

Prof Pape: Iran AMBUSHES US Bases! Why America Has NO WAY OUT

Professor Robert Pape joins to discuss Trump's nightmare scenario unfolding as the Iran War escalation trap squeezes US hegemony to the breaking point. Iran has just launched a devastating preemptive strike and the trap isn't just set, it's igniting a global fire storm unseen in the history of geopolitics. <https://escalationtrap.substack.com/> Prof. Pape's Substack. 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/spiritofho> #iran #iranwar #robertpape

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. As you can see, I am joined by special guest Professor Robert Pape.

#Danny

But we're going to get right to the latest developments, Professor Pape, and that is overnight, Iran essentially ambushed U.S. bases. It seems that the United States is not going to respond to these strikes that happened overnight. Iran fired on U.S. bases in Kuwait and the UAE with multiple missiles and drones, and there's been zero response from the Trump administration. What was targeted were satellite communication systems in Kuwait, as well as radar systems and deployment areas of U.S. troops at Al Minhad base in the UAE. And then there's some satellite imagery that's come out from September 1st strikes on Jordan. Now, here is a Fox News report on Trump's response in particular. And then we can get into exactly how this fits into the escalation trap here. Here's Trey Yingst, Fox News. I guess we can call him a reporter based in Tel Aviv.

#Trey Yingst

We know the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry called this a violation of the country's sovereignty. The event came after President Trump indicated on Wednesday the United States is prepared to strike Iran again when needed.

#Donald Trump

We took out all of the new equipment that they tried to build along the Strait of Hormuz, some defensive, some offensive. We've taken out a lot of ships. They can't see it because they have no radar, because we blew it up. And we blew up much more than their radar last night. It was a very heavy attack last night, and we're prepared to do another one any time we want.

#Danny

Anytime we want, Professor Pape. But unfortunately, that time doesn't seem like it's now. And Iran has gone on the offensive here. What do you make of this? Now there's reports that Trump is trying to end the Iran war, but at the same time, they're extending the deployment, the Pentagon is, of the 50,000 troops.

#Robert Pape

That's just the day after a strike. Yeah, exactly. And then we'll start it again. So we are in the thick of the escalation trap. You can even think of it as the middle innings of the escalation trap. This is not the ninth inning. It's not the first inning. And what you are seeing is the spiral phase of the escalation trap, where there will be pauses, surprise pauses. There will be surprise attacks. They will occur by both parties, both pauses and attacks. But also what you're seeing is, in this middle set of innings of the escalation trap, Iran is taking the initiative and more and more has the upper hand.

It's gaining more and more power, and it's gaining more and more, essentially, control over President Trump because it's putting him in a no-win situation, where if he strikes, Iran will double up. If he doesn't strike, Iran is still going to gain power. Now, to explain where we are in the escalation trap, let me just start by explaining the basic idea, which is: the escalation trap. The basic idea is the attacker, in this case the United States and Israel, attacks a target country, and it's tactically successful because the bombs hit targets and the bombs, in this case, kill leaders. What happens, though, in an escalation trap is the attacker gets strategically weaker. And in this case, that happened almost right away. Within days, Iran gained control of the Strait of Hormuz.

And what I mean by gain control is selective control, where it was able, through drones, also sometimes missiles, but mostly drones, and a few missiles and mines, in order to selectively control who goes out, passes through the Strait of Hormuz, which essentially is no one except Iran's own oil and then who Iran deems is friendly to Iran. And so that's the core of the escalation trap. And we've been in this trap for six months. And it's a trap. It's not just an escalation ladder, because once stage two happens, where the target gains power, now the assailant is in a really wicked problem because the assailant faces a choice. It can either accept the target state's greater power, which is a major embarrassment, or it can move forward.

#Danny

Oh, continue, continue. Yeah. No, I'm pulling this up as evidence of everything that you're saying. Oh, perfect.

#Robert Pape

I didn't understand. No, that's absolutely perfect. And so it can move. The United States can move forward to escalate more. And these are the horns of the dilemma, and what I call stage three that we're in now. And so Iran is in the catbird seat. They understand this very clearly. I do believe President Trump understands it as well. But the problem here is it's a true trap. So there is no off-ramp here. People have been looking for all these off-ramps, and what you are seeing is that for six months, there have been efforts to find off-ramps to the trap, the escalation trap. And it's like a vice grip. It won't let go. And part of the reason it's such a trap is Iran won't let Trump out.

Iran is not looking for peace. It's not looking to give Trump a face-saving fig leaf so that he can go about his merry business and we're back to square one, the pre-war status quo. Iran's not interested in that at all. And that's why what's happened starting in the middle of July is Iran has shifted from a strategy where they would retaliate for what the United States has done to where they go on the offensive very often. And when they are retaliating, they're doubling down. They're tripling down. They're not just simply playing tit for tat. So this description that you often see in the media now that we're in a stalemate, it's tit for tat.

That's not the situation. The situation is Iran has the initiative, and it's gaining power. Now, let me just say one word about the gaining power part. When you say, "Well, how is it gaining power? It already has four moves, right?" Well, the power element you can see right outside my door in Chicago with the rising price of gas. So since the middle of July, since this new policy has essentially taken hold by Iran, the price of gas has been shooting up because the price of oil is shooting up. Notice, for the first three, four months of the war, even though the war was going on, the oil prices were muted, and so too were gas prices, relatively muted.

There were a few spikes, but relatively muted. Part of the reason for that was because Trump was able to talk down the price. There were oil reserves that we could put on the oil market. Different reasons for that. Those have changed. Starting around mid-July, this is the point where the tension in the supply and demand of the oil market is just getting tighter and tighter. And what Iran is doing is, it's not just initiating violence. It is targeting the UAE oil tankers that are coming out through Hormuz, and it's also targeting Saudi tankers through its ally, the Houthis. And what that's doing is the big squeeze.

It's incrementally squeezing so that there's less and less oil, not necessarily every day, but over time, coming out of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf in general. And what that's doing is it's causing the price to go on a steady curve up. It's a steady incremental curve up over the last six weeks now. So it's really quite some time. And that's why the gas prices are incrementally going up in the United

States. And this is why Iran's gaining power. So Iran isn't just playing tit for tat. It's rising in power, and as it rises in power, part of that is influencing across the globe. It has global reach. The evidence? American gas prices. Iran is the number one factor driving up American gas prices.

#Danny

And, Professor Pape, why is it that the United States really has no way out of this escalation trap? Of course, Iran is having a hard time trusting the United States in terms of coming to any kind of peace, because I just read the reports: Trump wants the war to end, but Trump wants, in November, to go full scale with the war. The reports are always contradictory. And, of course, U.S. actions have not led to any notion of peace. Yeah, there's a real puzzle there.

#Robert Pape

There's a real puzzle for many people around the world, which is, well, if President Trump and Netanyahu started this, if Trump and Netanyahu stop it, doesn't that mean the war is over? Because after all, they were the initial catalysts that started it. And that is a very understandable way to think about international politics, but it's not the right way. It's a smart person's mistake, because once President Trump did this, then it takes two to stop this, at a minimum two. It takes Trump and Iran. It also takes Netanyahu, but let's just leave Israel out for the moment. And so what you are seeing is Iran, having watched this movie before, so call it a year ago—it's about 14 months ago—Trump and Netanyahu again blindsided Iran and launched a surprise 12-day war against Iran, this time attacking its nuclear sites.

Well, this is now the second time. So Iran is not interested here in just getting a ceasefire, because the last time it got a ceasefire, that didn't help Iran. The other side, U.S. and Israel, just came right back a year later. So the world might like this to stop, but the problem for Iran is that it now sees it needs more power. It needs more power not just to produce a ceasefire, but to deter the United States and Israel from attacking it in the future. Now, the United States and Israel, even though they've come down a few pegs in the last six months, they are still very strong states. These are not—they haven't become pipsqueak states. So if Iran is truly going to have major deterrent power, it's gonna need a lot more power than it currently has.

Right now, it has significant control over the oil coming out of Hormuz and the bypass, but even maybe half the control, because it's still the case that somewhere between 30, 40% of the oil that had been coming out through Hormuz is still getting out through Hormuz. But even that, there's still the issue of not just control over the oil of Hormuz, but will American bases get rebuilt in the future? And so, yes, they've been blasted by Iran. But the fact of the matter is, the United States has plenty of money if it wants to spend it on rebuilding those bases. And so do the Gulf states have plenty of money if they want to spend it on rebuilding those bases. And so I'm just articulating some of the key reasons why what you're seeing with Iran is they want to become now, I believe, a regional hegemon, the dominant state in the Persian Gulf.

Now, I don't mean the Middle East in general. So the Middle East in general would include Turkey, Israel, Egypt, and Pakistan. I don't think that's quite where Iran's sights are set. I think what Iran is thinking is they want to become the absolute preeminent military and economic power in the Persian Gulf here, and then have a sphere of influence that extends out beyond that to, say, Lebanon, the Red Sea, and then also connecting back with the Gulf itself. But what they want here is to be the dominant military power, not just simply the strong economic power. And in order to do that, it is underway with this strategy that we're watching play itself out. And if this continues for another six months or another year, Iran is going to be the regional hegemon of the Persian Gulf.

#Danny

Well, it appears, Professor Pape, that that's exactly where we're heading. According to Reuters, this is what Donald Trump is telling—or sources close to him are telling—journalists: the United States plans to resume the war against Iran with full force after the November midterm elections. President Trump will have a window.

#Robert Pape

Well, you're starting to see the trap in the escalation trap, you see.

#Danny

Yeah.

#Robert Pape

This isn't just, oh, I attack a country. I'm sorry. I promise I won't do it again. That's not good enough in international politics because there's no one to hold the United States accountable for these paper promises. They're basically pie crust promises, easily made, easily broken in international politics. The only thing that really provides deterrence here or accountability is military power, actual power. And so that's what Iran now sees in kind of complete 20/20 vision. It might have been foggy about this for the last few years, but it's hard to overlook the fact that Iran, essentially, as Iran was being attacked when Soleimani—you know, President Trump brags about killing Soleimani, the leader of Iran—Soleimani, he was a military leader, and these other attacks from 2020 to 2025, President Trump has been bragging about how they can attack Iran almost at will, and Iran just kind of weakly retaliates.

Well, those days are gone, you see. So there might have been a period of four or five years where Iran was absorbing a fair bit of this, hoping that America and Netanyahu would just kind of come to their senses. I don't think that's happening anymore. I think that, in fact, we have killed most of the leaders who were part of that. So we literally, instead of killing the hawks, we killed the doves in Iran. So this is even less likely. And this is the trap. This is why Trump keeps coming back. It's why

it keeps coming back and escalating, even though we'll go for a few days or a couple of weeks and the media will say, "Oh, Trump's given up. He's not going to do anything. He's TACO yet again."

And then we find ourselves right back in the very same kind of conversation we're having, except each time Iran is a little bit stronger, a little bit stronger. And to some extent, what Iran is doing is actually the puppet master baiting Trump. You see, Iran isn't deterred by American power anymore. What it's seeing is that when America strikes Iran, it can double down, it can escalate—escalation dominance, almost. And why would it do that? It would do that to move the Gulf states closer to Iran's orbit. And that is another level of power. That's not just diplomacy and who cares. For, geez, since really the 1970s, for the United States, the 1973 war with Israel, essentially, the United States has made strong relationships with many of the frontline Gulf states.

And it's happened incrementally over the decades since the 1970s. Well, what this is about, what Iran is doing, is undoing, reversing all of that—those relationships. And this is tremendously to Iran's longer-term and even medium-term power advantage. And that's why they're very happy baiting Trump into attacking Iran more, because that just gives Iran more excuses to leverage and put pressure on the frontline Gulf states. And that's literally what happened this week. So this week, it wasn't just that Iran retaliated, but the Supreme Leader came out with a statement. So I just, today, as I was on the plane, I was sending this out because the media has decided not to cover Iran's Supreme Leader's statements. That would be like not covering Donald Trump.

#Danny

They contemplate whether he's hurt or he's dead, but they never talk about his statement.

#Robert Pape

No, we've got to pay attention to the fact that this is somebody who's the Supreme Leader of Iran. And his statements are not just empty rhetoric. They actually tell us something. And that's what my post on the escalation trap was doing. And what does it really signal to us? It helps us to more deeply understand his strategic thinking and the strategic thinking of the IRGC, because the Supreme Leader is very deeply part of that, and the Iran leadership. And what the Supreme Leader has said mostly this week, because several statements, but the most important one is he's talking directly to the frontline Gulf states, and directly to: where are you better off with your security?

Are you better off with your security partnering here with the United States and Israel, who cannot defend you? Or are you going to be better off in an Islamic country relationship, where this is basically a relationship of Muslim countries against the Western occupier, as he is painting this? And this is very important to understand because this isn't just empty rhetoric. He's not trying to move the stock market, the Iranian Supreme Leader. This is telling us something about where things are

heading. And I think we need to understand that the Gulf states right now are up for grabs. It's nowhere near clear that a year from now, two years from now, they're going to be very close to America the way they are now here.

And even now, they're drifting away. This is great power politics of the first order we're involved in now. The smaller states, they've got to start to look: which way is the wind blowing here? And this is very, very serious stuff because what you can see is America—it can't protect its own military bases. It's having a hard time feeding its sailors on the carriers. I mean, my goodness gracious here. If this is how America is treating its own forces, you can see that this is what Iran is moving into. They are taking full advantage of this, and it's not just for, like, political talking points. It's for power. And that's what I think we're missing. I think we're just not quite understanding. Iran's playing a power game. We just got to catch up.

#Danny

Well, if you're going to get the terms of that MOU that the United States has attempted to rip up actually met, yeah, Iran needs power to do that.

#Robert Pape

I really don't think Iran's ever going to look for another signing ceremony with the MOU. I think this is—so, a lot of folks in the West, and I deal with a lot of business people, so the Escalation Trap Substack has really been an amazing opportunity to talk and engage with so many people in so many different parts of the world, not just the United States, but the world. I'm going to be going to Brussels next week to speak at the European Parliament, for example. I've got infinite invitations to come to the Persian Gulf. If we could stop bombing the Persian Gulf, I might be able to get there. But I'm just engaging with so many different parts of the world. These are people in business, people in government, people in the media, just plain ordinary smart folks in all different parts of the world.

And so you really see what a global phenomenon this war has become. And you can really see that Iran—a lot of parts of the world are asking very intelligent questions, and they're hungry to understand what's going on here because they're seeing that this is a completely different situation than anybody was expecting six months ago. And they're looking for some clarity on that. And Iran is, I also think, really struck by the weakness that this war has revealed in America's logistics systems. America just hasn't been prepared, not just for a long war, but even maybe more than a few months. I mean, this is really, this is revealing deep, deep weaknesses here with American military power. And a lot of people have just been hungry to understand that. I just wish the Trump administration seemed to be so hungry.

#Danny

Well, Professor Pape, here is, because it's in a different language, I won't play the video. But on August 31st, Iranian General Mohammad Reza Naqdi said, "Our assessment of the capabilities of the U.S. Armed Forces was greater than what turned out to be the case. They exaggerated their capabilities greatly through propaganda. That image has now collapsed." So this is coming straight out of Iran's military leadership.

#Robert Pape

And what this is explaining, and what that statement explains, is why they didn't try to seize Hormuz before. So what happened here was the United States has had an image for 35 years of escalation dominance, the preeminent military power. It really stems from the 1991 Gulf War, because the 1991 Gulf War happened right at the end of the Cold War, which, of course, took the Soviet Union slash Russia out of the picture. When Saddam Hussein, the leader of Iraq, invaded Kuwait and took over Kuwait, and then his army of 300,000 went right up to the border of Saudi Arabia, so it looked, for all the world to see, that Saddam Hussein was about to become an oil hegemon with Iraq's oil, Kuwait's oil, and Saudi Arabian oil.

Here, if you put all that together, man, doesn't that start to look like Iran, right, today? Well, what the United States did is, over six months, it built a military coalition: 36 countries, moved massive troops to the Persian Gulf. We're talking about hundreds of thousands, not just a few tens of thousands like we have now. And then it also brought to bear its new precision military equipment, the stealth fighters, use of GPS, more advanced satellites that had been under development in the '70s and '80s, but really hadn't seen prime time. And that war in 1991, we also weren't sure ourselves. We brought 10,000 body bags, right, to that war, in the 1991 Gulf War. That tells you, when you bring the body bags, what you're really expecting.

And we kicked Saddam Hussein and his 300,000 troops, battle-hardened troops from the Iran-Iraq War, out of Kuwait in 43 days: a 39-day air war and a four-day ground war. And what was the cost in American troops? 147 American troops died. Now, it's sad to see anybody die, of course, but that's nowhere near 10,000 or even 1,000. So what you saw then was a display of American technologically driven military preeminence. And that image—it was called shock and awe for short—that image has stayed with the American public, the American military, and the world until this war. Now, it's taken some dents along the way in these 35 years, so we can talk about the dents. But the fact is, other militaries totally revamped themselves as a result of this. And what you see is that Iran has been paying very, very close attention.

And what they've been doing, similar to what Ukraine and the Houthis have been doing, they've been moving into what I call the second precision revolution: cheap mass drones, mass precision air power with cheap drones. This is now a democratization of the precision revolution, where essentially middle-class states can afford unbelievably accurate precision air forces in the form of drones that were not there decades ago. And this is what you see when the gem, that quote—excuse me—you played shows, is they're rolling out their own second precision revolution. And just

like the United States was surprised in 1991 by just how successful their precision air power was, the same here with Iran. And they're really struck that America was that far behind.

#Danny

Yeah, and J.D. Vance today addressed the media, Professor Pape, and he said that—will this war win? What's her name? Susan Collins of CNN. I can play the video really quick. I don't know if the volume will be good enough, though. Hopefully it's not too quiet for people, but here we go.

#Speaker 1

Secondly, in terms of the war and the timeline, given this administration has put timelines out there before, what you just said about no negotiations happening with Iran, will this war be over by the time of the midterm elections?

#JD Vance

Well, Caitlin, again, I don't—I wouldn't call it a war. Right now, there is no active shooting. I recognize there have been places where this has flared up. Major combat operations—again, major combat operations—lasted for about six weeks. And since then, we destroyed, of course, their nuclear facilities with Midnight Hammer.

#Danny

So I don't even have to play the rest, because he's going to do the whole Trump thing.

#Robert Pape

What you are seeing here is J.D. Vance is being the good lieutenant in the Trump administration. So I'm not sure—it's a little hard to tell, you know, because you can't really put people on the couch and say, do they believe their own rhetoric? But when I listen to him say that, I don't hear that force of real belief in the voice. What I hear is talking points coming out. I hear that he's trying to put the best face forward on this. He's being a good lieutenant. But the fact of the matter is, this war is not going to be—this is a war. This war is not going to be over between now and the midterms, which are just a little over 60 days away. And it's not going to be over months after the midterms either.

And a big part of the reason is because, as I'm explaining, Iran won't stop the squeeze. See, Iran, I believe, has a very coherent approach, a strategy, and it also, I believe, fits with the midterm timetable. And I think Iran probably realizes this, which is that the midterms are a very important focal point for not just the United States, but for Iran. And why is that? Because if the Democrats win, and they win in part or in large part because of this bad war and all the costs that it's producing on America, then what's going to happen is the Democrats will win and control either one or both

houses of Congress. And then they will take steps to shut down this war, to literally shut down the war.

Now, of course, there'll be a battle between Congress and the executive on this. But in 1974, Congress also shut down the Vietnam War. That's how this thing actually stopped. It took another few months after the Congress, because there's stuff in the pipeline and so forth and so on, to actually shut down Vietnam. But this is a major election, not just for the United States, but for Iran. And Iran has a real favorite candidate here. But it's not just they want the Democrats to win. They want the Iran war to be a clear reason for what they will probably tout as the destruction of Trump's presidency. So it's not so much they like Democrats as much as they want to destroy the Trump presidency politically.

Do it. Make it clear that it's the war that played a huge role in that. Best way to do that is squeeze and drive up the price of gas in the United States. Keep them at least as high as they are now, if not push them higher. And to do that, you want to squeeze the oil coming out of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. So this is what I think is the true logic. And then this doesn't just let up right away, because you don't know who's actually going to be installed in the midterms until January. Remember, we had a January 6th, and President Trump's in office again. So we just have to see what's really going to happen in the election, not just on the vote and how it's counted, but how the Congress is seated.

And then what will the Democrats actually do? Will the Democrats decide, if they do take power and they are seated, that they're going to shut down the war? Or are they going to go a different way? We need to recall that in 2002, Hillary Clinton did not oppose the 2003 Iraq War. And why? She said she had to keep her political viability intact, meaning she made a political calculation. And I would just point out it was a wrong calculation. There was this other guy nobody had ever heard of in November 2002 named Barack Obama. I think a few people have heard that name now. And he did the exact opposite. So what he did was he made his opposition to the Iraq War his number one claim to be on the national stage.

And then that led to him essentially taking over the Democratic Party over time. So it was not—I mean, obviously, it's much more than just an anti-war candidate. So I'm just pointing out that this issue here of the midterms is very consequential for Iran, and it's not just going to be over. The result of the midterms doesn't just simply end on November 3rd. No, this will go on, and I think we need to be prepared that Iran is going to keep its foot on the throat of American gas prices here, I think, through January, maybe February. And notice that the Strategic Petroleum Reserve basically runs out.

You see? So this whole issue gets worse and worse and worse because Iran's just not deciding to play, you know, that it's going to be forgiveness. Iran's not in forgiveness mode. Iran is in power mode. And I think we're just having a hard time coming to grips with that. But this is the world we're in. We are in an escalation trap. Trump started it. But he can't alone end it. That's the problem.

That's why I was so vigorously trying to explain, don't do this thing. And then when we did it, get out right away. Take the very first off-ramp, declare victory after two days, and just get out. Now it's much worse. Much worse.

#Danny

Yeah, it definitely is a lot worse. And that makes me wonder, Professor Pape, about comments like these: J.D. Vance mimicking Donald Trump's Truth Social posts in the last few days. The way that the Trump administration seems to be doubling down does almost project a kind of weakness, in the sense that J.D. Vance is saying they won't talk to Iran until Iran stops shooting at shipping, while Iran is saying we're going to keep shooting at shipping because we control the Strait of Hormuz, and you need to respect that reality.

That seems very circular. So I'm wondering why even make comments like this, given the fact that they don't project either that American, I guess you'd say, hegemonic strength that the Trump administration in particular, but every presidential administration, likes to project in their own way. Oh, did I lose you, Professor Pape? Your picture's frozen. If you can hear me, please do reload maybe once you get the connection back. Professor Pape, are you there? I don't know if you can hear me anymore. Yeah. Please reload.

#Robert Pape

I'm not quite sure if I should go on with you or with that.

#Danny

Let's wait till you come back. No, you can.

#Robert Pape

Would you like me to reload it?

#Danny

Yeah, maybe, maybe just to reset. Okay.

#Robert Pape

I'll exit right now, and we'll come right back.

#Danny

Okay. All right. So Professor Pape will come right back when he's here. I will be sure to bring him back. But yes, that strength that we're used to, that projection of strength, is even wavering too. And I'm definitely going to ask Professor Pape about the role of the oil magnates, the oil monopolies, as well as Israel, in what's going on now in this confusion, it seems. So Professor Pape, you are back. Thanks for coming back. Can you hear me okay? Yeah, there's a big lag in your connection right now, Professor Pape, so I don't think you're getting what I'm saying timely. So I don't know if there's a way to fix that. It might be your connection in your hotel. Yeah.

#Danny

I don't know.

#Robert Pape

I'm not quite sure what to do. We were in great shape.

#Danny

Yeah, we were. We were. I don't know. I don't know either. I hope everyone sticks around. Hit the like button as we try to figure out these issues. We were doing great.

#Robert Pape

You're not able to.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, you're not— is it still a lag? Yeah, you're not coming through really at all. What you could do is, you know, you could try restarting everything and coming back, and then I will catch you when you do and see if we can fix this issue. All right, and then I'll bring you back in. Okay, so he's going to do that. So I want to also— because there's other forces involved in this, everybody. There's the oil monopolies, of course. They are trying— you know, the Trump administration is acting independently wholly here. There's oil corporations that are obviously seeking to make as much money as they can off of this war for as long as they can, and hence you see the market manipulation.

You also have Israel, which is now claiming that Iran is seeking a preemptive strike on it very soon, and that Israel might have to strike Iran. So you always have Israel in the background as well, wanting to leverage and jockey with this war in order to gain its own kind of power in the region and to cause this chaos and what have you. So there are many factors as to what's going on here. But overall, I think what we're seeing is that this escalation trap—it's really a trap of the empire's own making. It's really a trap of the U.S.'s own making. And it's one that is not leading to, of course, the

objectives that are the original objectives of this war. Truthfully, there has always, when it comes to U.S. power projection and U.S. imperial power projection, there is always an objective.

It may not be a strategy. It may not be a plan. But there is always an outcome that is desired. And that outcome was the destruction of Iran, and to topple the most important pillar of a new multipolar world and a new world away from U.S. hegemony. That's Iran. So take Iran out. And it was a miscalculation to take the methods that it did against Iran at this time. So this is truthfully one of the biggest blunders in U.S. history. Some have called it bigger than the Vietnam War blunder. The truth is, it's bigger than the blunder against Vietnam, because during the Vietnam War period, the U.S. was just entering its decline phase. It was actually, you could argue, entering the last hurrah of its hegemony phase, its ability to dictate terms around the world. It was fighting this so-called war on communism.

It was trying to overthrow every single government, use its intelligence agencies, its military apparatus, to conduct hundreds upon hundreds of military operations to wrest control of world domination, to ensure that its capital, as well as its military, was privileged everywhere, and that none of the scourges of socialism or any other kind of independent economic systems and political systems would rear their heads and be able to survive.

But nevertheless, that culminated in the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, which then led to, I think, a brazen overconfidence from the U.S. empire and an attempt to accelerate the process of self-preservation, because the economic contradictions and the military contradictions were already piling up, in that the U.S. empire was overstretched. The U.S. economy, capital, was contracting or leveraging massive amounts of debt to hide the fact that it was contracting and declining. And then you had waiting in the wings China, and a movement in Russia to become dignified and independent again, as well as, of course, across the continents of Asia, South America, and Africa, attempts to build a more diversified and independent domestic and foreign policy. So overall, the U.S. miscalculated, believed that its empire was forever, and now it is trying to wipe away the entire chessboard in order to solidify that dominance.

We haven't seen Professor Pape just yet. I don't know if he'll be able to come back due to his connection. And if not, we may end the stream just a bit early. But, you know, I can continue talking, to monologue for a little bit longer, and then, um, you know, we can leave it here, because this is a daily program and we've got a lot to say every single day with our updates. But nevertheless, uh, you know, we are looking at a historic moment, and I think the escalation trap is a very interesting framing, and one that is rooted in a lot of facts, because right now I would say that any U.S. military intervention, any attempt for the United States to assert its hegemony and to even expand it, because a lot of this is meant for expansion, will be met with the same kind of trap, in the sense that the U.S. just can't dictate terms like that anymore.

Actually, I was talking to a friend of the show, Brian Berletic. And we were messaging, and I said, you know, the biggest problem for the United States right now in this—we could call it the escalation

trap—is that it just doesn't have forces on the inside like it used to. The countries that it so wants to seek to diminish and destroy their influence worldwide—Russia, China, and Iran—these countries have clamped down and made sure that the CIA and U.S. intel cannot co-opt, wrest control of major institutions, cannot infiltrate in the way that will make a political difference. And we saw that before the February 28th war in Iran, when the so-called protesters, who were rioters, who were supported by Mossad and the United States, Starlink and the like, were squashed. These rioters, who killed a lot of people, they were brought to heel.

They were violently put down after committing so many acts of terror against civilians and police alike, and that led to, I believe, the utter destruction of the last remnants of the proxy forces the United States and Israel were cultivating to overthrow Iran. So that doesn't exist in Iran, doesn't exist in China, and Russia's opposition is weaker than it ever has been. It can't even sniff electoral power. And the NGOs and the various institutions in Russia that used to support this are basically gone. And they've been ever since—especially in the last 15 years, Russia has methodically taken them out. And because of the Ukraine conflict, that's given them an even bigger hand in making sure that there isn't that kind of political interference happening from the outside.

I mean, hell, there's been talks about assassinating the president of Russia. Remember Joe Biden? He had the Freudian slip. So ultimately, these countries have very good reason to ensure that they are safe from this. And now we have Professor Pape coming back. Hopefully he's able to come back and reestablish connection here. Let's see. Here he is. But I'm not so sure his connection is going to be good enough. Professor Pape, can you hear me at all? Trying to get you back in here, but we may have to cut it short if we're unable to fix these issues. Professor Pape, can you hear me? Yeah, there's a big, unfortunately, connection lag. It could be because of the internet connection in the hotel, unfortunately. Can you hear me?

#Danny

No. Okay.

#Donald Trump

Professor Pape.

#Danny

Yeah, I think there's a big connection problem right now. You know, this happens. It's okay. We might have to continue another time. We can, of course, reschedule for another show. I'd love to have you back on, and we might have to—we might have to bring you back on another time to finish up, also to just keep on covering this war. I'll keep you in the background for now and give it another five minutes or so. But yeah, that's where we are. Some people are asking about China and having more people from China, having more people with... You know, some people said try audio

only. Professor Pape, you're free to do that. I can't control your camera, but I don't know if that will actually solve the issues.

This does seem to be a pretty deep connection problem. I'm not sure if you can even hear me. So nevertheless... Some people ask, okay, people from China, can you have people from China on? Yes, I can. The problem is that the time zone issue has been very difficult because I've been trying to actually do programs at a more reasonable time for myself, and the 12-hour time zone can be quite challenging. But that will definitely happen. We do have the BRICS Summit coming up, and we do have Xi Jinping's visit to Washington coming up. So I will definitely have that. I also have a book that I contributed a chapter to that I do plan on having guests on from China who also contributed chapters about China's foreign policy. So that will happen again.

But nevertheless, the time zone issues have been difficult because, as you may know, the time zone from here to China, where I am based in the United States, is 12 hours or 13 hours, depending on the time of the year. And it can get quite difficult. And I've stopped doing evening shows. On September 10th, a week from today, I will have Ben Norton on. He is living in China right now. And I do reserve some evening shows for him about once a month or so when it's possible. So, Professor Pape, are you back with me? This could be our last try. You do look a little better, but I do see some lag still. Let's see. Yeah, no, it's not coming through. I don't know if we're... Any luck? I can hear your audio now. Yeah, yeah.

#Robert Pape

We might be able to hear your audio.

#Danny

Can you hear me?

#Robert Pape

We'll come back in about a half an hour. Let me see if I can...

#Danny

I can't hear you. You're cutting out, so I might have to end the program soon, but it's no matter. I hear you.

#Robert Pape

I hear you.

#Danny

Okay, you can hear me.

#Robert Pape

I'm trying to get the IT people here from the hotel.

#Danny

No, no, no. I think... I hear you.

#Robert Pape

Yes.

#Danny

You can hear me? Okay. Yeah, there is some delay here. Well, Professor Pape, maybe if you want to give your final thoughts, if you can hear me, about the situation. And let's see if you come through, and we can try that. So, to you, Professor Pape. Yeah, big delay. Big delay. He can't. Okay. Yeah, you're not receiving me, Professor Pape. So it's okay. How about we...

#Danny

Yeah, okay. I'm going to just take the reins for us today. I really appreciate all your efforts. We had a great show. Wait, are you there? Are you there? Okay. Okay. Still here. Still here. Still here? Okay. Not going away. All right. How about you give your final thoughts if you can hear me?

#Robert Pape

I'm going to stay here.

#Danny

Okay. Okay.

#Robert Pape

And I hear you.

#Danny

Yeah, no, the lag is absurd. So, Professor Pape, I'm going to close the show out, okay? I think we had a great one for as long as we could have, and we'll be back in touch. So let's do that, okay? I

appreciate your time. I really do. Thanks so much for making time in your travel schedule, and we will be back in touch. Thank you for having me. All right. Take care. Bye-bye. All right, that's it, everyone, for the program. Hit the like button before you go. I want to thank all the new members. Thank you so much to Cal John. Thank you so much to Kismeterma. Thanks so much. I don't want to pronounce that. Trump knows that he's never going to have a ceremonial funeral like the leader he murdered, driving his psychopathy. Bank on it. Thanks so much for those comments. Thanks so much for the super chats, everyone. This mouse is giving me a big pain in my butt now, too. Here we go. Thank you so much for the super sticker.

#Robert Pape

All right, everybody, I appreciate you bearing through those technical issues.

#Danny

Hit the like button before you go. Tomorrow I am on with Ray McGovern and Garland Nixon at 2 p.m. Eastern time to continue the conversation. I want you also—of course, what a day. All right, everybody. I want you also to know that you can support this show in the video description below: Patreon, Substack, and much more. You can find Professor Robert Pape's Substack there as well to support his work. Thank you so much for coming. 2 p.m. Eastern time tomorrow, I will be live September 4th, Ray McGovern and Garland Nixon. Thanks so much to all the moderators. I thanked you already by text, Whale Pilgrim, and everybody else who is here moderating. Sorry, I forgot who the other person was. You can say who you are in the chat. Appreciate it. It's hard to follow the chat as a singular producer. Really appreciate everybody. Hit the like button. Everyone who viewed, hit the like button. Helps boost the show. I will see you all again tomorrow.