

# Trump & Israel ATTACK Iran's Power Grid, Iran POUNDS back | Henningsen

Trump and Israel just struck Iran's power grid and now Tehran is hitting Gulf energy sites in a massive escalation. Danny Haiphong is joined by Patrick Henningsen for a daily update on the latest news and analysis on the war! Patrick Henningsen's work: @21stCenturyWireTV  
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## #Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong, and I'm here with Patrick Henningsen of 21st Century Wire, geopolitical analyst and independent journalist. Patrick, good to see you again.

## #Patrick Henningsen

It's great to be with you, Danny.

## #Danny

Yes. Let's hit the like button, everyone, because that helps boost the show in YouTube's algorithm. So, Patrick, I want to get to what's happened since the last time we were on this show. Many things have happened. Donald Trump said there would be a five-day moratorium on any strikes on Iran's energy infrastructure, including power grids. Well, according to Dropsite News, it wasn't even hours after that announcement that the U.S. and Israel struck new energy facility targets, including ones connected to a gas line that was critical to the power plant in Karam Shahar. There were reports of blackouts—other energy targets were hit as well. Total blackout on this, though, in the mainstream media.

And Iran responded. They hit Kuwait. There were reports of drone and missile debris that knocked out six or seven transmission power lines there. Explosions were also heard in Saudi Arabia near their oil refineries. Iran targeted Tel Aviv in a massive way over the last week—six to twelve hours, multiple waves. This included three destroyed buildings and a promise from Iran that if the United States and Israel hit the power grid in Iran, it would target not only power but also water

desalination plants in the region. So, Patrick, assess where we are right now, especially given this five-day deadline that Trump set. It appears that means very little, as the last 24 hours have shown us.

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

It's tragic, Danny. Great to be with you. It's really tragic because it seems to be this inescapable pattern with this president. Every time he's basically feigning a desire to negotiate—at least on the U. S. side—in every single instance, the Israelis use it as a window to attack, to do the opposite of whatever the United States is saying publicly. So what this looks like is kind of a tag-team operation, and Trump is the king of WWF—or WWE, whatever—I mean, that's the world he used to inhabit. And that's exactly what you're looking at with this relationship between the U.S. and Israel: the good cop, bad cop relationship. He's saying, "Well, look, you know, we don't have any control over the Israelis, I'm very upset with Bibi," and so on. Nobody's buying this anymore. And you know what, Danny, it so reminds me of the Suez Crisis, because the French and the British were doing exactly the same thing with the Israelis.

They had a secret agreement that Israel would be the aggressor, launching the attack and then pretending to accept a ceasefire deal. Meanwhile, all three parties were moving aggressively to retake the Suez Canal, and eventually the whole thing imploded and blew up in their faces. The rest is history. And by the way, as a result of that, the world order changed. That was the end of the British Empire's dominance over the Middle East. So there are some historical parallels here. You could say the same thing is happening to the current imperial hegemon, the United States, and they may go the way of the British and the French, as they did in 1956. The U.S. took over in 1956, and that was a sea change that brought us the modern geopolitical configuration we see today.

But what's more telling about this—and we can talk more about it, Danny—is that there are things going on in the background with this announcement. And I say "announcement" because it was on Truth Social. This isn't coming through official sources. I mean, that's part of the problem. What are the official U.S. government channels of communication? Is it the State Department? The president holding a press briefing? The White House press room? Or is it Truth Social? Is it a Twitter-style platform owned by Donald Trump himself? I mean, is that really a legitimate communication line for a country that's a world superpower like the United States? You can't take it seriously. He posts in all caps, and then—moments before, we've now found out—\$580 million in oil bets were placed online. And guess what happened?

Oil prices probably came down. As a result, there was also a surge in the S&P 500, and you saw an increase in market cap—about \$2 trillion. Then the Iranian denial came two hours later, and guess what happened? The prices moved in the other direction. The stock market lost a trillion in market cap, and then it recovered and came back up again. So it's clear that people who have access to

institutional finance, or who are putting large sums of money on what should be illegal websites like Polymarket and Kalshi—these kinds of political betting sites—are playing a big role. But that’s nothing compared to what’s been leveraged on Wall Street, and we haven’t audited that yet.

What I’m telling you now has been reported in the Financial Times this morning, okay? So it’s what I suspected. It’s what I said—and many others like me said this yesterday—that this is what’s happening. Trump is playing with the markets. He could very easily shore up the price of oil, bringing it back from \$120 a barrel down toward \$100 or even below, based on announcements he makes. Whether those announcements have any grounding in reality is another matter altogether. And the sick part about this is that the White House inner circle—including many members of his team, like his Commerce Secretary, who’s the former head of Cantor Fitzgerald—is involved.

These are Wall Street oligarchs, okay—and Trump’s family as well. Don Jr., his son, is on the advisory board of Polymarket. Donald Trump Jr. And this scam website that people are using for political insider trading is the next level of insider trading. This isn’t just stock tips; we’re talking about people betting on political outcomes and things like what we’re discussing here. So I really think this is just the next level of corruption. This is so classic late-stage empire. You know, this is something extraordinary. So what exactly is Trump saying, and how does it correspond to reality? Or is this just to move markets and for the people behind him to make insane amounts of money?

## **#Danny**

Well, it definitely appears that what you're saying is bearing fruit in reality. But it seems every time Trump does this, there's another escalation that leads to the opposite effect. And I'm wondering, Patrick, if you can comment. It seems like, over the last, you know, overnight period—at least overnight in U.S. time—these strikes on Iran’s gas facilities linked to power and water were almost like testing the waters, because Iran is reporting minimal damage and minimal impact. I think there were partial blackouts for a period of time, but nothing extensive. And Iran’s attacks seem to have been very much in kind, retaliating with the same level of impact.

But at the same time, Patrick, that announcement Trump made—this kind of ultimatum, pushing it to five days—it also corresponds with U.S. Marines that are coming. It seems like they’ll be arriving soon. These multiple MEUs will be arriving right as the markets close on that day. So we have five days, or four now, for the U.S. and Israel to keep violating the very thing they said they wouldn’t do. And there’s also this escalation on the horizon. So I’m wondering how you’ve seen Iran’s response to all of this. They don’t seem fazed by it. And given last night’s activity, especially in Israel, they seem very much ready to respond quickly to any escalation with something in kind—or even harsher, which is what they’ve guaranteed.

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

And I would add, Danny, that we're coming up to the end of the financial quarter as well—the final days of it. Those are things this White House looks at and reacts to, so the narrative might change once the quarter is over. Other commentators have made some interesting points that the narrative could shift after this period too. So what you're seeing here is a flurry of activity in the last couple of days, and then this could go in a totally different direction. If the U.S. wants to reorient their narrative, they can. It's very easy.

You've seen in the previous weeks, Danny—short-term pain for long-term gain—how that talking point was basically a talking-points memo, which probably came from either a PR company in Washington, D.C., working for the White House, or from AIPAC. And then you see it basically repeated by all the news anchors and politicians. So, to me, the only organization that has access to both politics and media simultaneously would be an Israeli lobby organization. Those talking points were beamed out, so we could see a narrative change. They could really ramp up the blaming of Iran again next week. And Americans have very short-term memories—this is apparently a genetic disposition with Americans.

They can't think past that—it's the goldfish syndrome. They'll forget everything that happened over the last month, as long as the media tells them it's okay to forget and adopt a new narrative. So, back to the original point here, Danny—the key point you're making. Trump calls off the energy strikes, that was the announcement. And then Israel does the energy strikes, you see? Good cop, bad cop. Iran basically warned them in advance. They said, "Don't do it, because if you do, we're going to unleash retaliation on all the Gulf states and Israel." So I can't work out where the Israelis are in this. If the objective is to degrade Israel's infrastructure and degrade the Gulf infrastructure, then this makes perfect sense.

But we still have to maintain that possibility. For some people, this is a thing. I can certainly see it from an Israeli point of view and an American point of view. And if we go back to that talking point—short-term pain for long-term gain—that wasn't just a panic talking point; that's strategy. So if that's the strategy, then the idea would be to degrade the Gulf states across the board. And that would lead—if the Gulf states are wrecked economically—it would invariably lead to regime change. These families would have to, at some point, flee. I'd say Bahrain definitely, and the others maybe not so easily, but they always have an escape route.

They have money—they can go to Europe, they can go to America, they can go to Singapore, they can basically go wherever they want. They could take a large portion of their wealth with them, enough to survive for a few generations. And whatever happens to those countries, probably the U. S. or Israel could jointly engineer coups—very easily, military coups. It's really a question of money at that point. That would be the easiest thing for the CIA or Mossad to do: convert a couple of Gulf states into military countries—uh, dictatorships—and then promise to have elections in, you know, a year or two, whatever. I mean, look at Syria.

They put the U.S. and Israel installed the head of Al-Qaeda—a terrorist, a wanted terrorist. They installed him in power in Damascus. And the first thing he did, Jolani, when he came into power was, “Hey, you know, we can’t be dealing with this democracy stuff. We’ve got programs to run. We’ve got Alawites and Christians to slaughter. We’ve got women to kidnap and put on the bridal markets in Idlib. It’s too much work for us right now. We’ll have elections in four, maybe five years. It’s not really a priority. After all, we’re terrorists.” I think you’re probably not going to get any complaints if there’s a military coup in any of these Gulf states.

And then the U.S. and Israel would effectively move to take over the energy infrastructure of those countries to rebuild them. They’ll say, “We’re going to rebuild them, we’re going to bring them back online.” That would be the plan. And based on what we’re seeing now—the complete evisceration and gutting of these countries through this conflict—that would be the sort of mop-up operation I would expect. From the Iranian point of view, they’re simply exerting deterrence. They’re trying to defend themselves, and they’re also trying to evict the United States from the Persian Gulf militarily and send a message to these regimes, these family regimes in the Gulf, that this isn’t tenable anymore.

This old arrangement—it’s not going to work anymore going forward. This is a new Middle East, and Iran is going to defend itself, defend its interests, and also create a security perimeter that doesn’t include the United States. Iran’s thinking is that they can fight Israel themselves, come what may, but it’s much more difficult when they’re encircled by American bases in the region—and by Israel as well, pretending to be an independent actor. But this is a complete pantomime. It’s a lie. The U.S. and Israel are running joint operations centers on this war right now. So, you know, that’s one of the problems, I think—they’re able to do this good cop, bad cop thing, which is a source of deception.

And it’s the same exact good cop, bad cop arrangement that the U.S. and NATO use in Ukraine—saying, “Oh, Zelensky, there he goes again, drone attacks on Moscow. We told him not to do that, especially during high-level negotiations. That Zelensky, we need to have a talk with him. We might have to throttle his funds or whatever.” It’s not credible. They’re getting all their intelligence, their ISR, their targeting, their equipment. We’ve got American trainers on the ground running all this gear. We’ve had American personnel on the ground with the military tech engineers, people running these systems now for over a decade. And they still talk to you from CNN, Fox, Sky, and all these ne’er-do-wells in the mainstream media like this is somehow two separate parties here—that the Ukrainians are independent.

It’s ridiculous at this point. Anyone who’s stupid enough to keep swallowing this garbage—and they’re doing it again between the U.S. and Israel, pretending that Israel is acting on its own and not coordinating with the United States—then Trump can lie to the public. They’ll all lie, right? Bold-faced lies to the American and global public. They’ll lie to other world leaders and say, “Oh, we didn’t know about that. That’s a shame what happened. We’ll have a word with Bibi.” And meanwhile, we’re careening toward World War III. I think at some point the press need to pull their finger out on

this and stop entertaining this vaudeville act, because it's just not going to be a good result for anybody.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and the censorship has been absolutely incredible. Those strikes we opened with, Patrick—the mainstream media and the collective weren't covering them at all. And then, of course, the retaliatory strikes weren't covered either, other than what's happening in Israel right now, which is the biggest impact being leveled by Iran in its continued operation. But what's interesting, as all of this is happening, is that we now have numerous Gulf states saying they're going to get more involved. Actually, I believe as we speak, Kuwait has just launched HIMARS into Iran.

Saudi Arabia, according to the Wall Street Journal, is seeking not only to enter the war but has supposedly been pushing Donald Trump to continue it. Hard to know what to believe, honestly, with all of that. But nonetheless, it seems like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, according to the New York Times, are itching not only to prolong this war but to get involved in some way. In many ways, it reflects the dynamic of the United States and Israel essentially fighting—creating the very scenario that Iran is warning could lead to massive blackouts, turning the lights out across the Gulf and maybe even affecting their water systems, given that the U.S. and Israel just tested that out a bit.

They tested it out just a bit, just to see how far they could get with their lies. But this is the exact same scenario that started the war. Oh, Donald Trump says something—they're negotiating, or he says something like, "Oh, we're not, you know, no war yet," or "We're not interested." And then they do it. So this is all, I think, important to note, given that this dynamic continues to cause whiplash for people following it. What's your reaction to these developments, especially with the Gulf states supposedly wanting to get more involved in a war that's already having devastating effects for them? Yeah.

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

I think you can see reports of this, but I don't think they're all credible. I can tell you, these Gulf states—and I've spent a limited amount of time in the Gulf working and reporting over the years, been to different of these emirates—and look, if there's HIMARS fire coming from Kuwait, the press will say it's Kuwait firing the HIMARS. It's not. It's the United States. Same with Saudi Arabia. They'll say, "Well, look at Saudi's very impressive air force there. Saudi's got this, it's got that." That's all U.S. weapons, 100%. All U.S. weapons, staffed by U.S. personnel. In the war in Yemen, there were reports that Saudi was short on pilots for sorties, so they were employing, quote, "retired American pilots" to fly bombing runs on Yemen.

OK, contractors or people who are maybe still active duty—I don't know—but they're flying bombing missions for Saudi Arabia, flying U.S. jets, working with the U.S. tower, U.S. command. So how far did that get Saudi Arabia after, what was it, nine years? Nine years of war with Yemen, and Yemen

basically kicked their you-know-what. How is Saudi going to fare picking a fight with Iran, honestly? Even if Iran's air defenses are degraded, they won't be degraded forever, right? And not only that, Iran could really, really destroy Saudi Arabia. So the problem with the Gulf states is, they're not accountable to their own population. They're not. They only have to maintain this veneer of consent from the population.

And then with that, they have to provide certain things, and it's usually money. They have to pay residents there. So their constituencies aren't very big anyway. The constituents for the Gulf—if you look at the UAE, for example—the foreign residents there vastly outnumber the Emiratis. There are probably only about 300,000 native Emiratis. The rest, the other millions, are from countries all over. And most of them are going to cut and run, if they haven't already, and divest from these areas. And then what's the other constituency? Well, it's the U.S. military. It's U.S. businesses and U.S. middle management and contractors and people—not Erik Prince, but people like that—who are in the mercenary business.

That's the only remaining constituency that's going to give—to the royal families—and that only extends as far as those people are getting paid. If they're not getting paid, then they could only be there if the U.S. is picking up the tab. And how is that going to work? The U.S. has already made it clear they're not going to put U.S. troops in harm's way, and they've evacuated them from many of these bases. So I'm looking at this story about the Gulf wanting to join the fight against Iran, and it's just not, to me, it's not credible. These families are not born fighters, okay? They're born to hang out in casinos most of the week and to go watch their racehorses—at the Hollywood Bowl one week, Royal Ascot the next, and whatever.

I mean, that's their life. That's what their kids have been bred to do. They're not bred to fight wars. And that's not the same. Iranians are born fighters. Iraqis, born fighters. Lebanese, born fighters. Syrians too—they're all born fighters. So with these other Arab countries, it's a different story. But with the Gulf states, forget it. It's not credible. If the U.S. pulls out any resources at all, they're basically paralyzed. If the U.S. pulls any personnel from Saudi Arabia, they have no military. It's not going to function. So I don't know. I have yet to see anything credible in those threats from the Gulf. I just don't see it.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and it seems to be muddling the understanding of who exactly is in control of these states. We've already seen the Wall Street Journal report that, despite Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and other countries saying they were not going to allow their airspace to be used or their territory to be used as launching pads for attacks on Iran, the Wall Street Journal says that's not the case. The United States has indeed used these countries as launching pads for attacks on Iran. And, of course, they've paid the price for that. So, you know, Patrick, I wanted to get your reaction to the Iranian response so far.

You know, in relation to the attacks on Iran's electricity and even its water, there was an interesting comment by the energy minister in Iran. He said that Iran generates electricity through a decentralized system with more than 150 power plants built entirely on their own, while the Gulf states around the region rely on centralized power plants concentrated in a very small area, making them very, very vulnerable. So all of this seems to be leading to a catastrophic situation for the Gulf states and for the global economy. And then there's this sense of what's coming—it seems like, I don't think these Marines are coming for no reason.

There's that happening, as we hear from the Huffington Post, that U.S. troops in general are losing morale. They're very concerned about what they call "dying for Israel." And that probably has something to do with Christian Zionist superiors telling them this is about Armageddon and the Second Coming of Jesus. So there seems to be a massive crisis building, and I'm curious how you see Iran's response to all of this, as much of the mainstream media is now talking about Iran actually having the initiative. Iran can go a long time. Iran has capabilities, and we're seeing all the things we've been talking about for so long now being admitted across Western mainstream media—that this is not going so well.

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

One thing you said there was really important, and I'll address it, but regarding the power grids, Danny—so right now I'm in my home state of Arizona, near Phoenix. If I drive out here onto the highway and look at our power grids, our transformers, our highways—all of it—and then imagine transporting myself to Saudi Arabia, to Jeddah or Riyadh, you know what? It's hard to tell the difference between there and Arizona, because it's all American. All American. So if you can't get American contractors and engineers to come in and fix or redo everything in the Gulf, then it's not going to get fixed or redone.

Iran, on the other hand, is not reliant on any foreign country to maintain its infrastructure. All of the Gulf states are totally—that's part of the gravy train, that's part of the deal with them existing—that they're going to use all these American and British companies, maybe some French. They've divvied out a few; maybe there's even an Italian firm here or there, a Spanish firm here or there. But the majority are American, and then some British firms, and they basically do everything in that region. That's not the case in Iran. What Iran will do is double down and rebuild. For them, it's a war of attrition. It's bad, it's painful, but they've already priced it in.

I'm telling you, the Iranians fought an eight-year war—a proxy war—where the West was arming and backing Saddam Hussein, this supposed evil dictator they later fought the Iraq War over. The United States and Britain were arming and backing Saddam for eight years while he rained missiles down on Tehran and other Iranian cities, and the Iranians lost—well, between the Iraqis and the Iranians, I think well in excess of six, maybe seven or eight hundred thousand. I don't know the

totals, but it's equivalent to what the U.S. lost in the Second World War in Europe, just to give you an indication. So over an eight-year period, they were willing to do that. The Iranians will go to the wall to defend their country, to defend their homeland—and they will mobilize.

They will re-mobilize. Do you think right now—and Americans are so thick, okay, they're so thick—do you think after what they've done to Iran over the last four weeks, what do you think mobilization numbers are like with young people wanting to join the IRGC? What do you think their recruitment's like right now? Do you think it's down, or do you think it's up? I'm telling you, it's at levels they've never seen in their history. It's the same exact thing with Hamas. It's the same with the Hashid right now in Iraq. If they want to mobilize, they could add 150,000 Hashd al-Shabi PMUs—just one announcement by the Ayatollah, and that's it. That's it.

Now all of a sudden you've got a 250,000-strong force, and it won't take long to train them up. And it's the same with Iran. So if this is a war of attrition, the United States better have unlimited ammunition. Donald Trump says we have unlimited ordnance, unlimited ordnance—air-to-air refueling tankers, unlimited this, unlimited that. No, no, they don't. They have finite resources, and Israel does not have unlimited interceptors for their Patriot missiles, which they call the Iron Dome. See, that's another thing—it's not Israel's Iron Dome. It's U.S. missile defense, which they supply to and maintain for the Israelis. It's not unlimited; it's finite. So if you want to play this war of attrition game, Iran is ready to take the short-term pain for the long-term gain.

Just ask Tehran. They've already priced it in. But the problem is—and this is the same problem with Ukraine that the U.S. and Europe have run into—is that it's amazing how these people don't pay attention to the long arc of history, because all the answers are there. If you look at the Russia-Ukraine situation, it's clearly a proxy war, okay? But there's a political timeline for Zelensky, where he expires, and I think he's past that point now. There's a political timeline for Europe—how much they can bankrupt Europe and bankrupt the U.S. to support this proxy war. But guess what? Does Russia have a short timeline on that?

No. Russia has a very long, long timeline. The president has a mandate, the government has a mandate to prosecute that conflict and to secure Russia's national interests. And that's a long mandate—it's a long timeline. So they could play the war of attrition for the next ten years. It's going to be fine for Russia; they'll cope. It's the same with Iran. The government now has a mandate to defend its country and repel the invaders—these people like the crusaders, basically. But there's a timeline on Donald Trump. He's looking at the markets. It's like every five minutes he's probably thinking, "Oh, do we stop? Do we go? Do we stop? Do we go?"

Oh, how much money are we going to make? How much are we going to lose? For Israel, do you think they have an unlimited timeline on this? I don't think so. It's very short—for Netanyahu's survival, for the Israeli state itself, which could effectively collapse as a society if this carries on for another week or two. I'm not exaggerating. You could see huge moves in Israel along these lines. But for Iran, where's the pressure on the Iranian government to sign a peace treaty right now? It's

not there. So this is the nature of the country—the political economy in Iran, the civilizational dimension. The same with the Russian Federation. And also, they're playing on their home field.

The U.S. is playing away. So these are just basics. And honestly, yeah, I don't see how this is going to get any better for Trump, for America, for the Gulf by extending this another— I would say you're looking at total catastrophe in probably three or four weeks' time. Not to mention a global economic meltdown—that's already begun. But politically, Donald Trump is caught in an undertow that is now inescapable, politically and historically. So is Benjamin Netanyahu. And so, I don't know. I'm trying to look for another scenario that we might be able to build an argument on for some kind of off-ramp, but it's hard to see it.

## **#Danny**

Well, the reports, Patrick—I mean, what you're saying does have a very rooted basis in reality right now, because there are reports that after Donald Trump announced they were going to obliterate the power grids in Iran, no one was thinking ceasefire, even after the so-called five-day moratorium on that threat. What you actually had were Iranians all across the country, around these power plants the energy minister was talking about, forming human circles around them—shielding them and rallying around them. It showed that Iranians themselves are not only willing to join the military, but also willing to put their bodies on the line for the protection of their own infrastructure. Given the losses Iran has had to deal with—in terms of civilians, in terms of infrastructure—I think that says a lot about who has the initiative to continue fighting versus the United States and Israel, where, as The Intercept reported, we're already seeing the interceptors run out.

There was somebody in the comments saying, "Oh, well, what about our lasers? It must be Israeli. What about our laser? We have lasers now." The laser cannot deal with Iran's hypersonic missiles at the level of their medium or long range. They're getting through. And every single day now—I've been saying this for the last 72 hours, the last 96 hours—we've seen the interceptors either be non-existent or fired at a very low level, to the point where they're not even trying to show these videos. We're only seeing this from Iranian and independent sources. Israel isn't showing any impacts at all because... just a couple of days ago, they were brutal.

We saw what happened to Dimona and the town that holds the nuclear research facility. And just now, I'm getting reports that the Rafael defense tech industry in Israel has been hit. So these are very sensitive targets being struck with basically no defenses present. All of this is bearing out in reality, and it's leading to, I think, a huge crisis—especially given that we know the United States and Israel are ready to take it to the next level. In large part, I'm wondering what your thoughts are on this, because there really is nothing else. I mean, you have U.S. Marines coming in, and you have threats and attempts to carry out those threats on the power grid, on water. It can only get worse from here, Patrick—it seems like that for the U.S. and Israeli side. Yeah.

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

Yeah, and look, I mean, I'm not a military strategist. You could get Scott Ritter or, you know, Colonel Larry Wilkerson to opine on issues like, if the United States were to deploy Marines to retake Kharg Island, or try to secure the Strait of Hormuz, or occupy any Iranian territory—what's that going to require in terms of air cover by the United States, and naval assets that need to be positioned in proximity to that? I mean, they're now exposing all those different aspects of a military operation, which aren't exposed at the moment because they're basically firing standoff munitions at Iran from a safe distance and then pulling back accordingly to protect themselves.

So, I mean, what does the U.S. expect? Do they think they're going to degrade Iran to such a degree that they can just march in there? This is not Cuba, okay? You're not going to be able to enforce a siege or a military blockade on Iran—it's just not going to happen. So, like, what's the plan? Or is this just posturing by the Trump administration? Because the numbers are minuscule. I mean, even the 82nd Airborne—what's the attachment of troops there? What are we talking about? Even if it were 50,000, it's nothing. And they will incur losses. Maybe that's the plan—they want dead American bodies coming back to get the patriots fired up to support a bigger war.

I mean, if that's the plan, well, we'll see how that works out. But besides that, we have some fundamental problems with the way the United States is—what they're threatening to do versus what they can actually deliver with those threats. And that's the escalation ladder, as it were. So what more can the U.S. do? I mean, we've talked about nuclear weapons in the past—tactical nukes, strategic nukes. I don't think there's an appetite, or at least I hope there's not an appetite, to go down that road. I wouldn't rule it out in this case, but it's kind of getting to desperate days here, because the U.S. is going to be running out of—they're going to be running out of assets. They've lost a lot already.

There's a record number, and they're probably underreporting quite a lot in terms of drones and aircraft that have been lost—things that have been lost in Iranian missile attacks that have hit U.S. bases. I'm sure this is grossly underreported on the U.S. side. And I don't think the U.S. has incurred this level of losses militarily in any conflict, probably in our lifetime. Normally, that would mean the secretary of defense would get fired or have to resign. The president might be in front of a congressional or Senate hearing, or somebody from the administration would have to answer for these record losses of U.S. equipment and assets—totally, and probably at this point, tens of billions, if not hundreds of billions.

It's hard to calculate. It's not only that, but the sunk cost of all those U.S. bases—to build them, protect them, staff them, everything they've put into them over the years. The United States, by launching this undeclared war of aggression against Iran with Israel, is risking forfeiting its military footprint, its geopolitical footprint, in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf specifically. Now, for somebody that regards themselves as an empire, that's a big, big thing to risk, and it's a big thing to lose. We even saw the Americans and NATO—there was a NATO attachment in Iraq—they had to cut and run. They basically negotiated a ceasefire with the Iraqi militias and left the country.

Then, of course, you never negotiate a ceasefire with the United States—or if you do, never believe they'll uphold it—because the U.S. promptly attacked and targeted those Iraqi militias. And what's that going to do? It might give Pete Hegseth a dopamine rush for a few hours, and then he can strut in front of the White House press corps in that silly Captain Kangaroo suit he wears with the American cravat. I mean, it's just ridiculous, because what he's done is mobilize the entire Iraqi population against the United States again. And if the U.S. tried Iraq now, as it did in 2003—how it bought off all of Saddam Hussein's generals, the amount of corruption it used to basically invade and take Iraq—well, that's not going to work this time.

And the U.S. had their proxy in power anyway—a Sunni minority ruling over the Shiite majority—which is the colonial model. That's not Iraq anymore. You couldn't do what you did in 2003 in today's Iraq, in 2026. So you didn't do yourself any favors. And the United States—if they haven't already—has evacuated what was their largest embassy, the one in Baghdad. It's only surpassed by the fortress they built in Lebanon this past year. But they're out of there. It's gone. And these are huge CIA stations as well. So, I mean, strategically, that's a lot to sacrifice for an empire. That can't be in the U.S. interest if the U.S. interest is to project power and contain China, right?

Because normally you'd want operational control over the Silk Road in the Middle East, and if they're going to lose that as a result of this errant preemptive war of choice, then anyone making the argument that Israel is not the tail wagging the U.S. dog—I don't think that's a credible argument. The only rational explanation we can have here is that the U.S. has been dragged into, pushed into, and made to fight a war on behalf of a foreign power that has total political control over the entire U.S. legislature and the executive branch because they paid for that in the last election cycle. That, to me, is the logical argument. But there are people out there making another argument, saying, no, no, no, don't look at Israel—no, no, no, it's the U.S. empire, nothing to do with, uh, nothing to do with Israel, and so forth.

## **#Danny**

So anyway, yeah, no, I mean, those are great points, Patrick, because there are also some people making the argument that the U.S. empire is hoping to raise gas and oil prices to such a high level that they can just reap all the profits and control all energy. But I think what's actually happening in real time is that even if the U.S. empire at this moment does have, quote-unquote, an interest in destroying Iran—we've talked about those reasons on this show: the multipolar world, Iran's sovereignty, all of that—it's the timing of this, and also the way it's happening, which points to major, of course, Israeli involvement in how this war is unfolding. There's just no doubt about that.

And, uh, the impact is the way this has ricocheted—backfired, really. You know, people who watch the show have been saying that the Zionists in the U.S. empire, they're not winning big here; they're taking big hits. You mentioned the assets. That number—they're never going to want to release what that number is, because just these air defense systems alone, whether they've been destroyed like they have been—a Patriot system destroyed, THAAD radars destroyed—we're talking about

billions, just that alone, let alone the aircraft. You know, all the aircraft that have been shot down, the drones—the bill is high. But there's also the fact that, as you just said, the resistance has been reignited. We see what's happening with Hezbollah.

Israel is caught in what's going to be a disastrous quagmire, trying to reoccupy—trying to occupy—Lebanon, and losing while doing it. Hezbollah is coordinating with Iran right now. The Iraqi resistance is, as you just said, pushing the U.S. back. Iran has said that the U.S. is now huddling with the Barzani clan in Kurdish Iraq, but also that NATO has left. All the NATO support—the Polish troops, everyone—they've left Iraq because they're too afraid of the resistance. Not just Iranian missiles, but the resistance in Iraq has been activated in a big way. They're conducting, sometimes, an operation an hour on average, which is causing huge problems. So this is the reality on the ground. And then you add in U.S. troops, you add in Marines, you add in the Kharg Islands, the Strait of Hormuz, and you have a real potential for a massive disaster.

And if the U.S. and Israel go forward and escalate on Iran's power and water, well, then you have not just an economic crisis, but a humanitarian catastrophe that Iran could also ignite if it were forced to do so. So this is not a great equation, Patrick, at this moment. This is kind of the sum of all the parts that I feel is... there's a lot of whistling past the graveyard. Yet Donald Trump is saying, in order to ease the markets, in order to buy time perhaps, he's saying, well, we're negotiating—we're negotiating with Iran right now—even though there's no such thing happening. So this doesn't feel like an empire that is seeking and winning some kind of full-spectrum dominance over energy and the world. I just don't see that. But what's your assessment of that?

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

No, the net result—the net—is that the multipolar world, BRICS as a network, is looking more attractive after this last month. I don't think you can argue with that. So if I were an oligarch—if I were a billionaire, if I were like Elon Musk with morals and ethics and I wasn't aloof and whacked out of my head on ketamine all day like some oligarchs are—I'd be looking for a safe place to put my money. And Asia looks like a much more stable investment environment for capital. That was the case before the war, and I think that's probably going to be the case after this is over—when it's over, if we survive this.

And in terms of political realities, if you're running a business, or an investment bank, or a country—if you're running a country like Donald Trump, CEO of America Incorporated—you'd want good information, wouldn't you? You'd want to know how to position your assets, how to use your resources. You'd want to be operating on the best possible information, wouldn't you, if you're going to be risking and spending money, capital, and resources. That's how businesses operate. The U.S. government is no longer operating like that.

And they probably haven't been operating like that for a very long time, because they're able to deficit spend—like under this president, Donald Trump—and with Elon's great Doge revolution.

Remember Doge? Oh, Doge is going to fix all this government waste. And what Donald Trump does is add another \$1 trillion to the deficit. So in his first year, I think you'll see the deficit surpass the Biden administration. And Trump year two is probably—you're probably looking at around a \$3 trillion deficit in U.S. deficit spending in Donald Trump's second year. So all this theater that Elon Musk was fronting about Doge and how we're going to trim government, that the federal government's got to be more efficient, more accountable—it's the opposite.

They're less efficient, less accountable, and they're going to burn through more money. So, of course, if you do that—if you have free money available, which this government does in terms of the U.S. dollar—we pay for that in inflation. When they drive the deficit up, we pay for that. Ron Paul's been making that argument for 40 years. No one's listened. But if you do that, it breeds corruption. Free money breeds corruption. Look at Ukraine: you inject \$300 billion into that cauldron of corruption, what do you get? More corruption, more graft. So this is how the U.S. government is operating.

So if I tell you that the Iraqi parliament decided twice in the last ten years to tell the United States to get out of Iraq—but they couldn't do it because they weren't in a position to, politically, and with the level of the embedded U.S. mini-economy in Iraq, plus the corruption, graft, bribery, and all that blackmail—it wasn't tenable. But now it is. Now it is. Now the prime minister—or the U.S.—is trying to prevent Maliki from becoming prime minister, because they know exactly where he's going to take this, which is where he took it before, and they didn't like that. So now that's a political reality. I see that. People in the region see that.

But Donald Trump—everything I just said—he doesn't know. The president of the United States is geopolitically illiterate. He doesn't watch podcasts like this or listen to the kind of guests you have on, people with a solid pedigree on these matters. So the U.S. government is making decisions based on bad information. That's the only conclusion I can draw. And this argument that shutting down oil supplies from the Persian Gulf is somehow benefiting the U.S. empire—it's really a plot for the oligarchs in the oil and gas sector who make up part of Trump's remaining base. You have to remember, the coalition that elected Donald Trump—and again, we come back to the political dimension in Iraq, which I just explained—that's real.

And it has outcomes attached to it along timelines—opportunistic outcomes along timelines. The same in the United States. The oligarchs who helped bankroll Trump's last campaign—the oil and gas sector, the guys in Houston, the guys in Dallas—okay, those guys, that's one of the remaining hardcore factions of Trump's base. So MAGA at the moment—the longer this goes on—MAGA is AI billionaires. It's the Larry Ellison and Sam Altman class. It's the Epstein class. It's the oil and gas guys. It's the guys who are fracking natural gas. Pretty soon, that's all—and Wall Street. And the people who insider trade on Wall Street and on Polymarket—that is Trump's base. That's what MAGA has been reduced to.

That's where it will end up. And there will be a few people wearing their red hats who'll believe anything Trump says, standing there at the rallies, putting their kids up in front of the camera. But that's not the same type of coalition that got him a mandate in the last election. How did he get that mandate? He got it by courting the independents, the populist anti-war voters, the Democrat centrists who swung over to MAGA because Trump said, "No new wars. We're not going to get involved in regime change wars." That's why they voted for him. But now he's clearly gone in the other direction.

He's now looking like a political fraud, as is everybody else in his cabinet—including Tulsi Gabbard and all these other people who sang this tune about "no more regime change wars," "we can't be putting our brothers and sisters in harm's way," "bring the troops home." So, I mean, it's just not credible at this point. The oil price spike, cutting off supplies from the Middle East—that will benefit the oligarchs, but it's not going to benefit the American people. It's going to create inflation, it's going to create an economic recession, a depression. It's going to contract economic activity.

It's going to make businesses and people less reliable as potential loan candidates for banks. So you have a tightening of lending, a liquidity crisis. All of that is coming with this. The American empire only exists because of the promise that it can deliver prosperity to its people at home. It also exists because it's able to leverage cooperation from its allies—and even neutral allies or frenemies—through international institutions that have been cultivated since the Second World War. That is the source of American imperial power.

Everything they've done in the last month has undermined all of those things. So if this is some imperial plot, it's a suicidal plot—that's the only conclusion I can draw at this point. And I think that's a rational conclusion. Maybe it's a case of hubris, maybe it's the best-laid plans of mice and men, or maybe it's just what happens in a late-stage empire. The corruption overtakes the rationality, and you see a kind of disintegration of the foundations of that empire. And Israel has been the catalyst, I think, undoubtedly. If that's what's going to happen, Israel is the catalyst for this process.

## **#Danny**

Well, talk about suicide missions—trying to permanently establish a settler colony, not only from 1948 to 2026, but to expand that model beyond even Palestine. It could, in many ways, be seen as a catalyst for everything you're talking about, Patrick. And, you know, that phrase "short-term pain for long-term gain"—it seems like if you flip that for the oligarchs, it's short-term gain. Yeah, let's grab the short-term gains and disregard all the long-term pain that's actually undermining the very foundation of the system. So yeah, sure, make a lot of money off gas, raise oil prices, all of that. But the petrodollars are intimately connected to what happens in West Asia, Saudi Arabia, all of that.

U.S. military projection and power are needed to ensure that U.S. economic markets stay stable. It's heavily dependent on Israel. So yeah, that's a suicide mission, because you're essentially building up

toward a conflict that ends in win, lose, or draw. Right now, it doesn't look like the U.S. and Israel are winning at all. But whatever the outcome, destruction is what's left in the wake—destruction they can't rebuild from. So it's an incredibly risky venture, and I think that's what we're seeing. And not to mention, Patrick, maybe we can end on this question from someone in the audience who asked: how are troops actually going to get onto Kharg Island? You know, is it a death trap?

And I wanted you to comment on this, given that Iran has now, with the Strait of Hormuz, instituted this toll. You know, ships are getting in—more ships, European ships, especially Chinese ships, and others from India, Bangladesh, and elsewhere. They're working with the Iranian government, and Iran has said, yeah, we're exacting a toll for ships to be able to get through here. So they're saying they're in control. And all of Trump's bluster, and the U.S. administration's bluster around escalating with ground troops, is about either cutting off Iranian energy from Kharg Island or literally trying to intervene in the Strait of Hormuz—all to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. So I guess the last question is: is this a death trap, to try to occupy and invade Kharg Island? And what do you make of the situation now with the Strait of Hormuz, given that all of the U.S. surge with Marines is about this?

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

Look, you have to ask yourself the question—and maybe this is a gamble on the U.S. part—if they're genuinely sincere, and Trump or the White House or the U.S. military believe they can invade and occupy Kharg Island, I have a hard time believing that. Maybe the White House, maybe Pete Hegseth thinks he can do that, but anybody in the Joint Chiefs, or anyone with actual military experience—real military experience in terms of command and real responsibility for U.S. troops and personnel—not Pete Hegseth, by the way, who's a reservist whose highest rank was major, who basically didn't do anything of note in the U.S. military other than get quite a lot of tattoos on his body as souvenirs of his crusadership, or whatever.

So they're gambling that if they put U.S. assets and troops on the ground on Kharg Island, Iran isn't going to besiege them with drones and missiles. Because Iran doesn't want to destroy its own petroleum storage, distribution, and shipping facilities there—that's essential Iranian infrastructure. The Americans think that's the heart of the Iranian economy, right there at Kharg Island. That's why they're focused on it. Do you think, if the Iranians have to choose between allowing the U.S. to occupy Iranian soil or taking short-term pain for long-term gain, what do you think they're going to choose, based on the behavior pattern we've seen over the last month and historically?

I think it's pretty obvious what the Iranians are going to do. Their attitude is, "We're not going to tolerate the U.S. on our shores, and we will rebuild our infrastructure." That's the risk Iran will take. They'll accept the short-term pain for the long-term gain. Is the U.S.—is America—prepared to take the short-term pain of losing a few thousand of our finest troops, sacrificed at the altar of Donald Trump and the MAGA collective ego, or the U.S. imperial ego? Are you willing to take that risk? So this comes down to the balance of force and the balance of resolve in the region.

I would say, in terms of the balance of force, the U.S. has quite a bit of power it can impose and inflict on Iran—there's no doubt about that. Quite a lot of damage, and the Israelis too. Between Israel and the U.S., they can cause a lot of suffering, a lot of damage. But who—and this goes back to the essential political timeline that we can't take out of the equation—who can sustain that? There's a political timeline for all the actors involved: the Gulf states, the Americans, the Trump administration specifically, Netanyahu and his government, Israel as a country, and Iran and its government. All of those actors have a political timeline attached to their actions.

I would give the balance of resolve in favor of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I think that's just common sense, looking at it as a basic equation. In the same way, I'd give the balance of resolve to Russia in the Ukraine war—and that looks like it's gone in Russia's favor. After all these three years of being told that Russia is defeated, that the Russian military is a spent force, and, you know, that they're fighting with shovels and running out of bullets—those were all lies. So how much of what we've been told about the U.S. and Israeli military conquests over the last four weeks is true, and how much of it has been exaggerated?

Exactly like they did to us—the Western public—with the Ukraine war. I'd wager to say, Danny, that it's probably a significant amount of tall tales, fish stories, and exaggerations on the part of the United States and Israel. In terms of what they've done, this idea that it's going to be the “Thor's hammer” blow that brings down the regime—that hasn't happened yet, and it's not going to happen. What they've done is mobilize the Iranians, not just this generation. The U.S. and Israel have mobilized Iran for the next two generations, at minimum. And they've sharpened the blade of the Islamic Republic's revolutionary society and government in a way that could never have been done before—and they've done it.

They're responsible for that. And I think the takeaway on this, Danny, the last thing I can say is that right now Iran has demonstrated—by closing the Strait of Hormuz, but not really closing it, keeping it open for their partners on their terms. See, that's the other lie—that the Strait of Hormuz is closed. It's not. It's not closed. It's open, but not for everybody. It's open for those who will abide by the new terms of the new regional hegemon. And that new regional hegemon is the Islamic Republic of Iran—until further notice. Thank you for your attention to this matter. All caps.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, I think that's a great place to end, Patrick. You know, we're going to have to keep abreast of all these developments because this is the direction everything has gone. I want to thank everyone for joining, and I want to thank all the new members. Make sure to go to the video description after the program is over to check out 21st Century Wire and Patrick's Substack. You can support him through those channels, so definitely do that. This was a great show today, Patrick—we'll have to do it again very soon. And we're going to head out of here for now. Every single day, there are new developments in this war.

And as you were saying, Patrick, with the political timelines, with each and every U.S. and Israeli escalation, it seems like that timeline actually gets shorter. Whatever consequences were going to come out of this timeline are coming faster and faster. Why they escalate while we're on—we're seeing the response is quite strategic, very methodical in escalating when needed, and keeping a general plan of attack at all times, every single day. And the demands they're putting out there, Patrick? They're pretty ironclad demands that they're not rolling back on, which shows a level of initiative and willingness to stand their ground for quite a long time. So this is where we're at, everybody. Patrick, any last words before I hit "end stream" here?

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

No, I just want to say thank you very much for the conversation today, Danny. This is a fluid, ongoing situation. So, disclaimer: everything we said could be completely irrelevant and null and void by this evening. I just thought I'd put that in there as a caveat. All right, everybody, take care. We'll see you again soon.