

Alastair Crooke: Insurrection & Regime Change Coming to Saudi Arabia – A New Middle East Emerging

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#Glenn

Hi everyone, and welcome back. Today is October 12th, 2026, and we have the great pleasure of being joined by Alastair Crooke, a former British diplomat and an expert on the Middle East. Make sure to subscribe to his excellent Substack, the Conflicts Forum, for some of the best insights into world events, and I've left a link in the description. So thank you for coming back on the program. It's great seeing you again. Welcome back, Glenn Diesen. Thank you.

I want to at least start with the Middle East, because I've been reading your Substack, and I wanted to ask: because when we observe the Iran war, as well as the Saudi-Yemen war, we tend to use military and economic indicators to assess the direction of the war. But the political systems themselves are somewhat fragile among the Gulf state countries. I was wondering, how do you assess the risk, for example, that Saudi Arabia could be facing now? I focus on Saudi Arabia because if the Saudis would fall, the entire region would change fundamentally. So how do you assess that political stability within Saudi Arabia?

#Alastair Crooke

Very, very fragile at the moment. And certainly there is a risk—several risks. But, I mean, there are definitely risks. And I think it was the Wall Street Journal today was suggesting that MBS is sort of going from bunker to bunker underneath the palaces, hiding away with his special protection squad. But there are different risks, and I think it's important to make sure what they are, because people always end up in the wrong place, in my experience, on this. Because it's actually not the Ansar Allah that is a threat to MBS in any physical sense at all. I heard some reports going out that he's hiding out in the bunkers because of fear of assassination by Ansar Allah. That's not the case.

Actually, the likely cause of his downfall will come from within Saudi Arabia, within the tribal structures of Saudi Arabia. And he has created this vulnerability by his own hand and by his own doing. So it is what it is. He has cut away the pillars of his own legitimacy to the point at which, yes, he is threatened and may be deposed in this coming period. But I'll just cover the sort of the main threats. The most obvious one is, of course, that Ansar Allah is following in the footsteps, perhaps, of Iraq, in the sense that as the Saudis or the Saudi allies or allied forces attack and destroy buildings in Sana'a or in Sa'dah, Yemen as a whole, Ansar Allah escalates by attacks on the infrastructure.

So they've just taken out an element of the major oil field, the Ghawar field, which was providing 30% of Saudi Arabia's oil exports. And they've damaged that, and they continue to damage refineries and oil infrastructure. The more Saudi Arabia attacks Yemen, the more the attacks on the infrastructure continue. And they are becoming quite serious attacks, are serious attacks. I mean, and this infrastructure is not going back quickly. I've just come from London, where I was listening to someone from Aramco, and all the talk amongst the oil companies has one word in it: resilience. We're all resilient about everything.

And, you know, fundamentals don't change, and that we'll be sort of heading back to everything will go back as it was. There are these little hiccups before in the Middle East, and we just hear them and go on because the fundamentals don't change. So these are fundamentals, and they are changing before our eyes, actually, dear CEOs of oil companies and so on, because fundamentals are the infrastructure necessary to extract, refine, and pump oil. And they are, in many cases, burning. And that's what I would call a fundamental that is in the process of transition. The second element, of course, is the financial consequences. And I don't think anyone has done much work on this.

I think Bill Kington has done a little bit about it. But what you see is that about, I think, some large proportion of the Saudi revenues from oil exports are necessary to finance their imports. I mean, this is normal stuff, of course, but I mean, it's quite dramatic figures. I think 83% of imports are financed by oil exports. That's a lot. And as the oil exports are now zero, what's going to happen? Because there are two possibilities. It can be either a huge trade deficit because if you're not having revenue, yes, you will still be importing. If indeed that is the case, then you're going to have a huge deficit. How are you going to finance that? And you've got one of two ways: devalue the currency sharply, which means huge inflation. I mean, it would be a big devaluation.

That is cutting the peg, or staying with the peg and selling off your foreign exchange reserves. That's what Japan has been doing in this period. But the amount of reserves they would have to sell, it would be bigger than that of Japan. And Japan almost shook the American bond market, and they still do that. I mean, the bond market was in danger of collapse. Bessent was doing everything he could to try and stop that. But I see that the amount of sales necessary to balance the books, if you like, this time would be of a much greater magnitude than even Japan. And therefore, if it was

allowed to sell its foreign exchange reserves, if Bessent allowed it, I mean, it would be a real, if you like, systemic threat to the Western economic system, I mean, through the bond market, which controls pretty well everything.

While you've been away, it's been rising and rising. The interest rates on the 30-year are sort of in uncharted territory, and the 10-year is well over 5, at about 5.5. So all of this is having a big effect. So you've got, first of all, the infrastructure. Secondly, you've got what it's doing to the finances of Saudi Arabia. But then we move on to the more serious, I think, threat, which is that MBS has cut away all the pillars of legitimacy that at one time underpinned the Saudi arrangement. That was the arrangement between the Wahhabi establishment, the Al ash-Sheikh, and, on the other hand, the Al Saud family. And that strategic agreement underpinned everything. The Al Saud family got support from the ulemas, from the religious authorities.

They got moral and, if you like, theological support for the family. And that's been very important at times because, for example, you may recall in 1975, King Faisal was assassinated in his palace by his nephew, his young 26-year-old nephew. He bent down to let the nephew, who was the prince, kiss his forehead, but he took out a gun and shot him in the head instead. And what was that for? Well, that was because of the modernization plan the family was trying to introduce at the time. They were trying to introduce television. And this young man, who was obviously a zealot, killed the king because of it. So the Saudis rolled back strongly on their liberalization, television, also about respect to women and maybe driving, and went all sort of Wahhabi. I'm putting that loosely, but it was going back to those structures.

And they kept more or less that, and it was then reinforced after 1979 when some ultra-conservative tribal members who were actually in the National Guard, I can't remember, they seized Mecca, if you recall. And the point to that is that the only way out of that required the imprimatur of the Wahhabi and theocratic elite. They were the ones that effectively saved the family at that point. And then you move on, if you like, to this new era, and you have MBS, who acts entirely on his own sole authority, ostensibly with the king somewhere in a coma behind him. But he acts on that. And in order to concentrate power, he's done a number of things. One is to divide the military forces and to use the National Guard as a watchdog of every element.

Each element of the military operates separately and at a distinct distance from other elements, operating to a royal prince in the Ministry of Defense. So every part of the army operates to one of the family in the Ministry of Defense. And the National Guard, which was Ikhwan, that was Ibn Saud's foot soldiers originally, they were brought into the National Guard, is really there to protect the family from a military attack, from some sort of military attack. In fact, the whole posture of the Saudi army is not to fight a war against the Houthis, but to protect the king and the family from internal, if you like, insurrection. So that was one part. Then, of course, he did the opposite of what happened after the siege of Mecca.

We have Vision 2030, which was with a heavy emphasis on youth culture and entertainment areas being open and, you know, young tourists on the beaches, women tourists on the beaches, and all of that. And at the same time, he diminished the standing of the ulama, of the clergy, the Wahhabi clergy, diminished them and tried to corrupt them largely, and has succeeded in that to a certain extent, but only at the expense of great resentment. On top of that, he has set off parts of the tribes against others in the sense that only the family gets the stipend from the sales of oil. But others who join the military don't get a military stipend and are quite poorly paid by comparison. So if you're one of the family, the inner family, then you get a small share of your work. Most of it stays with MBS and with the family. It's all family business.

#Glenn

And then they've had their lands expropriated because many of these lands have been taken to these projects like NEOM.

#Alastair Crooke

Huge amount of land, you probably recall. I mean, they actually, they just shot the chief, the tribal leader in that area, and expropriated those lands. So you have a build-up of resentments and factions, and many of them are deeply hostile, particularly after what happened at the Ritz-Carlton, when, you recall, you know, sixty princes were brought in, and then they were, some of them were actually, like, you know, technically completely tortured, but they certainly suffered and had their money taken from them. Taking the money is one thing, but they were deeply humiliated. For royal princes to be treated like that was a huge humiliation.

So that's why the setting is as it is. And what I hear, and I believe, is going on is that they are actually talking, and there are discussions going on amongst the tribal leaders, and even there have been some discussions with the IRGC about a new disposition for the region. So MBS has put himself, because all of these are things that he did and was responsible for, and he's kept everyone else out of it. He's done all the things, and he is now reaping a harvest of anger and grievance from, if you like, the tribes of Saudi Arabia, who previously had supported them, albeit with hiccups, with assassinations and other things, but had largely supported them. So that's the position.

#Glenn

Well, given that Saudi Arabia faces all these internal problems, which could lead to insurrection, regime change, it could be, of course, amplified or even backed by Yemen or Iran. You know, it's in such a difficult position, and it's such an important country, though, especially for the United States in the region, which is kind of why it's a bit surprising to see that Saudi Arabia appears to be standing there all alone. That is, why do you think the US isn't trying to step in to rescue the situation? And I know Turkey and Pakistan are supposed to help according to this Mecca Pact, but

that doesn't seem to be forthcoming. So how do you explain that, given that this situation is so severe and no one is coming to the aid of the Saudis?

#Alastair Crooke

I assume it's because the United States, but certainly I think Pakistan and others understand what I just said: that the army is not there for fighting the Houthis. The army is there protecting the palaces and the king, and they're not organized or equipped for fighting a war like—because they have a real legacy of being warriors. The Yemenis are one of those peoples in the world, like the Gurkhas and others, who have always had a reputation to be warriors, to fight them. But as I say, I think there are discussions going on, not with the United States perhaps, but more either with Ansar Allah or with other regional actors, or with the IRGC even. Recall during the Iraq War, you know, the IRGC—it was always, I always was quite surprised by it.

I shouldn't have been perhaps, but the IRGC talked to everybody in Iraq. You know, even those that were lined up against it and hated Iran, they had links into every area. And, you know, this is what they did in Afghanistan and why Afghanistan finally fell so quickly, because Qasem Soleimani had worked for some years talking to people in Afghanistan, preparing the ground so that when it came, it fell quite quickly. So I can't tell you for sure that this is going on. I can't tell you what the outcome is, but I think there's a large sort of buildup that there needs to be a complete redistribution of oil wealth and also political standing and political rights.

And that extends across regions. And what you say is quite true. You start in the dark, but you didn't follow it through. I mean, Saudi Arabia is something of a pivot. And how are they going to get out of this position? Because unless, you know, MBS, if you like, abdicates or he capitulates to the Houthis, he's in a trap, a very deep trap, and he doesn't have support. I don't think, I mean, Egypt's not coming to support, because Egypt remembers very well what happened during the Nasserite period, when they sent an army at the request of the Saudis to defeat the Houthis. And what happened at the end of that? You had something like 20,000 dead Egyptians lying on the ground.

The Saudis—the Houthis defeated them completely. So I think, and Pakistan, I mean, don't forget Pakistan. About a quarter of the population—well, just some of it—but I mean, certainly about 20% were Shia. And they were the ones that protested most strongly when the Supreme Leader was nearly burnt down by a mob in November. So who's going to come? Turkey's not going to do this. Turkey always stands on the sidelines, dragging one side off against another, and is in a financial crisis now. I mean, a serious crisis, which is sufficiently large even to possibly shake the Wall Street markets and so on.

#Glenn

So I don't think they're going to come in. What is America going to do?

#Alastair Crooke

I mean, have you tried bombing mountain tribesmen? It's not a very profitable exercise. They control all the mountain ridges running down the Red Sea, and they're dug in and they have tunnels. Okay, it's a bit similar geography to that of the Strait of Hormuz. So I don't think they're going to come and rescue people, and I can't see anyone else. But it is taking the Gulf as a whole, because the writing is on the wall. Unless they have the revenues to finance their sort of lavish consumerist societies, I don't think that's too strong a term, then there's going to be economic problems ahead. You take something like Jordan, not a Gulf state, but Jordan. It depends entirely on the huge investment coming from Gulf states. I can't remember what it is, but something like four billion dollars comes from the United States to keep Jordan afloat.

Why does that happen? Because Israel wants it to protect its eastern border. They like Jordan to be there. Jordan is a recipient of Palestinians that, you know, Ben-Gvir and others throw out of their lands. They can go to Jordan. That irritates the original, if you like, tribes of Jordan, who feel overwhelmed. They're now a minority against the incoming Palestinians, and angry, and have been demanding an end to the relationship with the United States, demanding that the King of the land refuse to provide support for America. And that is from the indigenous, if you like, Bedouin kinds. So look at the rest of the region. I mean, how precarious it is. You know, you take something like Kuwait. Well, that was the province of Basra.

Until, I can't remember where, '53, something like that. Kuwait, Bahrain was 200 years, a province of Iran for that period. The UAE was the Trucial States, I mean, that were put together and given independence in '71. You know, where's the solid roots in this? Where is the legitimacy? So what is the greatest danger? Obviously, you know, the inability to sell oil or other products from it. But the other one is they've never had religious legitimacy, nor does Saudi Arabia have. They claim that they're guardians of the holy places, but that's disputed by even Saudi tribes inside Saudi Arabia. They never had that privilege. And, you know, this was the Hashemite privilege. And so there's a whole area of Saudi Arabia that, you know, doesn't accept that at all.

So where is the legitimacy here? The legitimacy was, you know, the British came to them and said—at least one part of the British establishment said—"You know, Ibn Saud, you know, you could become king. You can use Wahhabis as the tool by which to control the whole of the Middle East." And so St. John Philby advocated to Ibn Saud strongly that he use the Wahhabists that we know in various iterations from the ones in Saudi Arabia, who at that time were, you know, zealots. They went down and destroyed Mecca and Medina after they laid siege to Karbala. They destroyed the shrine of Imam Hussein in Karbala and killed several thousand people in Karbala. They completely desecrated the shrine and killed many. And, I mean, these were, I mean, very extreme Puritan Islamic forces.

#Glenn

Well, this decline of legitimacy and the possibility of the whole region dissolving, you seem to tie it a little bit into almost the continuation of decolonization, given that, well, as you said, the House of Saud was largely picked, but...

#Alastair Crooke

I would say I'm not trying to avoid that. I'm actually surfacing it. I'm surfacing that it is what we perhaps are seeing, is the end of the long colonial project in the Middle East. I mean, not tonight, not tomorrow, but let's have a look in two years' time. But I think the whole project is shaking in its foundations and is vulnerable because of many things, but because of its lack of legitimacy and because also it has not, even inside Saudi Arabia but elsewhere, it has... the wealth that derived from the oil and from other things to a small elite, to a monarch, to a court. And that wealth has not trickled down throughout the region at all.

And I mean, this is one of the reasons that, you know, Egypt is in such a precarious state now, with the IMF insisting that they end their subsidies on bread. I mean, nearly 40% of Egyptians live below the poverty line. If they take away the subsidies on bread, which is what the IMF is telling them to do, I mean, these people will be starving. Some of them, they're very close to that, on the edge. There are a lot of Egyptians. Other parts of the Middle East, you know, it's 400 million persons. I mean, yes, the royal courts and everyone there, they live a lavish lifestyle. But go up beyond that and you'll find it's not quite like that.

#Glenn

As you suggest, if we go one, two, or three years into the future, I think it seems safe now to assume that the entire Middle Eastern region will look very different. And again, given that there's so many different variables at play, so many different actors with competing interests, I'm not suggesting we look into our crystal ball and make these very certain predictions. But what do you see the overall gravity going? Because it seems that Iran is an important part of this. That is, the actors in the region have to accommodate Iran's security interests to a larger extent.

And it suggests there's a pushback now from Jordan. There's this internal legitimacy crisis in Saudi Arabia. Bahrain and Kuwait, they might not even survive as states. We haven't discussed Syria yet, but it looks as if the whole region will have to reorient itself a little bit more, not under Iranian dominance or anything, but accommodate Iran to a larger extent. Again, I might be wrong on this, but how do you see the region? What direction do you think it will shift now over the next two, three years, if not sooner?

#Alastair Crooke

I think that there will be a sort of shaking of the foundations of this project. And I do think that Iran will play a key role. It won't be a sectarian role. It won't be Shia dominance. They don't do that. I

mean, if you look at the Houthis and Ansar Allah in Yemen, they are Zaidi Shia, not at all like Iran. But they have always had Sunnis and Hanafi Sunnis and even some Salafist types within major parts of their structures. I mean, they've deliberately cooperated. So I think that Iran is going to—it's engaged in a project to upturn the political and cultural composition of the Middle East. Let's be clear about that. It's not just so that they can do a deal with America. They want America out. They want America culturally out.

They want America financially, all the data centers, all of the paraphernalia of Wall Street, out so that the Gulf can start going back to having a real economy that provides for the commonwealth of the people, of the many people, one way or another, that is much more of an economy that is based on real economics. I don't want to go into the theories of this, but there is a tradition of that in the Middle East. Anyway, I mean, I read the long, long book called *Our Economics*, which was written by Sadr. And it's all about how to do that, how to create an economy that is, if you like, provides, which stops the aggrandizement of the oligarchs and provides for a smoother sort of distribution of wealth.

It's not a, you know, it may sound very radical, but it's not, if you like, an impossible—it's not a sort of imaginary project. It's a very serious project. So, I mean, there is that legacy. There are those, you know, ideas. Economics was thought about. It's probably being thought about. But there needs to be a big discussion. And I would say that what you really need is to have a sort of Afghan-like jirga to discuss this, to work it all out. Maybe that's what's happening in Saudi Arabia now. There is a sort of jirga taking place with all the interesting parties involved, saying what they believe are their usurped rights and want back.

So I don't know. I can't guarantee that's what's happening. Maybe something else will happen that will upset the situation more radically. But I don't know what it is. I can't imagine there's going to be an amphibious crossing from somewhere like Eritrea across the Red Sea, because any one of, you know, any of the sort of—I'm sure the older people and the historians in the Pentagon will say, "Don't you remember the Dardanelles? Don't you remember Gallipoli? You know how many people we lost trying to cross the Bosphorus and to do an amphibious landing in Turkey there?" I think it was nearly 50,000 dead amongst the Allied troops.

So I think people will be quite cautious about that. What else can they do? Well, I mean, you know, a bit more bombing, but what do you bomb other than Sana'a? You know, and that's just bombing civilians. You've seen the Houthis. You see them when they do their marches. They've just done another couple of million-man marches, million-plus men. You know, they have resolve. Don't forget, the Houthis have a history going back ten centuries. They've been a monarchy. They've been a people with their own structure and their own cohesion for a thousand years. So they have real, real roots. So I, you know, I don't know. Putting them under siege. What else could America do?

#Glenn

No, it's a good point, because obviously they exhausted a lot of their options here. But it's interesting, though, that many people tend to use the main lens of interpreting events as always being influenced by this Shia-Sunni split, because this largely defined a lot of this Cold War between the Saudis and the Iranians. But it is interesting what you argue, that these divisions aren't—they're not defining it anymore. That is going away, becoming less defining. Yeah?

#Alastair Crooke

Yeah, yeah. And as I say, I mean, the Houthis have always been a wide, you know, broad tent, and brought in people from other sects and other ethnicities into it. And they're not like the Iranians. They're not Twelver Shia; they're Fiver Shia. They accept the first five imams. But also, I mean, they have this history of, you know, pursuing justice. I mean, the defining quality for an imam in the Zaidi theology is that, for someone to claim to be a leader of Zaidi Islam, they have to have taken up arms against tyranny. That's their definition. I doubt sure if the British monarchy would rise to sort of accepting that its legitimacy would derive from taking up arms against tyranny.

#Glenn

Anyway, that's the society point of looking at it.

#Alastair Crooke

And that's been going for, as I say, ten centuries. So it's not something that's out of the blue. That's their tradition. But they're not Iranian.

#Glenn

And they're not bringing Nazis.

#Alastair Crooke

They have their own traditions and their own culture. And as I say, it's always been very broad-tent. That has been their culture. So, yes, they will be portrayed as being part of the, you know, the Shiite, you know, Iranian sort of implant into the conflict in the Middle East. But I would say to you that anyone who does a little bit of research will find that this is completely false imputation. That is because it comes from this sort of aggression that you get particularly out of Washington.

#Alastair Crooke

Oh, the Iranians, the Iranians, the Iranians.

#Alastair Crooke

But actually, it doesn't fit the pattern. And as I say, the Iranians have always been very good at talking to everybody.

#Glenn

Well, just as a last question, you're describing the whole region undergoing this fundamental shift, that the main structures are now being challenged. Well, the elephant in the room is: what about Israel in this regard? Because when you have this kind of chaos, it can be a big threat to Israel, but also, in chaos, it's also opportunities, I would assume, as we see, for example, in Syria, territorial opportunities for the Israelis. But of course, Israel itself is a part of the region. It has its own, well, some internal strife, some legitimacy issues. How do you see Israel fit into this wider picture of the region being reorganized?

#Alastair Crooke

Well, it doesn't. I mean, that's the whole point about it. I mean, it doesn't really fit in because it really contradicts all that Israel, as it is today, stands for. I mean, so much of their, if you like, their grand strategy, Israeli grand strategy, has been dependent on the destruction of Iran and the, if you like, establishing a Judaic hegemon across the region, Greater Israel. And so it doesn't fit. And indeed, not so long ago, a prominent Israeli was saying, well, you know, until these days, I mean, you know, the go-to country in the Middle East for business or buying weapons would be Israel. But now it's clearly going to be Iran.

You know, where does that leave us? So I—and, you know, there are others, there are even others who see the danger and what's happening like this. Major General Brick, who's a prominent retired general, and he says it's not even certain Israel will exist in three years' time. And he's no liberal or anything like that. He's just a professional military officer. So the voices are coming out that, you know, what are you going to do? Because are you going to be able to...? And the chief of defence tells the cabinet regularly, "You cannot—we cannot maintain actually what we are doing now with the forces we have. You'd need the IDF times eight to do this job."

I want to tell you, big red light: the IDF is imploding. It's imploding in terms of manpower, in terms of morale, of its morality, and its logistics. And you can see it. I mean, we follow the Hebrew press, and this is exactly what... So the question really comes down to, for Israel, are you going to continue to be a state that aims to kill or expel everyone around you that you regard as either an enemy or hostile, or do you find some way of coming to a consensual understanding? I would have said one of the things that's quite clear from the episodes that we've had, you know, all the talk about the Abraham Accords and all of this turns out to have been really very hollow.

#Glenn

Well, it is possible, though, that Israel might adjust to reality, because I remember three years ago, when the Chinese were mediating the improved relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia. At that point, you had the former head of Mossad making the point that, well, if the Gulf states are going to make peace with the Iranians, why would we be the last one left in an anti-Iranian alliance that would make us very vulnerable? And based on that premise, he was making the point, why can't we also put together some working relations with the Iranians? And again, it seems very far-fetched now, but look at the way the world looked at Iran a decade ago and how they're viewed today. I mean, what a change the world has been undergoing.

#Alastair Crooke

I would agree with you that really the only path out of that would be to come finally... And someone about 15 years ago, a very senior Israeli, said, you know, ultimately, at the end of the day, there's only one person to talk to, and that's Iran. And we have to—I mean, it's Iran that can, you know, bring about a wider settlement. I mean, you know, it wasn't Arafat. It's not the American president. It's probably going to be Iran. And Israel will do it first, America second, and the Europeans will lag far behind. That's what he said. At that point—now, yes, that's true—but the reality of what's happening on the ground, and let's not put it all onto Netanyahu, the reality of these elections at the moment is a strong swing to the far right. I hate using the word "far right," but in this case it's appropriate. I mean, it is really part of the spectrum of becoming really quite extreme.

And overall, all the polls are showing that Israel as a whole, particularly its young, are moving hard right. So the prospect for, I think, for the foreseeable future, whatever that means, I can't see that they are going to make that sort of huge jump to thinking seriously about how to find—I mean, I think they will be full of—they will do the opposite. They will sort of retreat into Fortress Israel and build ramparts against the jungle outside. I think at the moment that's more likely to be the outcome. I don't rule out what you say completely, but the other thing, of course, is—and we haven't discussed it—is that what happens if the economic conditions—the market crashes in Washington, in New York.

#Glenn

I mean, it's very fragile at the moment, particularly in the tech sector.

#Alastair Crooke

AI is increasingly being questioned about whether there is a real profitability that is visible there, and experts are saying there's no sign of productivity gain from AI if you look at the macro figures, and that it's got all this hidden debt hiding in sort of various parts of the balance sheets, and that makes it really quite risky. Anyway, all of this. But what happens if there is a big sell-off in the tech world?

#Glenn

Well, you know, Israel is going to be the first to do that. Yeah, and I should have said that it's possible but not probable that we'll see a big shift in Israel. But it is just a common, often a rule of history, though, that countries who don't adjust to realities, they become swept away. And all my fear is that the Europeans appear to be falling into this category, where they're refusing to adjust to new realities altogether. Well, they may be swept away, but they will be punished for this by the structures of the international system, by acting according to rules which reflect a distribution of power which no longer exists. It just feels this can't end well. But I guess that's for another day. So thank you very much for taking the time. As always, very much appreciate your perspectives.

#Alastair Crooke

No, well, thanks to you. And I look forward to hearing your thoughts about your travels in China. Bye for now.