

Iran & Yemen's Missiles LEVEL Saudi Oil | Mark Sleboda

The Iran war has become a regional catastrophe virtually overnight as Yemen enters the war with a massive victory over Saudi Arabia as Trump scrambles to hide the fallout. Saudi oil, the pillar of the petrodollar has been shut down and this is the weapon that Iran and Yemen are using is bigger than a nuke. Geopolitical analyst and military affairs expert Mark Sleboda discusses all of this and much more. <https://boosty.to/therealpolitick> MARK'S WEBSITE SUPPORT THE SHOW BY BECOMING A YOUTUBE MEMBER: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOxLhz6B_elvLfntSEfnzA/join PATREON. COM/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> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #YEMEN #IRAN #trump

#Danny

Welcome back, everyone. As you can see, I'm joined by geopolitical analyst, military affairs, and international relations expert Mark Sloboda to go over the latest developments. Mark, we begin with what CNN is calling an F-up of epic proportions when it comes to the 5,400 square kilometers that Ansar Allah, called the Houthis in Western mainstream media, have taken back from Saudi- and U.S.-backed forces. I just want to go down to a very, I think, pertinent quote here from the leader of the so-called Southern Transitional Council, the government backed by the U.S. and Saudi. They don't need to use advanced weapons anymore to close out Bab al-Mandeb. They can just use a cannon from a car.

And that's because here is the map here. They have taken essentially the entire Red Sea coast back from Saudi Arabia in Yemen. And here is the map in general of Yemen. That is where Ansar Allah has taken, including Perim Island, which overlooks the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. Now, Donald Trump, he's blaming Iran for this. And there's a lot of problems for Saudi Arabia now because not only is an Aramco-Jazan oil facility shut down due to Yemeni strikes, also, the east-west pipeline that connects Saudi Arabia's oil trade to Yanbu Port has been destroyed by what Saudi Arabia has called Iraqi resistance drones, despite Iraqi resistance denying this.

So, Mark, to you first, your reaction to this. Iran—I mean, Trump is blaming Iran. And he's also saying that Ansar Allah does not want to fight the United States. Me, I'm thinking the United States doesn't want to fight Ansar Allah, given how strong a position they've taken and the really disastrous position of Saudi oil right now. What's your thoughts on what's happened in the last 72 hours, particularly now Ansar Allah controlling the Bab al-Mandeb? A huge development.

#Mark Sleboda

Danny, thanks for having me. It's always an honor and a pleasure to be on the show. And first, may I just say—may I speak to all my fellow sci-fi geeks out there? I have long called the Houthis, the Ansar Allah, the Fremen of the Middle East. So after the dramatic events over these last few days, may I just say, "Long live the fighters! Muad'Dib!" Because that is entirely what we saw. I mean, just 36 hours. It is dramatic. And I see a number of commentators that are just astounded by the fact that a bunch of, you know... Yemen is the poorest country in the world by most counts for decades, really. And flip-flop- or sandal-wearing desert tribesmen, which is not quite actually completely accurate.

I mean, the sandals, yes, but, you know, reducing the entire population of Yemen, or at least the Ansar Allah movement of Yemen, to desert tribesmen is not quite accurate. But they have swept these Saudi-backed mercenaries and forces. And it has to be said, it's not just Saudi-backed, although those were principally the ones that the Ansar Allah moved against because they controlled the areas. There's also UAE-backed forces, and they actually are in control of the city of Aden. And one of the very interesting details showing what an epic F-up it has been is when the Saudi-backed forces came fleeing and retreating from the Houthi advance to Aden, the UAE-backed forces already there started firing on them and demanding that they would only get admittance if they lowered their weapons.

So even among the scoundrels, they're fighting amongst each other, if you will, there. But that same report by CNN highlighted how, well, basically over the last few years, since the, shall we say, the most active phase of the Saudi and associated invasion of Yemen died down, that the Saudi- and UAE- and other-backed forces there have been hollowed out; that they only had a fraction of the actual mercenaries there that they did on paper; that a lot of this was hollowed out by corruption, people pocketing the money, and so forth.

And that goes as well for the weapons, many of which were actually sold to the Houthis over the preceding years and so forth. So, uh, when the Houthis suddenly got up—and obviously this was planned and coordinated with their allies, you know, outside of—the whole rotten lot, at least in this section of the Saudi-occupied territory of Yemen, just collapsed like a rotten log. I mean, there has been fighting. I've seen plenty of videos of the Houthis, you know, ambushing Saudi-backed troops and so forth, firing on them with Kornet RPGs and so forth. But not just that, right? They've been firing ballistic missiles with, it must be said, like Iran, pinpoint accuracy on Saudi mercenary command positions and so forth. And they're also able to—whoever hit, right?—the Saudi pumping stations on the east-west pipelines.

Right. That is the bypass pipeline from the Strait of Hormuz that runs straight across the Saudi desert into the Red Sea at the port of Yanbu. That pumps out, or has pumped out—it's not pumping anymore—seven million barrels a day. Its pumping stations were hit yesterday with pinpoint accuracy. Satellite data that I've seen shows it being hit in at least eight different places. And the

pumping stations directly were hit. We've seen that from satellite data. And this is interesting. Yemen sources, you know, the Houthis, are claiming credit for it. CNN, with, you know, the word coming out from sources, anonymous sources in the U.S. government, but also the Saudi regime, have blamed Axis of Resistance forces in Iraq.

Meanwhile, at least some of those blamed Axis of Resistance forces in Iraq deny it. So, and all of that is very interesting. We've seen this once before in the last couple of months, where there were hits on Saudi oil infrastructure. And again, it was initially assumed it was the Houthis, and the Houthis claimed it. But then later it was blamed on resistance forces in Iraq. Yeah. And I have to admit, I don't really understand the reason for that. It could very well have been resistance forces in Iraq. I'm perfectly willing to believe that the resistance forces from Iran and Lebanon and Iraq and Yemen, all being Shia derivations, are coordinating with each other, and sometimes it's prudent for one to take the blame.

It is also interesting that the Iraqi government has removed one of their military commanders from their official military, whom it seems to be indicating was involved in—or at least the claim is that he was launching—those attacks. So it may very well have been out of Iraq. I can't say for certain right now, but it is obvious. The one thing that is obvious is that there is coordination between the Axis of Resistance in this attack, in this offensive, and these logistical strikes. And the IRGC—the Iranian media is openly claiming that they have IRGC officers and specialists who are on the ground in Yemen that helped coordinate these attacks or helped lead them, you know, choose your pick there.

And we also know that although the U.S. declined, according to the Western media, repeated desperate calls from Mohammed bin Salman for the U.S. to conduct airstrikes on the advancing Ansar Allah forces, the Houthis, that he declined. He has played the game of whack-a-mole with them before, and it didn't come out very well for the U.S. in the exchange. They wasted a lot of standoff munitions and air defense missiles, interceptors, playing that game a couple of years ago, you know, when Trump first took office, and they don't want to repeat that. They don't have enough of either the standoff munitions or the interceptors left to play that game with the Houthis again for very little call for that.

But the U.S.—again, the Western media is openly admitting that the U.S. has some 100 to 200 military specialists and advisors in Saudi Arabia that are helping direct their airstrikes in Yemen on the Houthi forces, the Saudi airstrikes. And the Saudis—I mean, even the Houthis are saying that just in the last day, there were 129 or so airstrikes conducted by the Saudis within Yemen. So they are pounding pretty hard today. And obviously the U.S. is helping with the targeting. And the Iranians are apparently also helping the Houthis with the targeting. And according to the Western media, it's the Russians and the Chinese who are helping the Iranians with the targeting.

So I'm sure you can see where this is all going. The conflict between the U.S. and Iran has died down to the level of maritime tit-for-tat strikes in and around the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman. However, it seems now that the battlefield has shifted horizontally right into what was a

periphery of the war. Iran, at least in the past few days, has become front and center, the main battlefield, with both Americans and Iranians, although neither are officially part of the conflict between, or directly part of the conflict between, the Houthis in Yemen and, you know, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, they're both on either side and not being shy about admitting that.

So this is a proxy conflict horizontally zoomed to the front and center inside of a larger direct conflict. And as I said, there are outside forces, right? The Europeans are still, you know, although, you know, at one level, they don't want anything to do with this war in the Middle East because they would rather the U.S. concentrate on the conflict in Ukraine. However, they are providing their bases and intelligence to the U.S., which is definitely a part of this. And we keep telling—the Americans keep screaming, very upset about all the aid that, in particular, Russia is giving to Iran. And, you know, besides directly to Iran, some of that aid might indirectly be going to the Houthis and to Hezbollah in South Lebanon as well.

I can't help but notice that suddenly, out of nowhere, Hezbollah became masters of drone warfare with fiber optic cables, which is an amazing ability they've learned just from watching the video clips of the conflict in Ukraine. Amazingly, the Khmer regime military still hasn't really mastered fiber optic drone warfare to any significant extent. And NATO hasn't, but, you know, Hezbollah's all over it. Just saying. So there might be some indirect transfer there as well. And if the Western media reports are to be believed, I mean, I am in no way wanting to dismiss the ingenuity and capabilities of the Fremen of the Middle East.

I've long been fans of them and their warrior ethos. The Western media says that they learned to make and pinpoint and target their ballistic missiles through Claude, through openly available AI out of the U.S. And I question that. I mean, maybe they used it for some things, but if, again, the pinpoint accuracy that the Houthis are showing, as well as the Iranians, tells me that they must have some satellite info, perhaps very rapid satellite info. So the main takeaway that I'm watching is that this is the Iran war on Iran spreading horizontally and actually shifting focus. And part of that is how Iran is trying to do this.

I believe that this is very much at Iran's initiative, that they are trying to both outlast and to effectively break the power of the U.S. blockade of their ports, in part by causing harsher economic damage to the global energy markets and closing the Bab el-Mandeb Straits and directly targeting that Saudi economy. East-West pipeline to Yanbu is obviously a big part of that and a big escalation on their part. Trump has at various times in the past couple of weeks claimed again and again that he's in complete control of the Strait of Hormuz, and also talking up how all these other alternatives to the Strait of Hormuz are being developed, and that the Strait of Hormuz isn't even really important anymore and no one needs it. Talking about oil transferred by truck through al-Qaeda-controlled territory in what used to be known as Syria, as if that could somehow make up for oil tankers.

It's a pittance, really. I mean, it's something for Iraq, but... But also, of course, this East-West Pipeline. And at least for the time being, we don't know how significant the damage is. The Saudi government says that the East-West Pipeline is now shut down as a precaution. Sure it is, right? It was just drone debris that fell on it, right? I mean, that's the way these things go. But I suspect that the damage is significant, and it can obviously be repeated at will, whether by the Houthis or by Axis of Resistance groups, Kataib Hezbollah or Islamic Resistance in Iraq, or by the Iranians directly. A pipeline is no safe alternative to the Strait of Hormuz in this conflict, not when you're a participant or the attacks are coming out of bases on your territory.

That's the thing. So Iran has once again fought the war against the United States asymmetrically. It has fired, in the past week, anti-ship ballistic missiles and cruise missiles at U.S. ships. They claim to have hit. The U.S. is claiming they didn't. There's no definitive evidence either way, although I think the U.S. would not be able to hide that for very long if that was the case. But, you know, other than taking those attacks, Iran is kind of running out of targets to hit. The U.S. has retreated from all of their other bases in the Middle East to Jordan. And now they're retreating from Jordan to Israel because of all the hits they've taken there. The Chief of Naval Operations, you know, Secretary of the Navy, admitted to the Epoch Times.

#Danny

I don't know why he's talking to me. I really don't know.

#Mark Sleboda

I don't know. But he's talking to the Epoch Times. But he made a quote that the Iranians really beat the hell out of Bahrain, right? And there's no port, there's no logistics left for us there. So they've retreated to Jordan, and now they're retreating from Jordan further west to Israel. So the Iranians have decided once again to take out their asymmetric attacks not on the U.S., but by the U.S.'s facilitating allies, in this case Saudi Arabia, which, you know, it is, of course, convenient that, you know, they have long been engaged in a, yes, simmering conflict with the Houthis in Yemen. But also, you know, if this is a geoeconomic game of chicken and you're seeking to cause economic damage on each other, and for the Iranian side that means the global energy markets, well, there's no better way to do it than to go after Saudi Arabia, of course.

#Danny

Hmm. Yeah, well, Mark, how big is it? And then I'll play Trump's comments in one second on this. But the question after I play it is, how big is it that now we have Bab al-Mandeb Strait in Ansar Allah control, and Iran, despite all of the talk and, you know, United States controls it—Trump says, he's going to say it here too when I play it—the fact is that ships aren't going through. Diesel, gas is through the roof. There is a major oil crisis. And quietly, as Saudi Arabia and the United States were

losing all this ground too, all the oil prices just kept going up and up. And now they're at this record point that's causing a lot of panic, but for everyone, I guess, except Donald Trump. Here is what he said about the situation with the pipeline that you were commenting on.

#Speaker 1

Is Iran responsible for the attack on the East-West Pipeline? What do you think Saudi Arabia is?

#Donald Trump

Well, I think they are. Probably they are. They're on the balls of their feet right now, but I think they are. They've been in charge of that for a while. We've had discussions. The Houthis called us, and they don't want to fight with us. They let us know. They don't want to fight with us. They don't want me to go after them. They don't want us to go after them. But they've called, and they've talked to us, and they don't want us to. They would much prefer not having us involved. And they're letting most ships go through. This is one country that they're not too happy with, and we'll get that straightened out. That's true. I have to say, we've done a great job there. We controlled it, as you know. We really very powerfully controlled the Hormuz Strait, and nobody saw that happen. So we have very powerful control over it. We had a naval...

#Danny

So, very powerful control over the Strait of Hormuz. Very strongly.

#Mark Sleboda

Very strongly.

#Danny

Ansar Allah does not want to...

#Mark Sleboda

But the Strait of Hormuz isn't even important anymore. There's all these better alternatives to the Strait of Hormuz, even though we control it.

#Danny

Like the pipelines, right? That just got bombed. But what's so interesting about this is, I remember, Mark, March, was it 2025? Didn't Trump say at the end of that war the same thing? He said, "Oh, the Houthis called me and said they don't want to fight anymore, and I'm going to respect that." It feels like déjà vu, but this is before the United States got seriously involved. Your reaction to this?

#Mark Sleboda

We don't know for certain whether there was any communication between the U.S. and the Houthis in this regard. It is true that the Houthis are not interfering with any traffic moving through the Bab el-Mandab Strait that is neither a Saudi tanker nor a tanker carrying Saudi oil, unless it's a Chinese tanker, in which case everything's cool. Even if it's carrying Saudi oil, they can just go through. So—and it must be said that China is actually the biggest purchaser of Saudi oil. So there is that. But, yeah, I can't really—Trump has lied so much. You know, he does it like he breathes, almost reflexively. I don't even think, you know, he—I think he lies to himself quite often. I mean, he convinces himself that so many things have happened, like phone calls with Modi and so forth, that later turned out not to be true.

So I do believe that the U.S. is trying to put—much like they're trying to push the Europeans to the fore against Russia in Ukraine, while they're certainly playing the major role covertly with the CIA—I mean, not so covertly because they're openly admitting it. Just like this, they want the Saudis to be the front man against the Houthis here. And again, the reason for that is the U.S. Achilles' heel, their munitions shortage, in particular air defense interceptors, right? Because we're not only talking about the Patriots, but for U.S. Navy ships that were targeted before when Trump went to war with the Houthis, also the low levels of the SM-3 and the SM-6 that are the air defense interceptors for Navy ship air defense systems. And the same thing with standoff munitions, right?

The Yemenis do have air defense systems. They don't want to fly directly into the face of those, just like they don't in Iran. So primarily, to go after the Houthis, they would need to use standoff munitions like they did, you know, back in 2025. And they just don't have enough Tomahawks or JASSMs to do that now. They're scraping the barrels of their inventories. That's why they've tried—they've stopped the wholesale bombing of Iran. For a couple of months now, they haven't hit anything beyond the immediate coast of Hormuz, and they've been trying to make the switch there to using glide bombs, because they can just get close enough to fire those at some targets on the Strait of Hormuz coastline within the range of the glide bombs, you know, launched by air.

Because, again, they don't want to enter Iranian airspace. So Trump's refusal here—he's, of course, everything is always bluff and bluster—but the U.S. just has too few arrows in their quiver to start playing whack-a-mole with the Houthis again. So they're trying to dump the lion's share of the work on the Saudis, while they're not being shy that they're providing, you know, targeting and military specialists to help the Saudis in that regard. So, um, the Trump administration has referred to it before, when we're talking about the Europeans in Ukraine, as division of labor and burden sharing. And they're trying to shift the burden from the wars that they start off onto their allies and proxies and vassals. And that's the case. And Mohammed bin Salman has got to be cursing Trump with every breath.

And if we just go back a few weeks, this all started when Saudi bombed that airport in Sana'a when an Iranian delegation was landing. And they opened that whole Pandora's box again that had been, for the most part, closed for a couple of years now. I believe that probably the Houthis, coordinating with Iran, were getting ready to do something. But the Saudis provided the perfect pretext for them to do it by striking first so stupidly, because the Iranians just landed elsewhere. And then—well, anyway, so I don't really understand the whole purpose of that. And it is likely that the Americans, you know, probably had some goading there to do that. And, you know, you can just hear Mohammed bin Salman saying, "This is another fine situation you've gotten us into."

Right. You know, Laurel and Hardy routine, because that appears to me, at least, to be what it is. I don't believe that Saudi wanted this renewed conflict with the Houthis, certainly not what they're getting right now. And they have got to be... First of all, they had the Iranians devastating them and them not having any real capacity to reply. And now they're getting it from the other side as well. And I think this is all best viewed, at least from the Iranian side, as a game of chess, right? So they're playing on one part of the board, and then they make a surprise move on the other side of the board, right? And Trump is still playing poker and trying to bluff his way out of this and, you know, looking at all those funny little pieces on the chessboard.

#Danny

What does this one do again? The Houthis.

#Mark Sleboda

It's, you know, not going so well for him or Mohammed bin Salman. And I don't generally have much sympathy for Mohammed bin Salman, but you have to feel sorry for the SOB in this position because I honestly don't believe that he asked for any of this. But of course, you know, there are costs to being a U.S. vassal in a multipolar world.

#Danny

Yeah, well, certainly it would be a strange wish for nearly the entirety of Saudi oil to be shut down by a war that is literally, I mean, quite literally unwinnable.

#Mark Sleboda

Oh, no. If all the Saudi oil is shut down, that means the price of oil is going to go through the roof. Oh, and wait a minute. What's Russian oil trading at now? Like \$20 above the price of Brent on spot buying? Oh, my God. That means that Putin has so much more money in his war chest to do

whatever the hell he wants in Ukraine. That's terrible. Oh, yes. That's also called the strategic partnership: Russia, China, and Iran. You move against one, and you weaken yourself against one of the others.

#Danny

Yeah, I mean, the U.S. is looking incredibly weak against all three right now, to say the least. Well, Mark, before we get into those broader questions in the last half hour of this show, I want to first ask you: who do you think—you know, some people have come to me and said, you know, Danny, it looks like the ruling elite of the United States, the West, they want to crash the global economy. So some people even messaged me saying, "Is this all a trap?" Here's Ansarallah on Bab al-Mandab, literally on Bab al-Mandab, Perim Island, and talking about the Bab al-Mandab Strait, how they basically control it. And then here is Iraq, the Iraqi resistance, saying they don't claim the attack, but they think of it as an honor to be—that's what the Iraqis said. Yeah, that was chef's kiss. Yes, amazing.

And right now, as we speak, Mark, Saudi Arabia is bombing Yemen, and now Yemen is striking at Saudi Arabia. So whether it's on the ground or through missiles and other kinds of warfare, it's a bad road for Saudi Arabia, which then leads to the question: who benefits then? Some people are saying, well, you mentioned Russia with higher oil prices. We all know that a lot of people have been paying attention to the market manipulation, the way that U.S. oil companies have made out big. But do you see this at all as some kind of big attempt to crash the global economy so the ruling elite run away with massive profits and ultimately see this as a strategy? I don't believe this is the case, but I'm wondering about your assessment and analysis of what that question really means.

#Mark Sleboda

Yeah, I don't believe that this administration plays 5D chess. I don't. I think that this is all unintended consequences. They thought that Iran was going to be another Venezuela, that they were just going to walk in and some Quislings would hand Iran to them on a silver platter once they dropped a few bombs and killed the Supreme Leader, and that is not what has happened. There's, you know, a fine line to walk in some ways between, you know, realizing that really, to some degree, the U.S. in particular, the CIA is to a certain level behind, or at least involved in, just about everything that happens in the world of, you know, geopolitical consequence.

And at the same time, blowing it up into some type of a global oligarch conspiracy. You can't get two oligarchs to agree on anything. They're all at war with each other at any given time. And too many of said oligarchs have competing and conflicting economic interests to believe that they could ever coordinate things, whatever their particular religious descent or ethnicity is, which I myself think is largely irrelevant. Capital will always act in the interests of itself, not in a broader sense, but

that individual capitalist. And capitalism is an extremely short-sighted economic system by nature. They might be able to do tactical things, conspire on an individual level, but they can't do long-range, right?

That's what the Chinese do. They do the long-term plotting. So no, I just don't believe anything. Yes, you can try to read into this. The U.S. is constantly trying to manage and massage and manipulate the oil markets, but it's on a tactical, reactive level, right? With the primary concern being the midterm elections. And, you know, you have to pay a lot of attention to the midterm elections, right? In the Western media, Trump administration officials are, well, anonymously talking, but talking openly in that regard that, well, as soon as the midterm elections are over, it's back to real war with Iran because, you know, they think they'll be in the clear then.

That's assuming, of course, that Trump, you know, the Republicans do well in that regard. Not that the Democrats would necessarily have any real different foreign policy. They're just as, you know, indebted to and in bed with AIPAC, with the Israeli lobby in the U.S. However, if they scent blood in the water, they will be quick to jump on Trump over it and blame him for all these failures, even as they try to present themselves as also supporters of Israel. So I don't believe in 5D chess global conspiracies out of the U.S. They handle everything at a much more reactive and clusterfuck level.

#Danny

Well, now we can get into some of the big picture, Mark. You know, BRICS is meeting this weekend, as we speak, for the next summit, which is being held in New Delhi, India. And, of course, you mentioned Russia, higher oil prices benefiting Russia. China—Xi Jinping is supposed to come to the United States. It's looking a little rocky now, as there are reports that the Trump administration may actually approve these worthless but very expensive arms sales to Taiwan. And that might actually cancel the trip. But nevertheless...

#Mark Sleboda

They might do that intentionally. I don't think they really want to. That's what I'm saying.

#Danny

That's what I'm saying.

#Mark Sleboda

They thought they were going to be in a situation with Iran under U.S. control and going to leverage that to settle the paused trade war between the U.S. and China, and that's not the position at all. I don't think they really want the Chinese president to come to the U.S. with all kinds of boss swagger. I don't think that's what they want. So they might try to sabotage that.

#Danny

That's what I feel like these reports about Taiwan arms sales are about. And, you know, because there were reports earlier that Donald Trump was planning to use this meeting to push Xi Jinping to abandon Iran. And, of course, oh, look at the terrain. And now you definitely commented on the terrain. I mean, the world situation—from the Strait of Hormuz, now Bab al-Mandeb, and, of course, the situation in the Ukraine conflict—none of it leads to the United States having any kind of position to talk to Xi Jinping about who China trades with.

#Mark Sleboda

I don't see any 5D chess there.

#Danny

No. So your reaction, though, to this—the world, you know, 72 hours, the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, super important—but also it comes within this broader context. Maybe you can comment on that.

#Mark Sleboda

Yeah, the first thing that has to be said is, you know, don't cash checks yet. The Saudis are going to attempt a reorganization, right? You know, they're going to try to rejuvenate, resupply, and reorganize their forces, their mercenary forces and so forth, and will attempt, you know, counterattacks. That's inevitable. So, and the Houthis, you know, are going to have to be ready for it. At least from everything I have seen, without being a regional expert, it seems to me that the Yemeni population in Mocha and many of these other areas look pretty happy to see Ansar Allah.

I don't know, you know, videos and such things aren't always a reliable sentiment, but I can't imagine that there's a whole hell of a lot of real love for the Saudis and the mercenaries that they back in Yemen. So any counterattacks might be, you know, complicated and difficult for them. And let's face it, you know, the Saudis have the full backing. You know, their military supplies come mostly from the U.S., a little bit from Europe. You know, they've got all the U.S. CIA satellite, you know, intelligence and AI backing. And, you know, they have access to all of this, you know, all the mercenaries that money can buy.

But the one thing that the Saudis lack is a warrior ethos, right? We want to go back to the seventh century. It was the Saudis who had the warrior ethos, and they spread their religion and their creed by force at first, at least, later by adoption throughout the entirety of the Middle East and well beyond. But in today's world, they're fat cats, right? They've been living well for the last few decades, and they simply don't have a warrior ethos. They don't have the ideology, the motivation, right? Meanwhile, the Shia Yemen, again, by many counts, the poorest country or close enough to it in the world, they very much do have ideological, ethno-religious motivation.

They do have a warrior ethos, and all the technology in the world can't necessarily make up for that gulf in capabilities. And I think we just had that demonstrated in the past couple of days. And ultimately, Yemen will be freed of Saudi control. And it's actually the Saudis that are going to have to fear Yemen moving into the Shia minority regions of Saudi Arabia, which also happen to be some of the oil-richest areas, interestingly enough. So, but if we want to zoom out from that to a geopolitical context, Trump is going to inevitably—you know, Trump has very blinkered—he doesn't do geopolitical thinking at a, certainly not at a multipolar level like a lot of the fans out here do.

He's certainly not motivated by that type of ideology and thinking. And he doesn't even do it at a strictly realist level, level of analysis and international relations theory thinking. Although there are a handful of big-brain people in his administration that do. Hi, Elbridge Colby, you evil bastard. But they've apparently been sidelined because he wanted the U.S. out of the Middle East entirely. And quite obviously, that's not happening. So he's got to be pretty frustrated. Trump thinks like a businessman. He's continually trying to toss rotten carrots to the Russians to save the Kiev regime. Like, oh, we'll do so much business together.

And the Russians are like, yeah, that's great. Oh, that's wonderful. But yeah, yeah, not yet. You know, not till we've achieved all of our objectives. And, you know, they're like, as if we would ever want to crawl back into bed economically with the Americans. That's the last thing we'd ever want to do. But Trump is a businessman, and he thinks that way. He doesn't view the world through the same geopolitical prism that all of his deep state handlers in various positions of the administration and the security state around him do. And when he talks to the Chinese, the arguments he's quite openly making are, it's in your interests to have the, you know, traffic get through the Strait of Hormuz, and therefore the Chinese should want to help me, right?

I'm doing them a favor. That's the blinkered way that he thinks of it himself. Of course, the Chinese: it's also in our interest not to have you overthrow the government of Iran, which is one of our major energy sources, giving you control over that. But also, you started this whole thing. It's your mess. And by the way, we're still getting our oil through because both Iran and the Houthis are largely letting our oil get through. So it really is your problem, not ours. That's certainly the way that the Chinese are going to look at it. Look, the Chinese do not—the line that the Chinese want is they don't want a global economic collapse.

So they have been helping prevent, thus far, a catastrophic rise in oil prices, preventing a total geoeconomic collapse. But they're certainly not going to help out the U.S. in this situation. So they've got a line that they're walking, too, between national interests and geopolitical interests as well. But, you know, there's absolutely no way that the Chinese are going to provide any real, you know, help to the U.S. in this regard. And that's why I agree with you. I think Trump's looking for a way to just scuttle, scupper this whole meeting with Xi Jinping because he's so—he's so used to, and it's so necessary for his fragile little megalomaniacal ego to be the alpha dog in the room.

And interestingly, he appears to have this weird kind of respect for Putin, where he recognizes at some level that Putin is a bigger alpha dog than he is. But with Xi Jinping, it's different. Xi Jinping, he wants to be the alpha dog in the room with him, particularly because it's so much closer in some respects to U.S. national interests. So going into, you know, what ultimately, of course, will be negotiations with the Chinese, he does not want to be doing that from the weakened position that he has put himself in now through launching this war. And, you know, give Trump credit. He does everything big—bigger than anyone else. And this is the biggest, by far, geostrategic blunder that the U.S. has made, bigger than George W. Bush invading Iraq.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, for sure. And with the way that oil prices are going, and what's happening in Saudi Arabia, and all of this, I mean, we only got two weeks—less than two weeks—until that meeting.

#Mark Sleboda

Diesel prices, food inflation.

#Danny

It's not going to get any better.

#Mark Sleboda

All the numbers, the U.S. bond market. Oh, it's just all—

#Danny

It's all bad news.

#Mark Sleboda

It's all a mess. It's all a mess. It's all a mess.

#Danny

And to your comments about how China has been navigating the oil situation, some people have come and asked me, Danny, does this mean China is, like, helping out the United States and helping out the enemies of Iran because they're keeping oil more stable? And I said, no, China—what China is trying to do is help out Global South countries who get absolutely walloped by oil, by this economic crisis. And it's in China's national interest to do so because China has a massive need to trade with these countries and ensure that they don't have an economic crisis. China can withstand

that. They have many times in the past. But when the world is in crisis, countries in Asia, in Africa, Latin America, they cannot withstand it.

So that's who they're thinking about, because that's a lot of China's market now, is the Global South. Because, you know, the United States and the West, they want to shoot themselves in the foot. But China is far more interested in keeping things stable for countries that cannot withstand an economic crisis, a global depression, than they are the United States. And whatever—if that happens to be an outcome, it's like, okay. But that's not—you know, China's not trying to save anybody but themselves, and of course their partners, because that's part of that. You know, if China doesn't have good partners, then China's economy will suffer from that.

So that's why they look at win-win cooperation and not zero-sum. They believe, hey, if we have people that have money elsewhere, then people will have money to buy Chinese things. I mean, it's almost as simple as that. But Mark, I have one question from a Patreon member. You can react to anything there, but someone from Patreon asked me a good question. I want to just read it because they directed it to you. A question for Mark, if there's time, is from Jack. About seven to eight weeks ago, our friend Stas Kropivnik said that very advanced, state-of-the-art Chinese anti-drone defense systems will be arriving in Russia by September or October. He said these systems could be a real game changer. Have you heard anything about this? And do you know any of the specifics?

#Mark Sleboda

No, I don't know anything about that. I haven't heard anything about that. I mean, Stanislav is a friend. I was just on his show this week, but I don't know anything about that. So I haven't seen anything on the battlefield about that. There is no magic anti-drone system out there, but there are lots and lots of layers of different types of anti-drone technology that can have a certain amount of effect, that have to be layered and integrated and interconnected and multilayered on top of each other to try to ameliorate the effects of drones on the battlefield. There is no magic wand, right? Not from China or anywhere else.

That said, back to what you were talking about, people need to stop trying to view the world through a black-and-white prism, right? That's what the U.S. does, right? We're the good guys; they're the bad guys. And the world is always shades of gray, at least from where I'm sitting. Danny, you and me, and I would venture the vast majority of you out there watching, are possessed of what we could call a multipolar ideology, right? A lot of us come from what might have once been considered the ideological left; others, a few from the ideological right. But the one thing that's kind of crystallized is a pro-multipolar, anti-Western hegemony viewpoint of the world.

But it's important to recognize that the leaders of Russia, of China, of Iran—the lead multipolar countries—they are not possessed, and they do not view the world through that prism. They do not think about those things the way that you or I might do. Quite often, their interests might co-align with that. But it doesn't mean that they are motivated by that. They are motivated by national

interests, by the best interests of their people and their state. And yes, that often might co-align today with some multipolar thinking, and they certainly will adopt that rhetoric, you know, when it's to their convenience to do so. But the Chinese government is primarily concerned about them, their people, and their development.

And what they need for that is a functioning, even performing well, global economy. A couple of decades ago, it was the United States preaching globalization and win-win, you know, relationships with everyone, because everything was about economics when they were the ones benefiting from globalization. Well, simply because of the nature of capitalism and money chasing capitalism, money, capital flows from the West to the East. All the things that have happened over the last few decades ultimately, yes, had some geopolitical decisions, with the U.S. trying to exploit the Sino-Soviet split and everything, but it came down to, you know, the neoliberal global financial architecture and the way it played out.

And China has benefited from that now. And to a large extent, it is China that is now the global steward of globalization. Now, not necessarily the globalization as it was instituted by the U.S., with the World Trade Organization and the IMF and so forth, but the actual day-to-day global economy, which benefits China. China's development needs—they have an export economy—they constantly need to export to the rest of the world, which means they constantly need to import things into China to turn into things, both in the physical sense of manufacturing, but also increasingly in the intellectual sense of ideas and software and brands and everything else.

So it is very much in their interests to keep the global economy on an even keel. And they have to balance between not wanting the U.S. to control Iran, which on a geopolitical level is a no-brainer for them. But at the same time, they don't want the global economy to crash. And Iran's best defense against the United States is an asymmetric lashing out against the global energy market and thus the global economy. So China has to maintain this tightrope walk. And they've been doing that until recently by drawing for their own needs from their own enormous strategic petroleum reserves rather than buying from the market, which over the past few months has made more oil available on the market because the Chinese weren't buying it up.

Right. At the same time, the U.S. was pumping. So China has, in the last few months, their interests economically have to a certain extent co-aligned with the United States in preventing—right, they didn't mind a certain rise in energy prices, but they didn't want it to go too high. At the same time, they want to prevent the U.S. from overthrowing the government in Iran. So things aren't always simple, and it's not always easy, right? It is very much a balancing act. But again, the most important thing in the world is, if you want to understand what the governments are doing, it is okay to have a multipolar ideology in your heart.

I do, right? But when you're doing analysis, you got to freeze the blood. You got to stop the heart. And you got to start thinking in realist terms that China's primary interest is not the Global South. China's primary interest is their state and their people. And to the extent that their trading

relationships and their position at the top of the global economy depends on trade with the rest of both the Global South and the Global West, yes, they're concerned about them. But that's motivated by national self-interest, not necessarily, at least, you know, not pole position one in terms of motivation. Yeah, totally. I'm thinking of a multipolar world.

#Danny

Yeah, in China, how people describe it to me is, of course, there are people in the party who have, you know, internationalist visions. They want to see all that, you know, global cooperation, mutual, all of this, mutual development happening. But ultimately, China has a raging, growing, incredibly heated economy. And they want to see countries around the world that are interested in trading with China, which happens to be nearly all of them, not falling into a recession. Because when you fall into a recession or a global depression, you can't buy things. Things tend to slow down, stagnate. And so even if China can withstand that, it is not in China's interest for the global economy to be wrecked because of some U.S. war or whatever the hell, you know.

#Mark Sleboda

If we take a look at the U.S., who are their leaders, right? Who are the U.S. political elite, right? They come primarily from politicians within the U.S. party system who are often lawyers or businessmen, right, on those two spectrums. Who are the leaders of Russia? They largely come out—I mean, not 100%, but a significant percentage of them come out of the Russian security state, right? The FSB, the SVR, right? They have other things. Putin was also technically a lawyer and stuff. So, you know, that is reflective of their elite thinking. The Chinese—you know this better than I do, certainly, Danny—but I'm sure you know: what is the profession, at least of origin, of most of the Chinese Politburo, the Chinese top committee?

#Danny

Well, most of them come out of some kind of business, or they come straight through the party. But a lot of them have enterprise experience, definitely.

#Mark Sleboda

A lot of them are also engineers, right?

#Danny

Yep.

#Mark Sleboda

A lot of them have an engineering background, and they think in terms of engineering. I think you're right. There is a growing percentage that also now come out of more of a business and management background. But traditionally, over the last decades, the majority of the Chinese political elite come out of an engineering background. And that imprint is still on the Chinese political system and the Chinese political elite way of thinking. And they think in terms of pragmatics, of what works and what doesn't, not necessarily in terms of global conflict or domination. There might be times where that is called for because that's the most practical, pragmatic thing to achieve your goals. But, you know, I always try to keep that in mind, understanding the framework that the various political elites, at least of the great powers, are coming from, because it does have an influence on the foreign policy decisions they make.

#Danny

Totally. Yeah, I mean, China's leadership is almost entirely interested in industry and ensuring that industry continues to grow, continues to serve China. And, of course, whatever global role it plays to do that, all the better. But, Mark, we are out of time. I want to thank a new member here, Alan. Thank you so much, Flying Boar, for your comments. Thanks, Alan. There is a question from Flying Boar we won't be able to get into in detail. But they can't.

#Mark Sleboda

Russian air defense and electronic warfare is so far heads above the Israelis'. The Israeli Iron Dome is about shooting down homemade projectiles made out of pipes from Gaza, right? No, no. And the U.S. THAAD and Patriot, yeah, we've seen that on display. Russian air defense and electronic warfare—look, in the Cold War, the U.S. concentrated on power projection, on aircraft, on aircraft carriers. And at that time, they were masters of cruise missiles and so forth. The Soviet defense system counted on an asymmetric defense to those then-perceived American advantages or NATO advantages.

And what they concentrated their military R&D and production on was air defense and electronic warfare as responses to that. That has played forward through the preceding 30 years. And Russia, by far—I mean, all you have to do is look at how many hundreds of drones that NATO launches at Russia every night through the Kiev regime: 400, 500, 600, up to a thousand, and how many get through, right? According to even Ukraine's own military blogger, who actually is a part of their military drone bomber, one out of 1,500 drones launched and targeted by NATO—one out of every 1,500—only one will reach through to Moscow if it's targeted at Moscow.

There's nothing even close to that anywhere in the world. And the real heroes of this conflict on the Russian side are Russia's air defense and electronic warfare, the physical shield and the electromagnetic one. Heads so far above the Israelis or the Americans that they're not even in the

same category. And we've seen that played out, because where is all that Western air defense in Ukraine now? It's either exhausted or it's, you know, destroyed. And where is Russia's air defense? Oh, it's increasingly more effective than ever before against ever-increasing pressures.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. I mean, Russia never has to lie. How many times has CENTCOM had to lie about their situation with Iran, Iranian missiles? Ooh, we hit them all. And then you find out that several got in and hit.

#Mark Sleboda

Even the Iranian air defense is looking better than the American air defense, I gotta say.

#Danny

It's looking—I mean, they have the United States firing from very far away.

#Mark Sleboda

Yeah, I mean, it's clear the Patriot is absolute shit at shooting down ballistic missiles. Right. As Ted Postol has long argued, what they are good for that no one wants to talk about is they're still good at shooting down aircraft, right, and keeping aircraft outside of your airspace. That's why Kiev wants them so much. Not because they can shoot down Russian Iskander-M ballistic missiles. They can't. But because they keep Russian Su-34 fighter bombers from dropping three-ton FAB bomb glide bombs on Kiev every single night. That's what they're really terrified is coming.

#Danny

Yeah. Well, Mark, people need to, you know, now that the show is over, know that they should follow you on Boosty. I can't believe it. I think I have it there, but let me get it into the description now. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Everyone can find it. Everybody can find Mark on Boosty, and make sure you support him there because he gives all—you know, he does this all of the time, diligently working to help us understand all of this much better, everything that we spoke about today and more. So it's there now in the video description. Everybody should hit the like button before you go. That helps boost the show. Tomorrow I'll be back, 1 p.m. Eastern, with Mohamed Morandi on our Sunday conversation. Yeah, so be like Mark and watch it tomorrow, September 13th. Everyone, hit the like button again. In the video description, you have Mark's Boosty. I'll get all the places to support the show there too in a moment, but I'll see you September 13th.