thing. They say that the United States has sent their CIA director to Russia to warn Russia about its ties to Iran and its capacity to escalate against Ukraine and NATO. So basically, CIA Ratcliffe is said to have sent a stern message to Russia and Putin: Don't attack NATO. Don't attack Ukraine harder. And don't trade with Iran, or else. And what happened? Well, CIA Ratcliffe left, and Russia hasn't changed a single thing about its policy.

So that makes me think—I've had many analysts on the show to talk about this—that, one, he didn't say those things at all, or two, he was told to pound sand. And either way, the outcome is the same. But in my estimation, why CIA Ratcliffe was there—I believe Larry Johnson far more than anybody else—was that he was actually there to talk about what bodies of the CIA have been slain by Russian forces in the Ukraine conflict, because the CIA has been embedded in Ukrainian forces for the duration of this war. And Russia has absolutely stepped up its attacks, not only on the front line, but also in Kiev and surrounding areas that are bases for mercenaries, foreign mercenaries, as well as likely CIA operatives.

So that is my—I would agree more so with that than anything else that anyone has said on my program. But I would also say that it is highly likely. I believe the CIA to be nefarious. I believe the CIA to have absolutely, you know, gruesome and vile aims against Russia and against any other country that it views as an adversary, that it literally organizes all of its operations around. And so I wouldn't be surprised if CIA Ratcliffe was using this opportunity also to scan the field, so to speak, to have—right? Because I don't believe the U.S. follows any diplomatic protocol. Sure, they would play, manipulate. They would say, "Yeah, we'll come."

This is what exactly we're going to bring and talk to you about, right? Maybe the dead bodies, maybe sharing intelligence around something, maybe some kind of arrangements where we get something, you get something—whatever would be attractive to Russia at this time, which is likely very little. But maybe Russia will entertain a conversation if it's going to get benefits out of it and not suffer any losses from it, right? Why not? But there's a whole theory. If you've ever traveled anywhere with people from the United States in general, but elite people who, let's say, make their whole living off of destruction and exploitation of people—people around the world, of just people who are considered lesser than, poorer than.

Well, there are a lot of Americans like that. I say a lot in the sense that it's a relative term. So, a lot in terms of number. There's a good number of people like that, especially sitting at this level of society. And I 100% believe that they would break diplomatic protocol and that they would act the fool, so to speak. So I wouldn't be surprised, actually, if Ratcliffe did go off script and say these things, right, like in private, and then leak it to the media that that's what was said, or even if he didn't say it, to claim that it was said, to look strong and tough and powerful. Again, the outcome is the same because Russia, no matter what we say, would say, "Get the hell out of my face."

Or you're just making it up, and it's not Russia's problem anymore anyway, right? So all this is to say, everybody, is that it was an embarrassing and humiliating moment. I don't think this was a moment of intimidation, of power tripping, or anything like this. I think it was another humiliation for the U.S. empire under Trump 2.0, where—and this is my final take here—I will say is that I don't think Trump is really special in many ways. What's special about Trump is that he entered a historic moment as who he is, with the people backing him and the class forces backing him, right?

Certain elements of the establishment and those who are looking to ride a gift wave of, you know, to build up their own careers and their, you know, bank accounts and their net worths and all of this. So they're riding his wave, and he is who he is. But he's also coming into the presidency for the second time in a certain historical context where the U.S. empire is in a graver crisis than it was when he first was president. So this presidency, as you may have noticed, looks a lot more shaky, a lot more rocky. And that's because, well, the U.S. empire is a lot more shaky and a lot more rocky.

It doesn't have as firm of a base to stand on. As much as Trump hates—hates Obama in the sense that he criticizes him, condemns him, says he's the worst president ever—he has this chart of all the presidents that have ever come before him. Trump's at the top. Obama's at the bottom with all these others. And as much as Trump doesn't like Obama, Obama made Trump. If it wasn't for Obama's stealth and very effective empire-building and imperialism, right? I guess we can say the effective empire-building and more like chaos for the empire's aims, the effectiveness with which Obama did that—Libya, Syria, the economic crisis, bailing out, pushing people away from actually blaming the United States political class under Obama for these ills, but instead, you know, kind of whistling past them.

It was that malaise and that contrast, that dynamic, that set of reality, that set of conditions and reality that led to Trump, that allowed Trump to come in, because there was a huge discontent. By 2016, you had people living worse in the United States and all around the world, and you had wars everywhere, even more ferocious and devastating. And you had a completely unstable economy, and you had this massive pivot to Eurasia against Russia and China, which was also causing a lot of instability too. So you had a shift away from U.S. empire claiming itself to be on top always with absolutely zero problems.

And suddenly you have Trump coming in the first time, where there's a myriad of issues that people for eight years were whistling past. Of course, you had Republican opposition and people who hated Obama for all the misleading reasons. And then you had a lot of people whistling past what he was really doing, and the bipartisan consensus on war and literal theft, austerity. And so those conditions led to Trump. They led to Trump and Bernie Sanders, but it led to Trump. And so that's what we got, everybody. We got Trump the first time. But now we're here 10 years later, a decade later, more, and look where we are. So the chaos runs absolutely parallel to the behavior of Donald Trump. They go together.

They correlate perfectly. And why? Because that synergy is a byproduct of the U.S. empire cracking, the U.S. empire in desperation, the oligarchs that run it looking to make as much short-term profit and to gain as many short-term tactical victories toward those ends, those ends of profit and hegemony, while whistling past the graveyard that is the empire. So that's my bonus take, everybody. That's how I feel about the Strait of Hormuz, the state of the U.S. empire, as we move forward in Operation D-Day, the cessation of active hostilities, yet we are still very much at war. All right, everybody. Thanks so much for listening to this bonus take. And until next time, see you for the next one.