

Iran DOWNS US F-15 Over Tehran, TORCHES Amazon | KJ Noh & Elina Xenophontos

Independent journalists and analysts KJ Noh and Elina Xenophontos react to the massive escalations in the Iran war as Tel Aviv gets pounded by Iranian missile fire, Amazon and Oracle Data Centers are torched, and Trump begs for a deal by bombing bridges in Iran. A full break down on all the latest developments you don't want to miss! Elina's work: <https://substack.com/@elinaxenophontos> <https://www.instagram.com/elina.xenophontos/> FOLLOW ME ON RUMBLE: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> FOLLOW ME ON TELEGRAM: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> SUPPORT THE CHANNEL ON PATREON: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #trump #israel #amazon #oracle

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. I'm joined by geopolitical analysts and commentators Alina Sinofantos and KJ Ngo. Thank you so much for joining me. Let's get started right away. Hit the like button as you come on. We want to begin with the breaking news. Western mainstream media is now reporting—after Iran claimed that it had downed an F-15E fighter jet over Tehran this time. I'm just going to pull up the news story about this. One of the crew members is said to have been rescued after a complex rescue operation. Iran is saying they also hit a helicopter that was conducting those rescue operations. An interesting development out of this, which you two can comment on, is that the Iranian media has sent out a message via the government, which I'll play here in silence.

Basically, what this report is saying is that if anybody in the military, the armed forces, or civilians—because it's unclear who—where they've been downed or where they've escaped to, if you hand them over alive to the security forces, you'll get a big reward. So there's now a wild hunt going on around this. Maybe I can begin with you, KJ. You know, Donald Trump gave a speech just 24 or 36 hours before this, saying that Iran was finished—its air defenses were gone, its navy was gone, its missile system was gone. It seems like with every passing hour since he said that, something else happens. Amazon was just hit in Bahrain; their web services are down. I'll pull up all the latest developments as you talk, but react to this development and where you see this war now as we enter the second month. Excuse me.

#KJ Noh

Well, what it looks like is that it's been pretty clear Iran has escalation dominance—strategic overmatch—primarily because it's able to achieve its strategic goals, and the U.S. is unable to thwart any of them. That is to say, it hasn't achieved regime change, despite what it claims. It's not able to open the Strait of Hormuz. It hasn't achieved denuclearization. It's not controlling any of the oil. So all of its strategic goals have failed. And now you can also see that it's failing tactically and operationally. What we see in this shoot-down of the F-15 and the possible shoot-down of the Black Hawk is—well, I mean, this is a debacle. It's on the scale of Mogadishu.

You know, any time the U.S. goes into the battlefield, into the theater, it claims it has dominance over the air and dominance over the seas. And we saw very rapidly that sea dominance was immediately curtailed. The U.S. was blinded—it had its radars, its AWACS knocked out—and now it doesn't even have local operational dominance. If you have an F-15 being shot down, most likely with handheld weaponry, that shows there's something very, very seriously deficient on the operational level. So I think this is going to—well, I mean, it already signals to the world that the U.S. doesn't know what it's doing, that it's gotten way in over its head, and that even these kinds of small operations, which the U.S. is supposed to dominate, it's no longer capable of doing effectively.

#Danny

Yeah, well, Alina, anything you want to follow up on, given the fact that we heard even CENTCOM has deleted everything? They tried to deny that this happened. They've been denying everything that's been going on—essentially, everything Iran claims they've been hitting and striking when it comes to U.S. aircraft. What's your reaction?

#Elina Xenophontos

Yeah, I think I would agree with everything KJ said. Up until this point, we've seen the United States engage in a general kind of blackout regarding what's actually going on, while regurgitating the same lines about how we've defeated Iran's defense capacities, we have air dominance, and we've destroyed the Navy. I mean, part and parcel of this is obviously overestimating—or rather artificially inflating—what the Iranian Navy was to begin with, in order to create this sort of faux idea of a victory, which the United States really needs.

But ultimately, you know, what we're seeing right now is the actual successful application of Iran's military strategy, which was always to, obviously, completely destroy command and communication centers within the region. Because all the bases that were hit, all the radar systems that were hit—operationally speaking, these are the systems used to conduct these sorts of operations. And right now, I mean, this has been reported even in Israeli media, as well as in the United States—mostly by Israeli media—that the United States is acting partially blind, if not more so than that.

And these are the kinds of implications that are basically going to continue to unravel, because the United States no longer has the ability to communicate regarding its operations within Iran. So if anything, this actually shows that Iran's strategy has been successful—that everything Iran has stated up to this point, or at least the vast majority of it in terms of its strikes, has been accurate. And if the United States continues to operate within the region, given how severely damaged and impacted its military infrastructure has been—because I think it was the New York Times that reported around 11 bases have been heavily damaged as well—11 U.S. bases in the region have been completely... I think it was 13, Alina.

#Danny

I think it was even more than that. I think it was 13, but go on.

#Elina Xenophontos

I think... I read it was 11 out of 13, but I could be wrong. That's the number I remember, but if it's 13, it could very well have been 13. And we're also seeing the images coming out of Saudi Arabia and the damage that's been done to the bases there. So I agree with everything KJ said. This is completely contradictory to everything Trump said in his speech about how successful the U.S. has been in the region. So yeah, it's been interesting to see these developments.

#Danny

Yeah, well, KJ, I just wanted to pull this up. According to Iranian media, this is a summary of what Iran has hit in about, what is it, 33 or 34 days since February 28th: four F-15s—three in Kuwait, one in Tehran. Of course, CENTCOM said it was friendly fire, that Kuwaiti air defenses mistook something of that sort. Two F-16s now, including one over Tehran. An F-18 fighter jet and two F-35s—they're claiming they hit them. They're not necessarily claiming they downed them or caused them to crash, but they say they struck them. So how does this fit, KJ, with the notion of a ground operation? Because Donald Trump said two to four weeks to send Iran back to the Stone Age, and yet the U.S. just sent thousands upon thousands of paratroopers and Marines, ostensibly for something. Meanwhile, Iran has demonstrated that it has pretty heavy defenses along its coast and can shoot down these fighter jets. Your thoughts on this?

#KJ Noh

Well, I mean, as you pointed out in the graphic, nine jets have been shot down. That's probably over a billion dollars' worth of hardware, plus five THAAD radar systems that seem to have been disabled. They literally had to rob Peter to pay Paul—they had to pull THAAD out of Korea and move it, probably to Jordan. And we also know that the AWACS have been disabled. So the U.S. is literally

fighting blind. And if you want to think of this like a cage match or a martial arts fight, they've not only been blinded—and when I say blinded, I don't mean a cut, I mean like a detached retina—their legs have been cut out; they don't have their bases anymore.

Their arms are tiring; they're no longer capable of blocking effectively. In fact, Roussi recently came out with an article on the expected schedule of depletion for major interceptors, and none of it looks good. They're all heading toward depletion. So, having lost your legs, having been blinded, and with your arms no longer able to block—if you think you can go to the ground and have a ground game, I think that's an act of madness, because that's exactly what Iran wants. It's exactly where Iran will have the greatest advantage. You know, they have an extraordinarily large army.

And if you send in a few thousand Rangers and Marines—the 82nd, the 101st—I don't think it's going to make a difference. In fact, it's going to be a suicide run. So it's not clear what the U.S. is planning with its ground attack. But I think back to Douglas MacArthur, who said that anybody thinking about waging a land war in Asia needs to have their head examined. This is from MacArthur, who actually did it himself. And so I think it's an act of madness. I think it's a suicide run. I have no idea what the game plan is there. But if the air war and the sea war are any indication, any attempt at a ground attack will result in an even greater military catastrophe.

#Danny

Yeah, and Alina, I just wanted to pull this up from Al-Mayadeen because they have an image going around that shows what looks like the ejection seat—or one of them—for the two crew members. And not only that, Alina, they're also claiming that Iran shot down an F-35, a stealth fighter, over central Iran in the last 24 hours. That hasn't been confirmed. It's unclear whether it's Israeli or U.S.—I mean, it's obviously a U.S.-made fighter aircraft, but both Israel and the U.S. have F-35s.

That hasn't been verified by the U.S. or Israeli side. But nonetheless, this appears to be a disastrous day. I'm wondering what you think is going through their minds right now, given that there's a promise this is going to last two to four more weeks—of the empire, of Israel—as these developments just keep rolling in. They keep happening. And many have noted in the Telegraph and across mainstream media that it seems like Trump is on the defensive, and that he and his administration seem desperate at this point, without an off-ramp.

#Elina Xenophontos

Yeah, I would agree. It's interesting to see what the United States is trying to accomplish at this stage. If they go for a ground invasion or, you know, keep bombing Iran into oblivion—or rather back into the Stone Age, which is what Trump actually said in his speech the other day—their main ambition right now, as I see it, is to inflict as much damage and destruction on Iran as possible. That means destroying their infrastructure, especially their oil infrastructure. We're seeing, obviously, the destruction of universities and hospitals. They even bombed—I think it was a cancer research center.

So the entire basis of the Israeli-U.S. coalition at the moment, in its imperialist war on Iran, is fundamentally to inflict as much humanitarian catastrophe on the people of Iran as possible.

But given the fact that there's no other way they can actually accomplish their main goal—which was regime change, and which has obviously been ruled out now, pretty much since the earliest days of this violent onslaught against Iran, even by Netanyahu himself—the idea is to try to bomb Iran, to destroy as much of its infrastructure as possible in order to, at least in their view, take Iran back several decades and obstruct its general position within BRICS, within its alliance with China, and to some extent how it will be able to evolve in terms of the BRI, the Digital Silk Road, and all these other factors that are part and parcel of its trade agreements with China. Because this is effectively what the U.S. is trying to accomplish right now.

Will they conduct a ground invasion? I mean, that would just lead to a massive casualty situation. Any such operation would cause huge losses for the United States because the Iranians have been very well prepared for this. But, as KJ also said, the U.S., as well as Israel and the broader Western military infrastructure, is running dangerously low on defense systems that could provide any real protection to its military personnel in this kind of scenario. And, of course, beyond the fact that the United States is running low on its defense capacity, it doesn't even have its radar systems fully in place anymore.

So this would actually be a massive catastrophe for the United States. The way I see this going forward—my personal interpretation—is that they're going to try to dismantle as much of Iran's infrastructure as possible to essentially cause an economic crisis for Iran. Because again, we have to remember that Iran is a country that has been facing forty-seven years of sanctions, with a snapback mechanism that was reimposed in October of 2023. And, you know, the snapback mechanisms aren't just any sort of sanctions.

These are multilateral UN sanctions, which legally oblige all member states to essentially embargo Iran. China and Russia, as well as some other countries, have said they will not abide by this. We've already seen that start to manifest, but it obviously has economic repercussions for Iran. So this is what I think the United States will try to do. And we're already seeing signs of that, given the civilian targeting and the strikes on civilian infrastructure over just the last few days.

#Danny

Yeah, well, KJ, at what cost, though? As they always say—as the Western mainstream media likes to say about China whenever it does something beneficial for its society and its people—but at what cost? So, at what cost here, to continue on this path? Especially as Alina said, which I think is 100% accurate: they're going to keep trying to destroy Iran, to send Iran back to the Stone Age, as Trump said. But Iran keeps retaliating. I mean, look at Kuwait—there's an oil refinery in Kuwait that's burning after Iran's latest strikes.

And then, as I said before, I pulled this up—Bahrain. They're starting to hit U.S. firms in the Gulf, and they've started with Amazon Web Services and Oracle in Bahrain. It's a big one to hit—the Amazon Web Services cloud computing center there—because it's a major employer. And we already know oil is at about 140-plus dollars a barrel for Brent crude right now, and it's only going up. People are talking about rising food costs. Amazon itself has put a tax on sellers—3.5%. So there are massive costs associated with this, KJ. What do you make of these? And there are likely others that I'm not mentioning.

#KJ Noh

I think that if it's a matter of who can endure more economic pain, Iran has the upper hand. Once again, even in the economic sphere, it has escalation dominance. As you point out, Iran has already hit the oil and gas refineries and fields in Qatar and Saudi Arabia. It has the potential to hit desalination plants if its own desalination plants are hit. It has the capacity to choke off not merely oil, but all the precursors that oil relies on, and other industrial inputs like helium and urea fertilizer, which are critical for the functioning of the global economy. So my thought is that if the U.S. wants to turn this completely into a strangulation bout, Iran already has the U.S. and the Western powers in a chokehold. I don't think any attempt to choke off Iran will result in the U.S. gaining a strategic advantage. I think it will actually have to tap out—and tap out soon. Hmm.

#Danny

Yeah, I want to pull up—Alina, I know you wanted to talk a bit about some of the desperation you're seeing on all sides of the U.S.—Anglo—European imperial sphere. Well, here's what Donald Trump said today—more words from him on Truth Social: “With a little more time, we can easily open the Hormuz Strait, take the oil, make a fortune. It would be a gusher for the world.” And what's so shocking about this, Alina, is that while he's trying to sound like a salesman, at the end of the day it does look quite desperate to be saying “with a little more time.” It almost seems like there's this rolling need to justify what's going on, and there's a lot of disarray happening. Mediators are saying there are no talks anymore—they've hit a dead end—despite Trump saying that Iran is begging and calling and all of this. All signs point to this war, and the consequences of it are only going to get worse. What are you seeing in terms of this desperation and how this all fits into the latest scenario?

#Elina Xenophontos

All right, so I actually want to continue from KJ's point. First of all, I completely agree that Iran has the capacity right now to outdo, let's say, the United States and the entirety of the West. To start off, I was reading—and this is quite ubiquitous at this point—that the United States is struggling. Not only does it lack the industrial base to meet the kind of war needs within West Asia, but it's also unable to meet the needs of its NATO allies in general.

I mean, I was actually reading a piece published by Politico just a couple of weeks ago saying that its allies are in shock and awe right now because weapons that were meant for Asia and Europe were rerouted to West Asia. That's fundamentally because the United States doesn't have the industrial capacity to mass-produce enough to meet the needs of its own war—obviously against Iran at the moment—as well as the needs of its allies. It's also running out of rare earth supplies, which China clearly dominates. I think I read that the U.S. has around a month and a half left of rare earth minerals to meet its own needs.

In fact, over just the last couple of months, suppliers to aerospace and defense companies have had to turn down buyers because they're running out of supplies. So this is the entirety of NATO and the Western industrial complex, so to speak, that's not able to meet its own needs. However, they're making a lot of money when it comes to their stocks—the value there is increasing dramatically because of rising demand. But this is the way the United States makes its money: it profits from the accumulation of this fictitious capital in stocks.

But the reality of the matter is that they not only lack the industrial base, they don't even have the resources needed to continue this war. And much like KJ also said, Iran hasn't actually faced any significant losses in its international trade—its trade, especially with China, has continued as normal as it was before the war. Whereas for the West—that includes Europe and the United States—that's changed significantly. So, you know, Iran is able to maintain its trade. It's actually been reported that they're making more now from their oil, fundamentally because oil prices have risen as much as they have, although obviously there are agreements in place. But still, it is.

You know, it's creating the kind of conditions where Iran will come out of this far stronger than the West, given the fact that it's a self-sufficient economy—and that self-sufficiency was born out of the sanctions regime. You know, also, KJ had brought up the issue of fertilizers. We're seeing in the West right now, and even in the United States, that they're struggling to get access to fertilizers. We've seen this before, obviously, with the Ukraine-Russia war, because the two largest producers are China and Russia. What does that mean for agriculture and farming? We're seeing farmers in the United States who are currently, you know, severely struggling just to meet their own needs and their own demands.

So this is what's currently happening in the West, whereas Iran is able to pretty much sustain itself. It has the ability to withstand this aggression—it's built for a wartime economy, whereas the West isn't. Now, regarding the desperation, something I wanted to bring up is that we're seeing Europe at this point, which is probably going to be hit even harder than the United States, mainly because of its geographic location. They're making all these declarations that they're not going to participate in this war, supposedly trying to present themselves as sovereign from the United States.

And, you know, we saw Meloni state that Sicily basically wasn't going to be used and so forth. But actually, when you look at what's currently happening—and I don't know if KJ wants to explore this,

but I can get into it a bit more as we go on—what’s happening behind the scenes, and what I think really defines the desperation of the West, is that they’re currently preparing for post-ceasefire operations in the Strait of Hormuz. So the UK today—actually, no, yesterday, the 1st of April—held talks with about 40 other countries to form a coalition to secure, or rather restore, freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

And with that, there’s a two-stage process. They said the first phase would involve the EU and Gulf states militarily entering the Strait of Hormuz to destroy the water mines placed by the Iranian military as a defensive measure, and then to escort vessels through the strait. This is directly antithetical to Iran’s strategic objectives in this war, as it has stated that maritime activity in the Strait of Hormuz has now permanently changed—that tolls will be imposed and paid to Iran, which Iran will then use. It’s basically a form of sanction.

It will use those sanctions to rebuild its economy. And so you have the EU trying to portray that, “Oh, we’re not just going to listen to the United States. We have a sense of sovereignty,” and so forth. This is just theatrics. But behind the scenes, if you look at what’s happening in the Eastern Mediterranean—the European armada that’s being built there—they’re preparing, at some point in the next few weeks, to enter the Strait of Hormuz. This is going to be the next stage, and how that’s going to manifest is interesting. I don’t want to keep talking too extensively about it, but we can continue discussing it as we go along.

But this is just to highlight the desperation, because the EU at this point is attempting to enter this conflict through the more legal means of using, obviously, the Law of the Sea—the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea—and the freedom of navigation, under Article 48, I think, or maybe 44, I can’t remember. But the EU itself is completely demilitarized and reliant on the United States to rebuild itself. It doesn’t have industrial capacity. And at the same time, it’s trying to antagonize Iran at a moment when it cannot economically withstand the trade shocks that are hitting the EU.

#Danny

Post-ceasefire operations, KJ, seem a bit premature. And nonetheless, that’s exactly what’s happening. But yeah, your reaction to this—what can anyone do? The United States has no idea what to do when it comes to the Strait of Hormuz and Iran’s control over it. Iran has said that Iran and Oman will determine what happens in the Strait of Hormuz from here on out, and there are no ifs, ands, or buts. That’s the new law of this territorial waterway. What’s your reaction to what Alina said about this?

#KJ Noh

Well, I agree with Alina. If the U.S. or the West imposes significant economic sanctions on Iran, the only way—or one of the main ways—it will try to recoup those costs is by imposing tolls on the Strait

of Hormuz. The Strait of Hormuz, if you think of oil as the lifeblood of capitalism, is like its carotid artery. And Iran has essentially placed its finger on that artery and said, "We control it." I think there's very, very little the EU can do. Certainly, the U.S. can't do anything, and I can't imagine the EU can either. The first thing is, they're not going to open up the Strait by sending naval ships.

It's not simply a matter of demining their drones—their underwater drones. The entire landscape of the Strait is honeycombed with Iranian strategic and tactical assets capable of shutting down anywhere along that coast completely. You know, it's a thousand-mile coast. Experts have said that to control the Strait of Hormuz, you would essentially need to control an area the size of Vietnam. Essentially, you'd have to restart the equivalent of the Vietnam War. And once again, remember that the entire topography of the Gulf favors Iran. That is to say, you have the mountain ranges that kind of ring the entire coast and the Strait like a set of bleachers, or even an amphitheater.

And on the other side, on the Gulf side, in the Gulf states, it's essentially coastal or alluvial plain—flat alluvial plain. So purely from a geographic standpoint, Iran not only has the upper hand, but it has a kind of fractal geometry that allows it to have incredible presence and force projection throughout that area. Any notion that some kind of naval armada or land presence is going to change anything in the Strait is absolutely, absolutely wrong. It's completely misguided. So I don't think it's going to happen. I think the EU is, you know, it's pie-in-the-sky fantasizing at this point. They've really kind of lost the thread.

#Danny

Yeah. And Alina, you know, there's this pattern that's becoming clear—that while the United States claimed at first it wanted to conduct regime change, now Trump is actually saying that already happened and that it wasn't even the goal. It seems like there's major disarray even within U.S. ranks. Overnight, in the last 24 hours, we had Pete Hegseth, the Secretary of Defense—or as he calls himself, Secretary of War—fire twelve high-ranking generals, including General Randy George, who was the head of the U.S. Army. And there were rumors of a lot of disagreement about how the situation in Iran is unfolding.

And then you have a completely opposite dynamic. You have people like Abbas Araqchi out in the streets with the Iranian people. Iranians are out there every single day. And here's what he said about the bridge that was bombed by U.S.-Israeli strikes—the unfinished bridge. He said, "Striking civilian structures, including unfinished bridges, will not compel Iranians to surrender. It only conveys the defeat and moral collapse of an enemy in disarray. Every bridge and building will be built back stronger. What will never recover is the damage to America's standing." So, a bit of a contrast here, Alina. I don't know if you want to comment on this and what you find significant.

#Elina Xenophontos

So, what was significant about what happened with regard to the military? Obviously, Hegseth having essentially fired significant personnel within the U.S. military at a time of war—I think this speaks volumes about the internal conflicts that are currently transpiring between the Trump administration and the military apparatus. Because ultimately, at the end of the day, the job of the military is to make sure they're able to successfully carry out operations.

And they can see that what's currently happening in the region—obviously, in its war against Iran, for all the reasons we've mentioned up to this point—is a failing operation. And yet, rather than moving away from the conflict, moving away from the war, we saw Trump talking about continuing it for another significant amount of time, maybe another month, while simultaneously mobilizing all this personnel. From a logistical perspective, if you're in the military, the common-sense approach would be to terminate this operation.

However, unfortunately, the military is not a neutral actor. It's part and parcel of a greater imperialist machine—the United States. They're driven by entirely different motives, which are, of course, sustaining global hegemony and their own imperialist projection abroad. Iran is at the front lines of that, in terms of what it represents in the grander scheme of things—its role in BRICS, its role in developing new financial infrastructure that would bypass the Western financial system.

Its threat to the petrodollar, which is pretty much the backbone of the United States—the backbone of what has sustained American imperialism—is significant. Without dollar dominance, there's no way to continue financing the U.S. deficit. You need a stable economy and a stable dollar to maintain massive investment in American capital and U.S. Treasury bonds, which in turn allow the U. S. to keep facilitating the kinds of wars and global hegemony it depends on. And now, Iran—through its alliance with Russia and China, as well as the BRICS project—is threatening that very foundation.

So ultimately, you know, the United States—or rather, I guess, the more powerful figures in the United States, the corporate actors behind the scenes—don't align with that logic. Their motives don't align with those of the military, which is fundamentally meant to, you know, win wars. Whereas the United States at this moment is guided by the idea that we need to effectively weaken, target, and encircle China as much as possible.

And we are willing to go to whatever lengths are necessary to achieve those aims. What we're seeing right now are these internal contradictions manifesting within the establishment itself—that's my belief, anyway. And this is going to keep happening because, ultimately, the military apparatus and those in power who are driven by corporate greed represent two entirely different, conflicting ideologies at this point. So that's sort of my interpretation of it.

#Danny

Yeah. And KJ, you know, the United States—with all this chaos plaguing the U.S. economy and political class—they often talk about Iran like it's a singular entity on its own. Or if they mention anyone else, it's their so-called terrorist proxies that they're supposedly supporting. But what we've seen, I think, is that not only has there been a real shift—and I'll pull up the images of what's happening to Israel right now—because every strike against Israel is being coordinated by Hezbollah, which has made a resurgence that I don't think anybody expected. And now, of course, Ansar Allah, known as the Houthis, are also in the war, firing directly on Israel and threatening to close the Bab al-Mandeb Strait.

As Alina mentioned earlier, China is still providing absolutely critical economic cooperation to Iran by buying its oil exports in massive quantities. But Iran is by no means alone. How does this change the calculation? Because the U.S. and Israel have to talk about Hezbollah—they're trying to invade Lebanon and are having a really hard time doing so. Yet the United States doesn't like to acknowledge any of this. It's looking at Iran as a singular entity that it's trying to destroy, and in many ways, it seems to have tunnel vision. What are your thoughts and reactions to that?

#KJ Noh

Yeah, I think you're absolutely right. The U.S. does have tunnel vision. It has a completely misguided conception of the battlescape, the players, and the way they're related. You can see that right from the get-go, from the beginning of the U.S. attack on Iran, when it thought it could do a single decapitation strike that would completely disable Iran and open it up to the regime change it had been fomenting on the ground. That's completely misguided, because as we know, Iran has prepared this mosaic defense, which resists decapitation through a decentralized form of military command. I compare it to a starfish—you cannot decapitate a starfish. If you attack a starfish and manage to sever it, it will simply regenerate itself into multiple starfishes. So that whole notion of decapitation—what the U.S. called Air-Sea Battle, or what's colloquially referred to as "shock and awe"—did not work.

And then the errors compound from that point forward. So Iran was able to escalate first horizontally and then further up the escalation ladder. And in particular, in the economic sphere, China's support—economically and politically, as well as through, for example, ISR with the Beidou navigation system—has been critical. But the U.S. has also failed to understand that Iran is not isolated anymore. It's not an entity that can simply be decapitated, isolated, and taken out. It has not only economic allies but military allies. And if you look at the Bab el-Mandeb, which is currently under threat, even as the Strait of Hormuz is under total control of Iran, they've created a debacle for themselves that I really don't think they know how to get out of.

They've literally painted themselves into a corner. And the last statement I'll make is really about this framing of Iran as, quote-unquote, "terrorist" and fomenting terrorist proxies, if anything at all. We know who the global terrorist is. I think the Iranians themselves were subjected to decades of

terrorism by a U.S. proxy, namely the Pahlavi regime. So I think this whole black-is-white, up-is-down, left-is-right kind of framing is the reason why the U.S. and its allies are facing a strategic defeat today in West Asia—because they simply have no grasp of reality. Any assertion by the neocons that they “make their own reality” has been shown to be completely, utterly fraudulent and bankrupt.

#Danny

Yeah. Yeah, well, Alina, in many ways, the assertion of control over the Strait of Hormuz has the opposite effect of isolating Iran. Iran now has so much leverage in the global economic arrangement that countries are being forced to go to Iran and say, “Hey, how can we work out a deal—an arrangement where we can actually move our tankers and commercial vessels through this waterway?” The Philippines is doing this, as are European countries and India.

So many countries have come to Iran saying, “Hey, we need this, or we’re going to be in dire economic straits. How can we play by your rules?” And Iran would say, “Our rules are fair. This is a territorial waterway off our coast, part of our sovereign waters.” What do you say? How do you see this development unfolding? We can see what’s on the mind of the United States, Europe—the entire collective West—the Strait of Hormuz. They can’t get it out of their heads because of how significant this really is.

#Elina Xenophontos

Yeah, so ironically, one of the main reasons, as I mentioned earlier, that this war took place against Iran is obviously to restore the petrodollar system and address the threat that Iran poses to it. What’s interesting now is that, if anything, this has actually accelerated the weakening of the petrodollar system. Because what we’re seeing is that, like I said earlier, what was once a wartime tactic—taking control of the Strait of Hormuz—is now being passed through Iran’s parliament, and it’s going to become official law. Like you said, they’re essentially going to be controlling the Strait of Hormuz, and there will be effective tolls—sanctioned tolls, essentially—that must be paid to Iran if you want to pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

And so, interestingly, what will this actually do? Not only does this strengthen Iran’s position in terms of its ability to restore itself economically as a country, it also becomes leverage against the Western states in pushing to remove or weaken the sanctions regime that’s been imposed on Iran up to this point. But it’s also set the stage for the yuan and other currencies—especially the yuan—to become very important in the trade of commodities, oil, gas, and fertilizers.

And we’re already seeing that transpire within the BRICS states, especially in terms of China and Russia’s relations. So now, the impact of this war on the Strait of Hormuz has actually cemented the

very thing the United States was trying to thwart. I also wanted to bring some attention to the state of the U.S. economy, which is struggling quite significantly. And this matters when we're discussing its broader ambitions in the region, but also its ability to project power.

So there were actually a couple of reports—well, not reports, but the balance of payments sheet that was produced by the Treasury—which found that, and this isn't exactly new, they had declared technical insolvency. Now, that's somewhat problematic terminology, because the United States can't technically go insolvent. But what it means is that the U.S. is currently facing an enormous fiscal crisis, with around six trillion in capital assets and roughly 136 trillion in liabilities. In this balance sheet, they included all Social Security, Medicare, and so forth, which up until this point had always been excluded.

Now, why was it included? It was included fundamentally because it's no longer seen as sustainable to continue in the debt-driven direction that the United States is currently in. And given the fact that we're reaching a point where these Social Security payments have to be met, this is becoming unsustainable. I was actually reading just this week that, because of the war in Iran, the United States is facing massive inflation. The Federal Reserve is not going to engage in quantitative easing, because if it did, it would actually further exacerbate the devaluation of the dollar. The demand for Treasury bonds has also weakened just this week, obviously because of the threat and the weakened state of the U.S. economy.

And so this is, again, problematic for the United States, because it needs that constant investment in its Treasury bonds in order to fund itself. Obviously, this is also bringing about an increase in the yield on its existing debt, and that essentially means the United States is going to be further indebting itself while not being able to bring in the kind of money needed to sustain itself. So what's happening in the United States at the moment is that it's facing a massive fiscal crisis. Its debt bubble is dramatically increasing as a consequence of the war, which is actually further exacerbating that.

And as this loss continues, it will further create a loss of faith in the U.S. dollar, which is actually strengthening the search for alternatives—looking at establishments like BRICS, looking at, you know, the multipolar world in a different way. So again, we're seeing how the United States' attempt to thwart the rise of the multipolar world has actually accelerated it. And I think this is the greatest loss the United States can take away from this operation. There's no way we can frame or present this that changes that material reality.

#Danny

Yeah, great points. And, KJ, I definitely want you in here to react to that in the context of this. You know, Donald Trump is asking Congress to supersize the military budget to \$1.5 trillion while slashing domestic programs. What's interesting about what he's asking for, according to Politico, is that he wants to cut domestic programs that Republicans actually like. You know, they're obsessed

with China and tech and research. They want the United States to invest in private scientific research and development, R&D, to counter China. And Trump wants to cut everything. He wants to cut all funding—to science, to tech, any federal funding—and social programs too. So \$1.5 trillion, on top of the point Alina just made, \$1.5 trillion to the military. Your reaction to this? This is during a war that's not going well.

#KJ Noh

Well, it's like eating your seed corn or burning your furniture and the framing of your house in order to keep yourself warm. It's completely and totally self-destructive. The U.S., you know, thinks it can solve everything through military Keynesianism—that is to say, by constantly spending more and more on the military. But there's a real guns-and-butter issue. And if you cut your domestic programs, even though that's the fundamental social compact, then you no longer have anything worth defending. And it may be that the calculation is, "We don't care—as long as our oligarchical, plutocratic elite are happy, we'll just keep on going until everything collapses." But I think that is extraordinarily, extraordinarily foolhardy.

Regarding what Alina said, she's absolutely correct. Traditionally, people have calculated U.S. national debt at around \$38 trillion, but it's actually much closer to \$136, \$137, or \$138 trillion. In other words, there's about \$100 trillion worth of debt that's been hidden. The reason for that is that the U.S., when it calculates its debt and adjusts its budget, uses cash-basis accounting—which is absolute nonsense, because if you have a business larger than \$5 million, you have to use accrual accounting. That method takes into account future debts and gives a much broader view that includes your debt picture and the obligations incurred at the time they arise, rather than when money actually changes hands.

And so, yes, the U.S. is facing a critical fiscal crisis. It is technically insolvent. Traditionally, it has dealt with that through what is essentially a Ponzi scheme—a confidence scheme where they just keep printing and pumping out more cash, expecting people, simply on the basis of their assurances and declarations, to keep buying into it. But at a certain point, all that fictitious capital, that fictitious bubble, has to break. And when it does, it undermines the U.S. credit card that it uses to fund its limitless wars.

Traditionally, it's had this unlimited credit card—essentially printing money or printing T-bills—and it's used those to fund its endless wars. But that credit card was securitized with oil, which is also tied to the "exorbitant privilege," or the reserve currency status, of the dollar. Once you start undermining your control of the major oil artery through your inability to think dialectically, you've undercut your foundation—you've undercut your security, which is the reserve currency, the exorbitant privilege of the dollar—and you've lost control of the global flow of oil. So all of these things show that the U.S. is doing everything it can to undermine itself.

It's literally sawing off the branch it's sitting on. And it boils down, once again, to an inability to think systemically, to see the larger picture, and to think dialectically. If they did—if they thought dialectically, even for a moment, and not just in the grossest sense of blowback or unintended consequences—but really understood things from a dialectical perspective, they'd realize that President Trump is actually doing God's work in making China great again and in making Iran great again. He's also, once again, inadvertently decarbonizing the global economy.

#Danny

Yeah, this is true. This is true. And there's some breaking news here. According to the New York Times, a second combat plane was actually downed in the process of the F-15 being shot down. This A-10 Warhawk attack plane, according to the New York Times, went down near the Strait of Hormuz around the same time the F-15E was shot down over Iran. This is according to U.S. officials. And, you know, all of this is not going well for the United States and its unipolar order, Alina. We even have U.S. intelligence assessing that. And this is probably conservative—it's probably not accurate. It's definitely the case that U.S. intelligence doesn't have good intelligence on Iran and its capabilities.

It says roughly half of these missile launchers are still intact after more than a month of supposedly decimating them and blowing them away, Alina. So Iran is saying it can keep this up for years in the Strait of Hormuz, with the war going at its current intensity and with the capabilities all sides are showing. This is already having a massive impact on the overall world order. Is there anything you want to add about this, given that these are very bleak and dark signs—signs we've all talked about on various programs, on this program, on our respective platforms—but maybe there's something we haven't yet discussed, Alina, that you want to bring in here?

#Elina Xenophontos

Well, I'll also just say that, you know, based on what KJ was saying—the kind of continuation of the economic demise, I guess, of the United States—in order to tackle its fiscal crisis that we spoke about earlier, they're not going to pump out money like they did in the past, with the 2008 crisis and so forth. And again, in 2020—actually, in 2020—they began quantitative tightening. But you can't just print money without essentially devaluing your currency, weakening that currency, reducing the demand for it, which then allows you to continue your imperialist aggression abroad.

So what they're effectively going to do is make, as you said, massive cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and so on. That's going to directly impact the American people, and it's coming at a time when they're already facing a significant deterioration in material conditions—because of the war, because of inflation, because they can't make ends meet. You know, like I said, a lot of small- to medium-sized businesses are effectively unable to handle the economic implications of this war, as well as the trade war. But why does this matter? Because it's going to cause internal conflict within the U.S. itself.

You're going to see people becoming increasingly disenfranchised with the state, and all the more outraged. And so, the means that the United States was able to establish up until this stage—by creating these Social Security programs or providing labor rights and laws—all these programs that were pushed forward through the influence of more left-leaning, socialist ideas are now going to be even more dismantled. And when you've done that, you've delegitimized your own state. What we're going to see is a crisis in the U.S., and we're going to see the same thing happening in Europe as well.

And so they can't even handle their own fiscal crisis at home. They're unable to meet the war needs—the ability to even produce and go to war with their adversaries. And much like Danny Haiphong said, we're seeing, you know, Trump—or rather, the United States—has been making China great again. In fact, I think the Financial Times just a couple of days ago published a piece, which I couldn't believe was in the Financial Times, about how China is now positioned to become the superpower of the world.

I mean, this is an enormous kind of recognition to come from a Western mainstream media outlet, because, you know, like we said, there's no way the United States or Europe are going to be able to assert their control over the Strait of Hormuz again. Iran is going to have complete control over this territory, even if they try to claim that this is some sort of violation of international law of the seas, etc. They're going to be coerced into making certain agreements. They're going to be coerced into starting to pay in yuan. That's going to undermine their own currencies and their own economies. And this is going to bolster BRICS. Effectively, everything the West has tried to prevent is actually going to materialize at some point.

Oh, yes, this is the Iran war. Essentially, this is quite a decent article from the Financial Times, actually. Because, you know, China is very well prepared to weather this entire storm, as are Iran and Russia. The only ones who do not have oil reserves, gas, or fertilizers and are essentially just struggling are the entire West. They've lost any sort of leverage at this point to actually assert any of their demands. So this is, I think, what's going to be very interesting going forward—seeing the economic implications of that, how it's going to manifest at home for Europe and the US—because it's going to be, I think, very chaotic.

#Danny

Yeah, KJ, is there anything we haven't covered yet that you want to bring in? Because, you know, the last time we spoke, it was the day of the U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran—the very first day, February 28th. They destroyed the Manab school, more than 170 young girls killed. Morals shattered, war crimes committed. And the U.S. came out of that saying, "We've decimated everything. We killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. We've killed most of their leadership." They thought it was going to take three to four days—two to four days, I believe—and that it would all be wrapped up. And here we are, well into the second month.

#KJ Noh

Yeah, well, you know, just going back to the start of the war—the entire war was criminal from top to bottom. It's a war of aggression, which is the ultimate crime under international law, the one meant to control the evil of the whole. And just recently, Secretary Rubio came out and said that Iran was violating international law by controlling the Strait of Hormuz. I mean, irony of ironies. The hypocrisy has no limits. But coming back to what was said earlier about the state of conditions in the United States—things are not going well for your average American family. About 60 percent of all families don't have a thousand dollars to their name. Thirty-eight percent don't even have four hundred dollars, which means that any, even the slightest, unexpected economic shock can essentially send them over the edge and into homelessness.

And God knows we have no end of homeless people in the United States. It's literally a failed state, a third-world situation. It's a failed state as soon as you go out into the urban areas of the United States. And so, when President Trump talks about bombing or returning Iran to the Stone Age, that in and of itself is a promise to commit war crimes. Let it be said clearly that Trump is not the only person to talk like that. That phrase was coined by Curtis LeMay, then picked up by Richard Armitage and James Baker, and Colin Powell even talked about turning North Korea into a charcoal briquette. So anybody who's astonished by that language is not paying attention.

But going back to this notion of returning Iran to the Stone Age—I mean, to be honest, there's a large population in the United States that's already living in Stone Age conditions. If you go to some of the homeless encampments, people are living worse than they would have during the Stone Age. And so, I think we need to understand this fundamental reality: the U.S., as a declining empire, is making things even worse for its own people, even as it threatens not only to commit genocide against the Iranian people but also to devastate its own working class.

The other thing I think we haven't mentioned—but which I regretfully feel is important to point out—is that the risk of war, if this continues, isn't just further attrition or ground troops. There's also a risk of nuclear escalation. Both Iran and the U.S. are nuclear-powered superpowers, and U.S. nuclear doctrine essentially boils down to the idea that if we're losing a war, we can use nukes to bring it to a tolerable close. That's literally written in black and white; it's official doctrine. So that's a real danger. And I'm very worried, because I see Undersecretary Colby has been very, very silent during this whole period. But that silence, to me, suggests dangerous machinations, because he's the one who has actually advocated for the seamless use of tactical nukes in war.

The last thing I want to say, just to turn it back to a more optimistic standpoint, is that President Trump is referred to in China as "Comrade Trump" because, as we've noted before, he's making China great again. He's dismantled the U.S. industrial base, and subsequent administrations have continued that process. President Trump himself is, as far as I can tell, pushing the world toward

decarbonization and de-dollarization, and he's doing extraordinary things to dismantle the empire. So, in that sense, President Trump—perhaps inadvertently, perhaps against his own wishes—is doing God's work in making the world a slightly safer place over the long term.

#Danny

Alina, I'll give you the final word, since KJ got the first word on the show. Anything you'd like to add before we close out?

#Elina Xenophontos

No, I agree with everything KJ just said. I think it's—you know—I would also add that it's very interesting to watch the United States not, in any way, assess its position in a dialectical way, but ultimately we have to remind ourselves that the only people currently benefiting from this war in the United States are the military-industrial complex, big oil, big tech, and, of course, finance. All these industries are significantly profiteering because, in an economy that is ultimately failing—one that doesn't have an industrial base and doesn't actually produce energy—it's a finance-capitalist economy at the end of the day.

In order to sustain itself, it relies on the creation of fictitious capital—stock market bubbles, bond markets, and so on. Because if we look now, the reports coming in show that a lot of U.S. Treasury bonds are less in demand. But what is in high demand? Bonds from other financial institutions, and also from the military-industrial complex. So they're making a lot of money, and war creates money for the ruling classes. But ultimately, the American working class is going to bear the cost of that. These are all mechanisms used to sustain a failing economic structure—unless it radically changes. And that is what's happening in the United States.

And so for me, I think the positive thing—and I'll just finish off in the same way KJ did—is that ultimately great change is coming, even within the West. There's going to be, you know, an impact on the working class. The squeeze on their own material well-being will become such that it will generate this kind of, I guess, internal struggle that could actually bring about change—different avenues of change—but it will also weaken the U.S. and its ability to assert itself globally. I remember Marco Rubio talking about trying to return to the colonial era, because obviously that was the period when they were able to consistently exploit the Global South.

That era is officially dead. I mean, even when formal colonialism ended, neocolonialism—in the form of the IMF and the World Bank—continued. This export of financial capital into the Global South was the means by which the EU and the United States sustained themselves. But that is now rapidly closing. And the United States, in its attempt to, again, as I said before, prevent that—especially under Trump, but even before that—has faced the same kind of, well, criminal behavior, or at least, from the U.S. perspective, negative repercussions, as we've seen with the war in Ukraine.

We saw the same thing happen even under the Biden administration, because ultimately there aren't really any differences between the Democrats and the Republicans. Their main agenda is to serve the same sort of imperialist, I guess, needs. So it's basically a continuation of the same agenda—that's how I'd put it. And it's costing them the future of the U.S. But as long as they're making quick profits—because if you look at Morgan Stanley, they're publishing little leaflets saying it's a great time to invest, a great time to buy stocks, and so forth—they're making money.

It's quick money, but that's not going to be enough to sustain the U.S. So what we're going to be looking at in the future is the rise of multipolarity—the rise of alternatives that will allow, especially, countries of the Global South that have been suffocated by Western financial dominance to finally breathe. And I think this is how we should look at this war. Although, of course, yes, it's going to bring a lot of destruction—when you're dealing with an empire that's collapsing, it's dangerous—but it's also an opportunity for change to manifest.

#Danny

Yeah, and I think we're definitely seeing that with Iran's retaliation, the global ramifications, and just what we're seeing on the battlefield in the region that the U.S. and Israel opened up. But with all that said, I think this is a great place to end. I want to thank you both for joining. We're going to head out together. I want to make sure people know they can find Alina's work in the video description—both her Substack and her Instagram are there. And KJ makes the rounds in all kinds of places as well, so be sure to look up his prior work. Without further ado, everybody, hit the like button before you go—that keeps things going in the algorithm. I'll be back tomorrow, 1 p.m. Eastern, 2 p.m. Eastern, with Mark Sloboda for a more military update. The video description is where you can find Alina's work and all the places to support this channel. And I will see you tomorrow. Bye-bye.