

Trump Orders All-Out War, US & Israel STRIKE Iran Before Midterms | KJ Noh

Trump is diving fully back into war mode with Iran as US & Israeli forces prepare for a massive offensive before the elections in both states. KJ Noh analyzes the geopolitical and global significance of the escalation and what the mainstream reports are leaving out. SIGN UP FOR CAMPAIGN TO CODEPINK CAMPAIGN: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe6Af6QErr7122oMNEnehe9uqSKX2dbR4Qf1PMwO3w6phwQEg/viewform> 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> #iranwar #trump #china #yemen #usmilitary

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. As you can see, I am joined by KJ, a geopolitical commentator, analyst, and all-around good guy, to talk about the latest developments. So, we begin. It's been, KJ, a whirlwind, whiplash last, I should say, just last 12 hours or so. We heard that first, Trump was considering a plan to strike Iran before the midterm elections. This was reported late last evening by everybody, including The Atlantic and The New York Times. But then just a few hours ago, Donald Trump, as oil went to one hundred and five dollars a barrel and the markets started to spasm, Donald Trump has said we will not be attacking Iran at any time prior to the midterm elections to be held in the United States on November 3rd.

But Channel 14 in Israel is saying that they are preparing for another confrontation with Iran, as the Pentagon and Washington had reportedly issued military directives for these preparations for large-scale operations against Iran. This is according to IDF Chief Eyal Zamir to both Channel 12 and Israeli Channel 14. So, KJ, where are we right now in this war? We have oil prices spiking. The Strait of Hormuz is still very much a huge debate about who controls it, who doesn't, Iran or the United States. And, of course, the Yemeni front is on fire. And all of this is the backdrop for U.S. hegemony and the myriad of crises it faces. So, to you, what do you make of these contradictions? Absolutely almost whiplash when it comes to how frequently we're hearing them.

#KJ Noh

Well, I think it's deliberate. I think it's a deliberate form of psychological warfare. I don't believe that the intent to attack is serious because, frankly, you would need at least a year of buildup, vast logistical preparation, and a much, much larger deployment of troops. You're not going to get very far with a few thousand, 10,000 troops, and perhaps, you know, an aircraft carrier or two, which doesn't look like it's even in theater yet. So I believe that this is largely theater. But remember, war is largely theater. There's a large dimension of war which is theater, where we even talk about the term "the theater of war."

So I think that this is a way of wearing down Iran, trying to see if they can demoralize it a little bit, like what they always do with North Korea twice a year, and now almost constantly with war games, constantly giving the pressure, the full-court press, making them think that at any moment they're about to be attacked, and then forcing their economy and their government and everybody's nervous system to go into overdrive, and to see if they can exhaust them that way. I think that, once again, if we come back to the basics, you and I have discussed this before, there are fundamental asymmetries that make it almost impossible for the U.S. to prevail against Iran.

The first one is resolve, right? I mean, Iran has a much greater resolve to fight. But the second one is geography. I have referred to this as the Jackie Chan strategy. Jackie Chan beats his opponents not because he's a better fighter per se, but because he knows how to use the environment to his advantage. And we have said over and over again, the environment is 99% in favor of Iran. Those mountains create a fractal labyrinth of advantage that the U.S. simply cannot overcome. And the Strait of Hormuz itself is an amphitheater, which is controlled by Iran. They have the bleachers and the skybox.

The U.S. only has, you know, the flat alluvial plain and the waterway itself, which actually has to do a hairpin turn around, which essentially makes it a kill box for the United States. So, resolve, geography, strategy itself. Certainly Iran has shown itself to have superior strategy. The U.S. is out of options with bombs and blockades. A blockade is partial. The bombs have been shown not to work. We see diminishing sorties all the time. I mean, really a tiny fraction of the sortie rate that the U.S. is usually accustomed to. It's running out of missiles, both interceptors and offensive missiles.

And of course, boots on the ground would be, you know, catastrophic—really, you know, an attempt at a suicide run. And then we know the economics do not favor the United States. Once again, the U.S. uses expensive interceptors against Iran's very, very cheap munitions. These are, you know, asymmetries of 100 to 1, even 1,000 to 1. And the fundamental asymmetry between a financialized economy and an industrial economy, and the different learning curves in battle, show that Iran has the definitive advantage. And I think primarily what we're seeing here is psychological warfare to see if they can wear Iran out and down, set its nervous system into overdrive, and see if you can create a collapse in that fashion.

#Danny

Yeah, well, as you say, KJ, that seems to suggest that there's a lot of time required for such a thing because Iran is nowhere near that point, or at least that's how it seems in front of us, what we can glean from the realities on the ground. You mentioned that it would take a massive buildup that might take years. One of the interesting things that has not been talked about a lot is how the USS George H.W. Bush is now in Thailand. This is after the USS Lincoln was in Thailand, these aircraft carriers. And the USS Theodore Roosevelt still needs probably a couple weeks, if not more, to get to the region.

And that doesn't mean that it's ready to just leave, though. If there's any preparations to use it for some kind of attack, it might take some time. That means the October 27th elections in Israel and the November 3rd elections in the midterms are there. Those are coming pretty hot. What do you make of this? The USS George Washington is all by itself on that blockade line with the attendant destroyers, but what do you make of this? We have Trump talking all-out war on the one hand, and then, as you said, a psychological operation to probably manipulate the markets to pull back from it. But there's obviously pretty intense conversations about military options here. Camp David meeting included everybody, included the entire brass from the CIA and the Pentagon and more. Your thoughts on this?

#KJ Noh

Well, you know, again, I don't have the inside track. Certainly, there are all kinds of plans and machinations going on. But we have to look back at the structural constraints here. The U.S. is not geared up for a massive invasion. It doesn't have the forward positioning. All the bases have been knocked out of commission. Currently, it's doing replenishment from Diego Garcia. It was bombing from Fairford in the UK, and now it seems to have been pulling its bombers out of the UK because it feels they're vulnerable. So from where is it going to project power, and what kind of power is it going to project? As I said, if it's not a plan to go immediately nuclear, then it doesn't make sense from a conventional standpoint.

Yes, we have aircraft carriers. Some of them are in commission, out of commission. Most of them are vastly overstretched. Clearly, they're rusting from the inside out. They're probably doing significant damage in Thailand. They're invading the cloaca of many young Thai women. But I don't think that they can have the same impact as far as real combat is concerned. So I think some of this—clearly, planning is going on. These may be contingency plans. They may be actual plans. But regardless, the structural constraints don't indicate that actual boots on the ground or a massive incursion is possible. It would take at least 11 months to build up enough force to be able to project.

And as we know, the bases and the U.S. capacity in the Gulf area have been severely diminished. So one way of interpreting it is, you know, Trump, when he goes into negotiations—he's been known to do this in real estate—is that he sends in a lot of, you know, excavators and movers and has them do a lot of work, and then points to his counterparty, "Look at all this work we're doing. There's a lot

of, you know, real estate construction going on." Is this the same type of ruse? Very possibly. But from a purely military standpoint, you know, even from a layman standpoint, it does not make sense. There is not enough force. There is not enough projection power to be able to effectively engage in a major military operation.

#Danny

Well, it's interesting, KJ, because Barak Ravid, who writes for Axios, who is essentially the mouthpiece of Washington, essentially for this unfortunately very now prominent piece of media that often is breaking so-called news from Washington itself, is oftentimes accused of manipulating the markets. But somebody wondered if he was hacked today because after he reported on the back and forth, the bait and switch of Donald Trump and his administration saying they were going to attack, maybe they won't attack until the midterms, until after the midterms, or they were going to attack before the midterms.

He cited both examples of June 2025 and February 27th, where Trump had not only said that he hadn't made a decision about striking, he also said he would decide within two weeks. There were also instances where Donald Trump said he was in great talks with Iran. This was June 2025, right before, in the days before Israel, with the U.S.'s help, began striking Iran in the 12-day war. So there's a real cause, I think, to be very suspicious of anything that comes out of the Trump administration's mouth. What do you make of this? The lying, the back and forth is so obvious now. I'm wondering how you think this impacts not only this war, but really the geopolitical landscape, when it's just so apparent that nothing that comes out of the administration's mouth can be trusted.

#KJ Noh

Well, it creates a massive deficit of trust. Nothing can be done. Nothing can be relied on. Purely from an economic standpoint, nobody knows whether they're coming or going. Nobody can make predictions. Nobody can invest. Certainly, from a strategic and a geostrategic viewpoint, nobody knows where to place their chips. Nobody knows which side to ally with. Nobody knows what's happening. This is, I believe, part of the strategy. This Jekyll and Hyde quality is part of the strategy. It's this borderline behavior, which people have referred to as kind of disrupted narcissism. But I think that, you know, this coming and going, this unpredictability.

This madman schizophrenia may be part of the strategy, but the thing is, we shouldn't be taken in by it. There are structural constraints, there are realities, and we should not be pulled along with every single vacillation and imagination and whim. We understand what the reality is. The reality is the United States is losing the war. There is no way for it to recover control of the Strait of Hormuz. The mercenaries in Yemen will not be able to win back the capital. They will not be able to hold any of the territory that they've taken, even along the coast. The Yemenis, like the Iranians, they have the advantage of resolve, of geography, of strategy, of determination.

So these things are fundamental facts that can't be changed. And of course, the U.S. could escalate by bombing Iran's infrastructure again. But what it doesn't seem to understand is that Iran is perfectly capable of wiping out all the infrastructure in the Gulf states, essentially making them deserts, uninhabitable. And as Robert Work has said, you know, the strategy against Iran is Air-Sea Battle. This is the plan of war that they actually game out against China, but it's being tested against Iran. The U.S. has lost Air-Sea Battle. Air-Sea Battle, in its simplest sense, Robert Work referred to it as a guided missile salvo competition, a guided missile salvo competition.

The U.S. has already lost that competition. It's not going to go back in there, try the same thing, and win. It's not going to work. If the U.S. starts attacking Iran's infrastructure, Saudi Arabia and all the Gulf states' infrastructure is toast. And up to this current moment, you know, the Strait of Hormuz has been like the carotid artery. But there's nothing to say that Iran cannot attack the heart. It has been choking off the bloodstream, the energy stream. But it can also knock out the pumping stations and the wells and all the infrastructure. And that will really, really transform the global economy. We'll go into immediate cardiac arrest.

#Danny

Yeah. And one report that I haven't been able to talk about yet, but I think is important, is there is a Congressional Research Service report that said that the United States military has lost 81 planes, drones, and helicopters in this war alone. So Iran also has the ability, whatever's left of these bases, whatever's there. And we know that Jordan, in recent months, has been the site where a lot of U.S. hardware is being stationed. But nevertheless, there is obviously a capacity of Iran to take out what are very valuable pieces of equipment that are also limited in their scope. So here's the list of all of the F-15s, the F-35s, the A-10 Warthog, all of these pieces of equipment which are massively expensive, but also they make up what you often talk about, KJ, which is, in this air-sea battle, they're a huge part of what the United States does and what we've seen in this war, but also what we'll likely see in future wars by the United States.

They can't afford to. They're very scared of losing an aircraft carrier, whether it's just taken out of service. But even these fighter jets and these various tankers and all of this, these are extremely valuable, not only because they cost money to make and we have a military-industrial complex, but also, it looks very bad. It looks very bad for the United States to lose massive numbers of aircraft. And what's your thoughts on this? And also, we can also bring it out to the larger picture, too, with just the shape of the geopolitical landscape and how West Asia is really changing it for the United States. It seems like for the worse, for U.S. interests, at least U.S. hegemonic interests.

#KJ Noh

Yeah, I think U.S. hegemonic interests are severely diminished in West Asia. And as they diminish in West Asia, they'll diminish around the rest of the world unless the U.S. is able to pull a hat trick either with nukes or with some kind of massive propaganda campaign. The thing to note here is that

the U.S. is losing these aircraft, and those losses compound. First, it lost its strategic radars, and these are critical. These are the eyes and ears of U.S. force projection in the region. Those are the first things to get knocked out in this guided missile salvo competition. Iran came out of the blocks and won that competition right away. And then the bases have been hit significantly, 15 to 19 of them, so much so that the U.S. is not even considering rebuilding them as far as we know.

And the key logistical bases have been knocked out. The key coordination, the head of U.S. control, has been decapitated in West Asia. And then we have all these planes and aircraft, airframes, that have been taken out. It's not the helicopters and the jet fighters that are the core issue here, although they're very, very expensive. And once again, as you lose more and more pieces, your losses compound. It's like a chess game. After you lose the queen and the knight and the rook, your options are very, very limited. But it's the tankers. The U.S. has a limited number of tankers. And remember, jet fighters and bombers or, you know, multi-range aircraft are still very restricted in how far they can project power.

So without the tankers and also without the AWACS, the kind of airplanes that act as mobile radars and mobile command stations, if those are knocked out, then really the U.S. capacity to project power becomes completely curtailed. And U.S. military power is air power. It's air power. I mean, it's multi-domain operations, but its key advantage is in the projection of air power. It controls the skies, and then everything else ensues from there. If it is no longer able to project air power, and if its AWACS and air control aircraft are no longer capable, that is like sacking the quarterback. You are so restricted in what you can do. And I think this is what we're seeing right now.

It also has to do with the fact, as you pointed out, these are very, very hard to replace, especially with the lack of industrial capacity, but also because of the lack of rare earth elements that China has put a chokehold on. So the U.S. is really losing capacity. Its losses are compounding. Its air power projection capacity is significantly diminished. And all of this at the same time that it is posturing as if it were to do a major operation. I think that, you know, there's something very, very contradictory in that. I think we need to look at the objective facts. You know, the ideologues can fight reality all they want, but we stay grounded in reality. We derive truth from facts. And the truth is that U.S. air power and air projection power is significantly diminished.

#Danny

Maybe we can now do an evaluation. You know, three years ago, KJ, the launch of not only resistance by the Palestinian people, but also the response to that, which was and is still quite brutal, genocidal, as it's been called by many, that ignited an acceleration of a regional war, a war of resistance in West Asia. And ever since, nothing has looked the same. And now we are not only in the throes of what is a lengthy and will continue to be a lengthy U.S.-Israeli war in Iran, but you mentioned Yemen. Now that part of the geopolitical landscape is literally on fire, with Ansar Allah making rapid headway against their Saudi aggressors, U.S.-backed, of course.

So the landscape has changed. And I'm curious on how you view what the situation is and how it impacts the rest of the world. Because, you know, we often hear about China and Russia in the background. We often hear about the United States and what its interests are. Israel, who wags the dog? You know, all of this has become so much more of a part of the conversation of what's happening in this part of the world, but how this part of the world affects the rest of the world. So what are your thoughts reflecting now on these last three years of, you know, what many have called hell and what others have also called a huge moment of global change?

#KJ Noh

Yeah, it's both, right? It has been absolute hell for people in West Asia, most certainly the Palestinians, certainly for the Yemenis. I mean, people forget that Yemen has also been undergoing a genocide forced by Saudi Arabia, you know, for years now. You know, at least 300,000, 400,000 people have perished in that genocidal war. But now they are fighting back. They're taking back their country. And we have to understand all of this as one large interconnected project of decolonization. The Global South is finally fighting back and liberating itself in a way that it was not fully able to accomplish before in the post-World War II era.

During the post-World War II era, there was some decolonization. Many countries got formal political sovereignty, but they never were fully able to achieve economic sovereignty. And there were all kinds of ways through the Bretton Woods system and later neoliberal structural reform in which the U.S. empire continued to control the planet. Palestine was also critical in part of this because it's one of the keystones of the imperial colonial project. It's the last settler colonial state that was created, even as the rest of the world was decolonizing, as settler colonial states were being completely destroyed, you know, transformed. It was a specific settler colonial project. All of that is shifting.

So I think that when we look back on this, we'll see the turning point of history as starting with what happened on October 7th, three years ago, which isn't to say, once again, that it has not been atrocious, that it has not been, you know, a complete and total genocide, and that we shouldn't, in the global core, do everything that we can to prevent any continuation of this war. And I'll talk a little bit more about that later. But certainly, U.S. hegemony is in decline. We're not in Kansas anymore. The tide has shifted. The foundations of U.S. power, in particular military strength, backstopped by economic strength, backstopped by the control of the global reserve currency, which was tied to the control of hydrocarbons.

All of those foundations are being undermined, and we see the rising BRICS and the alternative clearinghouse systems and the alternative financial systems and the alternative banking systems. All of these things are being built out. So we're moving towards a multipolar society that is decolonized from the Western imperial core that has controlled it in a vice grip for the last, at least, century. I would argue really many centuries, from 1492 onwards. So we're seeing a fundamental shift in

history. This is really a pivot point of history. But at the same time, it's not over yet. And as the Global South rises and rises peacefully, as China rises peacefully, the U.S. declines more and more violently. We're still in that violent, violent phase.

#Danny

Yeah, you know, KJ, the United States, as part of this process you're talking about, finally made good on its—or at least finally addressed its commitments. I don't know if we can call it making good on its commitments to withdraw from Iraq. But as our friend Brian Berletic has noted, a lot of those troops are simply moving to Jordan, where it seems like a lot of U.S. troops are just huddling these days, partly because it's probably the only place they have left to go. But anyway, I'm curious about this. You know, I was talking earlier about the U.S.'s reliance on proxies and how, if we look at the Syria case in 2024, when it fell, and we just look at the vast, broad scope of the U.S.'s imperial strategy in West Asia, it has been heavily reliant on proxies that seem to be in short supply.

Here are images of Iran attacking the Kurdish opposition groups in Iraq today, and they've been doing this almost every single day, weakening what is a heavily U.S.-supported opposition, which there have been plans to use as part of the shock troop force to attack Iran and create an external and internal crisis. But I'm curious what your thoughts are about this. There, of course, in other parts of the world than West Asia, the oligarchy and the proxies there seem quite strong and on the move. But in West Asia, which arguably is a huge key for U.S. hegemony, it's receding, and we could say probably in total, Eurasia as a whole, that is also receding. It seems difficult for the U.S. to actually cultivate allies, and we know what the state of the Gulf countries are now, in particular Saudi Arabia and its war on Yemen. So your thoughts on this? This is a huge part of what the U.S. does, and there's cracks everywhere, it seems.

#KJ Noh

Well, I mean, there's specific parts that have to do with the history of each region. And then there's the simple fact of geography. The U.S. finds it easier to project force in its own hemisphere, in the Americas. It always has done that. That's where it started from. And so that's one dimension of its control. But the other fact is not simply distance, but political history. We know that the Gulf states were started, as many of them, as crucial states, essentially British colonial vassals. They signed a pact with the British imperial devil in exchange for continued support and sovereignty there. In exchange, they would facilitate the flow of oil and allow the British mandate to continue in West Asia. All of these Gulf states lack legitimacy. They lack popular support.

Many of them don't even have fixed populations. You know, anywhere between 50 to 90% of their populations are migrant laborers who are brought in to do the work that the citizens don't want to do. And many are kept in conditions that approximate or approach slavery, indentured slavery. So all of this is to say that U.S. power projection is weakening because as its absolute economic and military power weakens, not only does it take out its frustrations on its proxies and its quote-

unquote allies, but also the allies themselves become restive. They realize that the boss is not as strong as formerly projected, and therefore they start to balance. They start to look for their own—they start to do their own hedging and balancing and alliance building.

And all of that creates a ripple effect where the network, this kind of hub-and-spoke control, this top-down control that the U.S. had over the world, is significantly undermined. It's weakened significantly. That said, there are still shock troops and proxies that the U.S. is still seeking to leverage. Certainly, we think that, you know, Syrian proxies could be one. We certainly know that in the Pacific, Japan and Korea and the Philippines and Taiwan could be recruited as proxies. This is an old imperial strategy. You know, when Britain attacked China, it used 20,000 warriors from Rajasthan, you know, to be the shock troops of the Opium War.

So all of this is to say that we know proxies are part of the agenda. We know that there are deadly and ruthless proxies out there. And yet, at the same time, I think that there is significant weakness. There is not enough strength, even amongst these proxies, to do what the United States wants to do, which is to invade, attack, and ultimately control its enemies, most notably, in this case, Iran. It is not capable—certainly, it's not capable of maintaining a sustained attack, and there is no way that it could hold territory, even if it were to attack it. And we see the retreat out of Afghanistan and Iraq being good examples. You can invade, you can destroy; that doesn't mean you can hold territory.

#Danny

Some have made the comparison of what's happening in Yemen now to Afghanistan. Do you see any of that? I mean, some have even gone as far as saying Ansar Allah, and what the Western mainstream media call the Houthis, are similar to the Taliban. But I never saw the Taliban launch ballistic missiles at an airport in a different country. So, your thoughts on this before we look at the rest of Eurasia?

#KJ Noh

Yeah, I think it's qualitatively different. Afghanistan was an insurgency, and essentially what they did was they wore the U.S. down. The U.S. tried hard. You know, it built out for decades. It built out an entire doctrine and a system of counterinsurgency, and it tried its best, and it was simply worn down and defeated. On the other hand, Yemen, despite the near-genocidal sanctions it has endured, the near-genocidal war it has endured, has become a very, very powerful fighting force that understands modern strategy and modern multi-domain operations.

And as I said, it's using its geographic advantages, you know, superbly. And as you point out, it's, you know, waging a missile war. It is going toe to toe with the United States, going toe to toe in this guided missile, you know, launch competition. And it, too, is coming out ahead. So this, you know,

the fact that it is capable of working on that level shows that it is qualitatively different from the smaller insurgencies that were enduring and very, very, you know, effective, but they're completely different.

#Danny

Yeah. And some of the argument has been that, you know, the Taliban at one point had certain levels of support from the United States. There's, you know, some who have suggested that Ansar Allah has also at some points received certain levels of support from the United States. But when I look at the landscape, KJ, I agree with you. It's like what has happened since 2014 to Yemen, there is such a clear line, it seems, of this organization, this political force, which is also a political force with government power, state power, that looks far more like a part of the axis of resistance than just a byproduct of blowback. So I wanted to bring that up because I see the comparisons a lot, and I think it kind of falls into this narrative of, well, these groups are all just armed groups that are one form or another dictated at one point by the U.S. Any thoughts on that before we move on?

#KJ Noh

Well, the U.S. has always played a double game with many, many opponents. It has always tried to cajole. It's always tried to bribe. It's always tried to get its way with different components. So that history, if you dig deep enough, you will probably find something interesting that looks like cooperation or support, but that doesn't mean that right now they're not diametrically opposed to each other. The Taliban, you know, Talib actually means student, right? I mean, these were created—these were students, scholars that were actually created as blowback, as you point out, by the United States itself, as it mismanaged its invasion and then occupation of Afghanistan. Ansar Allah are a much, much more enduring force. They track their history back centuries.

They have a strong, not only ideological and religious discipline, but they have a strong military structure. The Taliban was never able to force a U.S. aircraft carrier or significant platform to retreat. Ansar Allah has done that, and it's done that multiple times. These are qualitatively different forces, and it shows the ways in which the Global South is organizing and regrouping in ways that are capable of challenging the United States on its own turf and in its own area of strength. Just simply the fact that Iran was able to stand and punch back against the United States, and it's the United States that had to go back to the corner, shows you that military affairs are no longer the same. Things have transformed fundamentally.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, Ansar Allah. The things it has achieved under the worst of conditions also include blockading Israel successfully. Israel just called Ansar Allah a mini Iran. They called Yemen now a mini Iran because of its missile and drone capabilities being as advanced as they are, so advanced that they're releasing videos of precision targeting against these Saudi-backed forces. So, pushing

back Saudi Arabia, defeating the United States in that several-month act of aggression, war of aggression last year, and of course what we're seeing now.

KJ, I want to ask you about the state of what's happening in the Asia-Pacific because, you know, in recent weeks we saw a U.S. Marine has allegedly been arrested for committing murder against a woman in Okinawa, on one of the many bases that the United States has there. We also have reports, and I can pull this up. It's actually quite comical. CNBC, about how China has obtained parts of an F-35. And now, I covered this story earlier when it first broke, but now they're saying that the UPS manager responsible for fielding this package of F-35 parts just simply missed his email. Check this out.

#Speaker 1

In today's Executive Edge, a story about the importance of checking your email. China managed to obtain parts from a U.S. F-35 stealth fighter jet after a UPS employee missed an email warning not to route that shipment through Hong Kong. That's according to a Bloomberg report that said that the shipment of the warplane parts was meant to travel to San Francisco through South Korea and then Taiwan. But it was late leaving Australia and was mistakenly routed through Hong Kong in an effort to try and speed up delivery. China seized the parts in Hong Kong, and the Pentagon is, in their words, actively working to retrieve them.

#Danny

So, KJ, your thoughts on this? I mean, from the, of course, horrors of what it means to be occupied by the United States, like Okinawa is, to these absolutely ridiculous narratives. I mean, I don't even know why they release stories like this to the public. Maybe they just can't hide it anymore, right, about the F-35 parts. But, you know, the United States—and then we also, of course, had the Trump Xi visit, which caused a lot of consternation on the part of neocon hawks, both on the Democratic and Republican side. So, your thoughts on the state of this always-building war toward China, but a buildup that has its share of setbacks.

#KJ Noh

Well, these kinds of things happen all the time. You know, I remember a little while back, they were sending, I think, anthrax through the mail, and some of that got misrouted for the Jupiter program. It's just nonsensical things that happen. In this case, perhaps that person didn't see the email, but my goodness, if the transmission of critical strategic materials relies on whether somebody receives an email or not, there's something wrong with that workflow. There's something seriously misguided. And then who knows, maybe the email itself was not working properly, as we see today.

The entire system is being enshittified, and nothing works properly anymore. And it's not surprising that also bleeds into the military-industrial complex. We know it's already starting off with graft and

incompetence. And then, you know, with more, you know, systems failure all around, not a surprise. But regarding the U.S. Marine who killed a Japanese woman, I mean, these are the kind of things that happen often, the crimes against the native people where the U.S. has bases. The U.S. has, what, 750, 800 bases in over 130 countries, and everywhere where there is a U.S. base, there is a potential for this kind of violence, damage, criminality, death, assault, rape.

Part of the problem is the United States, when it goes into a host country, it signs what is called a status of forces agreement, and that gives the U.S. tremendous powers, sometimes even *carte blanche* against the local population. So you send in groups of young people who are trained to be violent and to be hateful, who are trained to hate people of color, who are trained to wage war. And then they have guns and weapons. And then on top of that, they have money and they have impunity. They have immunity. That is a recipe for catastrophe. And from time to time, we see very, very visible incidents like this.

The Marine took this Japanese woman to a hotel, killed her, and then walked out with her backpack. That's what allowed him to be identified. But this kind of thing happens all the time. It's almost a kind of side effect of having this massive military presence around the world and training men to engage in violence against people, and then giving them almost unlimited power, certainly military, a certain kind of immunity or impunity. That is a recipe for catastrophe. And we've seen it over and over and over again. This is just the most recent example. Other examples in Okinawa, they've happened many times.

Some of these are horrific, you know, young girls being kidnapped and raped in Korea, you know, young girls driven over by tanks or armored cars while they're going to work, going to school. This kind of stuff happens all the time. It's deadly. It's dangerous. It's violent. It's ugly. And, you know, the sooner the United States dials down its military presence in other countries, which it has because it wants to wage war, in particular in Asia, against China, the sooner it dials this down, the less suffering there will be for local populations. And actually, the better it will be for the U.S. economy, because now we're wasting our money on hurting people around the world.

#Danny

Yeah, well, before the Iraq War, I mean, this was the period that essentially had all of the U.S. military hardware, everything it had, was moving in this direction. But a lot of that has changed. I'm curious how you see the overall landscape now that, of course, the U.S. still has all of these bases, and the U.S., you just can't count them. I don't know if they're not willing to say or something like that. But really, an absolutely disastrous and shocking number. It's just shocking that the United States has so many bases in this part of the world alone.

#Danny

Your thoughts on how West Asia feels? Like, you know, there's a report by the CIA Red Team that said that Israel is facing a major crisis internally, which we know, with the history of colonialism and settler colonies like it, internal crises always mean external catastrophes for the region and a lot of the world. So the region itself in West Asia seems like it's a powder keg that's already been sparked and lit in many ways and could get worse.

Almost, we can guarantee that there will be more attempts by Israel and the United States to clamp down and try to expand their dominance there, no matter how much it wanes. And then how does that affect, though, this theater in Asia and the Asia Pacific with China? Because there are some in the Washington establishment, the foreign policy establishment, who are not happy with it being tied in. I mean, I can almost see the midterms now as a referendum on the U.S.'s incessant focus on West Asia and a desire to go back to the more eastern parts of the Eurasia theater, like China and, of course, Russia.

#KJ Noh

Yeah, this is a good question. Certainly, you know, I hate to say this, but I believe the U.S. is in a school shooter mode. It's creating havoc all over West Asia. As you point out, it's lighting fires everywhere, setting, you know, havoc and destruction. It's letting loose the dogs of war everywhere. It also wants to pivot to the Asia Pacific. In the neocon class, there are two categories. They are the primacists. They're the ones who want it everywhere. They want primacy everywhere all the time at once. And then you have the prioritizers who say, look, you know, we need to sequence things. We need to have a division of labor.

We need to strategically re-sequence. And the most important critical path for us to move forward is through China. Everything goes through China. We knock out China first, and then we go back and knock out the others who are really, you know, side jobs. The head of the snake is China. So we still see this kind of prioritizer thinking that wants to take the war to China. We see the constant escalation in the Pacific. We see the constant war-gaming, the up-armoring of the entire first island chain. The U.S. is scrounging, you know, all the islands of the Pacific, looking for every single scrap of asphalt from where it can launch missiles and planes.

So the powder keg, as you put it, is still being primed. We are not out of the woods yet. It's still very, very dangerous. And at the same time, barring the deployment of nuclear weapons, which Elbridge Colby is saying that we should use like candies, wants to hand them out like condoms or like candies, barring that shift, which is very much a possibility, from a conventional standpoint, the U.S. cannot prevail. As I pointed out before, the U.S. plan of war against Iran was the plan of war against China: air-sea battle, a guided missile salvo competition. The U.S. could not prevail against Iran.

It will not be able to prevail against China on those grounds. It simply doesn't have the industrial capacity, doesn't have the rare earth elements, doesn't have the force projection power. It wants to use its proxies as much as possible, but it will still fall short. And so this is a moment both of tremendous risk and also of potential transformation. We have to keep both in mind. As I've said, sorry to be trite, it's darkest just before dawn, and we are on the cusp of transformation. Things have the potential to get worse before they get better. We could see further conflicts, accelerated, intensified conflicts in West Asia.

We could see accelerated conflicts in Europe. Europe looks like it's primed for war, and also certainly in East Asia, where there is the primary focus. I do want to point out one thing that has been interesting: South Korea has just given the middle finger to Ukraine. And when I say middle finger, they're actually withdrawing—they're recalling their ambassador from Kiev. Recalling an ambassador is probably the strongest diplomatic rebuke that you can send, short of completely severing relations with another country completely. And as you know, this has to do with the fact that Zelensky went before the UN, talked about South Korea sending North Korean POWs to South Korea, and he was under a nondisclosure agreement. He broke that agreement.

South Korea's president was incensed and called it a betrayal in public, essentially called out Zelensky. And now there's all kinds of back and forth. We'll see what happens. But this is a very interesting moment because, first, it shows the way in which East Asia and West Asia, in particular Europe, are all interconnected. The key fact is that during the Yoon administration, the previous South Korean president, he had this slavish desire to curry favor with the United States. And the U.S. was running out of munitions in its war against Russia, in its proxy war in Ukraine against Russia. It needed about 90,000 shells every month. It could only produce 9,000. So it went to South Korea and said, "South Korea has 330,000. We can get them in 41 days. Let's call up the South Koreans, tell them to FedEx it to us express."

And Yoon, in a slavish desire to curry favor, said yes. And they sent probably between 330,000 to perhaps half a million shells. In other words, it was the South Koreans who maintained, who continued the war against Russia. Otherwise, that war of attrition involving, you know, shells would have ended three years ago. So South Korea sent at least half a million 155-millimeter shells to Ukraine. It did this illegally because under South Korean law, you cannot send arms into an active conflict which you are not a party to. But what they did was, they said they were lending them to the United States, and then the United States would send them to Ukraine. Shells are fungible. 155-millimeter shells are fungible. So it was just a pretense, but he sent more shells to Ukraine than all of Europe.

South Korea by itself sent more shells to Ukraine than all of Europe. It also sent perhaps 100 105-millimeter howitzers. It sent them to the Czech Republic, which doesn't even use them in their arsenal. So those were clearly being sent to Ukraine. It sent other types of aid. And then it currently has a contract with Poland to build HIMARS-type guided missiles, what the Koreans call Cheonmu.

Hanwha is a company which is building HIMARS-type missiles in Poland. We know where those are going to end up. Those are going to be sent into Ukraine. But anyway, all of this is that Yoon was too happy to oblige, to even go to Bucha and do a photo op with his wife and go on about values, diplomacy—the values meaning the values of sycophancy to empire, the values of the Epstein class.

But Russia warned South Korea not to get involved. The foreign minister and the deputy foreign minister both stated explicitly to South Korea, "You do not get involved. You do not send weapons that will kill Russian citizens. If you do, there will be hell to pay." And South Korea continued. And so President Putin signed a strategic agreement, a mutual defense treaty with North Korea in 2024. And then North Korea sent troops to help defend and liberate Kursk when Ukraine invaded it. And then two of these troops were taken prisoner of war. Now, this is where it gets very, very sticky, because under international humanitarian law, those troops should have been sent back to North Korea, or at least Russia, since they were fighting under a Russian flag.

Instead, this is what I surmise: the Yoon administration probably initiated moves to have them taken to South Korea. Now, under South Korean law, all North Koreans are automatically considered South Korean. And if they're taken prisoner of war, South Korea tries really hard to take them into South Korea as a kind of propaganda coup. This is what happened, for example, during the Korean War. The Korean War was essentially over by 1951, but it took another two and a half years just to negotiate how the POWs would be repatriated and who and how. So it is an extraordinarily sensitive issue. And from the standpoint of North Korea, they see this appropriation by South Korea of North Korean troops as a kidnapping. And to the best of our knowledge, since we have never heard anything from these North Korean troops, what they actually want.

There's been no independent third-party evaluation or announcement of what they want. I think it's reasonable to assume that they are being taken against their will. North Korea would most certainly see it as a kidnapping. And also, the other thing is they were probably certainly mistreated by the Ukrainians, possibly tortured. One of them had a broken jaw. You know, I've been in military combat. A broken jaw is the last thing that happens in combat, right? All kinds of injuries happen in combat. A broken jaw is highly, highly unlikely. So they're most likely tortured and mistreated. That makes them very hard to repatriate to Russia or North Korea because North Korea would expose their mistreatment. And actually, even the release of their pictures was a violation of the Geneva Conventions.

The Geneva Convention is very, very strict on this. You do not take pictures of POWs and release them to the public. So there was probably some kind of deal that was struck to send them to South Korea. When they go to South Korea, they essentially get deprogrammed. They're put into a place called Hanawon, where they're held in this kind of Squid Game-type compound, where they're constantly surveilled and deprogrammed, incredibly tight security. And then once they finish Hanawon, they're selected. If you're young, pretty, and photogenic, you're usually put onto the North Korea defector circuit, where you are paid large amounts of money to defect, to, you know, attack North Korea and tell lies about it.

That, um, there's one young woman who's been totally discredited. But anyway, you know, she's the one who said that she started taking courses at Columbia University and realized that it was more oppressive than North Korea. She may actually be right, but not in the way that she thinks. But anyway, you know, there's a category of North Korean defectors that are trotted out into the propaganda system. And then the other people are quietly, you know, disappeared into a black hole, and you never hear from them again. So one of those things would have happened to these people. These people would have probably gone into a black hole. But then Yoon Suk-yeol, the former president, was impeached.

The Lee Jae-myung administration came in. Zelensky was pushing for more South Korean military support. As I said, South Korea has been the quartermaster to the Ukraine conflict. It has supplied more munitions, for example, than all of Europe combined. And I believe that he could leverage the POW situation into gaining more support. When he didn't get that, I think that he decided to blow the whistle and create tremendous conflict and inconvenience for Lee Jae-myung because the Lee Jae-myung government is trying to de-escalate with North Korea. And by blowing the whistle on this and showing that North Koreans are being sent to South Korea, this would automatically scuttle any overtures that South Korea is making with it.

So I believe that there was an NDA governing the relationship, the transfer. And from North Korea's standpoint, this would be seen as a South Korean kidnapping. And Kyiv would also have an incentive to keep it quiet because these prisoners could have been exchanged for Ukrainian POWs. But anyway, he blabbed at the UN. South Korea called it treachery. The president, Lee Jae-myung, went—you know, went public and said that this was betrayal. The South Korean foreign minister has called it unheard of in diplomacy. And then, instead of apologizing, Ukraine has accused Lee Jae-myung of lying about it. Highly unlikely, but they claimed that there was no NDA, which is nonsense.

And then, to rub salt into, you know, the friction, they also hinted that this could provoke a war between North Korea and South Korea. That was kind of, you know—I mean, in fact, they would like to see a war between North Korea and South Korea, because then that would prevent North Korea—that would tie down North Korea. So anyway, that was, I think, beyond the pale. And then they started to allege that South Korea had helped Russia and was buying Russian oil. And so I think that was the last straw. So that fake apology and that distaste for Ukrainian politics and South Korean involvement on the Ukrainian side, along with South Korea's desire to keep good relations with Russia—I mean, Russia is South Korea's neighbor—South Korea will now recall their ambassador.

So we don't know if this will be a permanent recall or a temporary recall, but it's a really, really strong signal that there's serious friction, there's serious fractures even among the vassals. The EU has threatened South Korea, you know, to retaliate if it breaks relations with Ukraine, so that tells you where the EU is. But I think, you know, things are already significantly damaged. And it shows the kind of weakening of these alliances that the US has painstakingly built. Yoon Suk-yeol originally wanted to incorporate South Korea into NATO and further vassalize it. And Lee Jae-myung has sent

a signal, you know, we're not going down this path. And essentially, we're breaking relations with Ukraine unless there's a significant shift in attitude and behavior.

#Danny

Wow, incredible summary, really honing in on this really critical example of exactly where the world situation is and how the United States, in particular, is going to great ends and great lengths to achieve these ends. Yeah, KJ, we can close it here. There's always people asking me, well, is the U.S. empire in decline and collapsing, or is it powerful and surging and able to assert its monopoly on violence? I would say that we are seeing signs of decline everywhere. The U.S. empire is certainly receding. It's sitting on top of a myriad of crises, but this monopoly on violence and this world financial system and everything that you just outlined here in this example of South Korea shows that, no, the U.S. still has the ability to squeeze, to try to suffocate and cause immense amounts of suffering.

Does that mean it will lead to the resurgence of the United States as a hegemon without any challengers? No, likely not. Likely what we're seeing is the exact opposite of that, and we're going to continue to see the exact opposite of that for quite some time, unless something, as you said, pulls a rabbit out of the hat, unless there's some trick that I'm not aware of. But nevertheless, I think it's like holding two things together at the same time, two contradictions. One, the U.S. is going to wreak havoc as an empire, chaos. It's going to continue to try to vassalize, oppress, suppress. But at the same time, we are seeing a lot of inroads toward building a different kind of world. So, KJ, your final thoughts?

#KJ Noh

Well, as you point out, the U.S. still is incredibly violent, and as it weakens, it becomes more and more violent. It declines violently as the Global South rises peacefully. And that resort to violence, we can understand it as a kind of reversion to primitive accumulation. Capitalist states, when they start, they start out with genocide. They start out with slavery and colonization. And then they financialize and they create these neocolonial systems of control. But when that weakens, then they come right back into that naked violence.

So we see this reversion to capitalism: direct primitive accumulation, this direct overtaking, for example, of Venezuela's economy, the threatening of Canada, of Greenland, etc. This naked reversion to colonization and massive military violence. All of that is to say that there is, and I hate to say this, there is more pain to come. And that pain is also—it's already here domestically, but it will increase domestically. The economy is getting worse, and I believe that there's further immiseration. Certainly, the bubble is ready to pop.

Certainly, bond markets and interest rates are going to, you know, have massive catastrophic effects across the board. We know that hydrocarbons are still going to increase, and the hydrocarbon

shortage and all the related resources, including naphtha, sulfur, urea, all of these shortages will continue to increase. There'll be demand destruction across the world. So, not to get apocalyptic, but there is massive pain, suffering, and destruction that is still approaching. But I think, as I always say, there is something we can do. One thing we have to understand is that right now the military is going to have a 1.5 trillion dollar war budget. This war budget is preparing for war, but in particular, it's preparing for war with China.

This is the largest adjusted military budget, adjusted to inflation, since World War II at its peak. So really, we are looking at massive peak expenditure preparation for war, even as, you know, troops go on food stamps and, you know, the vast majority of troops who join, they never signed up for war. In fact, the only thing they signed up for is socialism, because the military is about the closest thing to socialism that you can get anywhere in the United States: guaranteed roof, guaranteed food, guaranteed work, guaranteed health, guaranteed education, right? So that's not what they signed up for, but they're being put in harm's way, and they are also putting others, you know, millions of others, in harm's way. And so, the vast majority of people in the United States currently think that the \$1.5 trillion request is too high.

And if we actually do a correct calculation, it's probably closer to \$2.3 trillion. But the vast majority of people in the country, at least 60%, believe that the military budget is too high. We know that this is going to take us down a path of catastrophe. And I think that it's important to the extent that budgets are a moral statement. I believe we should make a moral statement, but also because we know that the effects on us will be devastating, both domestically, because all that money that could have gone to serve humans will now be poured into the machine of destruction, and also because it will create untold threat, damage, harm, fear to the rest of the world.

So I think that right now we have to put our shoulders to the wheel and make the demand that we do not wage war on China and we do not pass legislation that appropriates money for war against China, that appropriates \$1.5 trillion for war against the rest of the world. So anyway, all of this is to say that Code Pink is doing three days of action, three days of nonviolent action, November 10th, 11th, and 12th in Washington. They want to rally our so-called legislators who are supposed to represent us and tell them to reject the war buildup, to reject plans for war, in particular against China, reject domination of Asia and the Asia-Pacific, and to urge Congress to invest money in health care, housing, education, community needs, sustainable future, all the things that we know that we want and everybody has been clamoring for for decades.

And last but not least, to demand peace and cooperation over war. And so, if you're interested—and I think this is an eminently important action, which is being led by some of the most courageous and principled activists in the United States right now, Code Pink—you can go to their website, and there's a form. You can join, sign up, and really, I mean, I think this is one of the moments where we can actually make a difference, or at least try to make a difference.

#Danny

Yeah, well said. And we'll end it here by letting you all know that you can sign that form. You can participate any way you would like to. So this is the form. You just give your email, your name, and what you would want to do, whether you want to join the march in person or just want to help with planning or just want to participate remotely. Just let them know and participate. That's how you can become part of—especially if you're in the United States—you can become part of an effort to stop this ever-expanding war machine and to build a bigger popular consensus around that. Do that. That link is in the video description below. I want to thank everyone who viewed today. Thanks to Farzana Deem for the super chat. Thanks to all the moderators in the chat today, this evening. Appreciate your time and your efforts. Thanks to everyone who viewed the show today. I'll be back tomorrow. I'll let you know when that is. But hit the like button before you go. Do support the channel if you can. Patreon, Substack, much more. See you.