

Iran SHOOTS DOWN Four US Fighter Jets | Mark Sleboda

Military affairs and geopolitical analyst Mark Sleboda returns to provide his assessment of numerous US fighter jets shot down as Iran's massive escalation brings Trump and the US's war into a turning point moment of crisis. Support Mark Sleboda: boosty.to/therealpolitick <https://substack.com/@marksleboda> LIKE the video and Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis! Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong> Telegram: <https://t.me/DannyHaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritho>

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. I'm joined by military affairs and international relations expert and geopolitical analyst Mark Sloboda. Mark, great to see you again. How are you?

#Mark Sleboda

Danny, thanks for having me. It's always an honor and a pleasure to be on the show. And I'm alive—how the hell are you?

#Danny

I'm also alive, and what a time to be alive, because we're still covering this historic war of aggression on Iran waged by the United States and Israel. Let's get started, Mark. Everyone, hit the like button as you come in. So, let's begin with this: there's now a manhunt for what the U.S. says is the remaining pilot missing from the two attacks involving the downed F-15 fighter jet that happened within the last 24 hours. Mark, Iran is saying that the fighter jet's other pilot—who the U.S. claims was rescued—actually has not been rescued, and that this is propaganda.

But I wanted to pull up the terrible day—what Iran is calling Black Friday—because it wasn't just the F-15E Strike Eagle that was downed. There was also the A-10C. Iran is reporting an incredibly large number of other aircraft—uh, an F-16 over Iraq, an F-16 that was badly damaged and had to be downed as well. So, four fighter jets and a bunch of other support aircraft over the last 24 hours. Mark, let's just begin with this: Fox News is reporting on it. CENTCOM is silent about this, by the

way—no tweets. They like to tweet when nothing's ever happened, but they haven't tweeted anything.

#Mark Sleboda

I heard from CENTCOM that all of their aircraft are accounted for.

#Danny

It's all accounted for.

#Mark Sleboda

You know exactly where the pieces are, out there in the Iranian desert.

#Danny

Well, here's Fox News. Their national security correspondent had some interesting words that might speak a little more to the reality—of course, with a lot of spin, too. Here we go.

#News 1

But the Israelis are...

#Danny

Hold on one second. Let me take this off.

#News 1

...off airstrikes in that area while this search and rescue takes place. There are some indications that at least one of the pilots may have survived, but we're awaiting a statement from CENTCOM. There's a lot of information being put out right now through Iranian state channels. They obviously want to see this and present it as a win to their people. It's a great propaganda victory for them, but we don't know whether it was a mechanical failure or whether this F-15E was shot down by IRGC forces.

What we can say is that there's still a danger to pilots flying over Iran, even though we've heard repeatedly from the Pentagon that they have air supremacy there. There are still many surface-to-air missile systems in existence, as well as Iranian ballistic missiles we've seen. There were three waves of ballistic missiles fired at Israel in the last hour or so, so they still have a lethal capability. It's one of the reasons the Strait of Hormuz is still closed. It's extremely dangerous.

#Danny

So, Mark, how's that air supremacy going? And what are your reactions to the developments over the last 24 hours—CENTCOM is silent, the Trump administration isn't silent, but they're not really talking about this. So, your thoughts, your reactions to that?

#Mark Sleboda

Okay, so first of all, let me address the Black Friday sales thing, because I'm not a person who's generally prone or sympathetic in any way to consumerism. That's just not me. But, I mean, who can resist these sales? Buy one F-15 and get an A-10 and two Black Hawks for free. I mean, that's quite a deal—an irresistible sale, I'd say. So, yeah, we were told by the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I believe Tuesday or Wednesday, that the U.S. had now achieved a high degree of air superiority over Iran and that the U.S. was beginning overland missions, right? They were talking specifically about bombers, B-52s, but I think we can assume they were also talking about tactical aircraft as well.

And this, you know, it would have been a big deal if it were true. Because despite everything they've said up until now—and they've been lying—U.S. officials, Trump, I mean, Trump, everything he says is in his delusional fantasy world, so no one can take anything he says seriously. But even U.S. military officials—Warburton, Hegseth, all of them—were saying that the U.S. has been flying over Iranian airspace for the last five weeks, evidently, you know, completely unimpeded and freely and everything. And those of us who are paying attention to this conflict know that that is absolutely not true, right?

So at least up until the middle of this week, the U.S., for the most part, their aircraft were staying well outside Iranian airspace. They were firing from Iraqi airspace, from the Gulf, possibly even from the Caspian. But they were not—except for Reaper drones and a few Israeli drones—largely staying outside Iranian airspace. A few high-altitude bomber passes, you know, dropping bunker busters, perhaps. But there's not even a whole lot of evidence of that. And then we see this result this week, where they say, "Now we've achieved air superiority, and now we're going to be flying over Iranian airspace."

Now, the reason this is important is because if the U.S. and Israel are firing from outside Iranian airspace, then they have to use standoff munitions. They have to use Tomahawks and JASMs, right? That's the main thing. There are a few others, but that's what they're firing into Iran. And that's important because the U.S. only has so many of them. Their stockpiles are critically low. We're told that in the first few days of the war, the U.S. fired around 650 Tomahawks. So while some attention—at least in the alt media—has been drawn to the fact that the U.S. and Israel are critically low on air defense interceptor missiles, it's not getting much mainstream coverage.

They're also critically low on standoff offensive munitions, and the numbers have gotten so low that, if you look at the number of Tomahawks fired in the last week, it's dropped down to zero. You know, hundreds in the first days of the conflict, and now down to that. And evidently, from what we've

heard, the JASMs—air-launched cruise missiles—those inventories have also been brought down to nearly nothing. Now, if the U.S. achieved real air superiority over Iran, that would be a problem for Iran, because then the U.S. could switch to JDAMs, which are old, dumb gravity bombs with a glide kit attached—or just gravity bombs themselves.

And then the U.S. could bomb Iran essentially indefinitely. You know, when Trump made those claims—“oh, we have an unlimited supply of weapons”—yeah, they do have an unlimited supply of old, dumb gravity bombs. That much is true, effectively. But they don’t have an unlimited supply of Tomahawks or JASMs, those standoff cruise missiles. So if Iran could keep them held off, then the U.S. would run out of offensive potential. But if they could make that switch, then the U.S. could comfortably bomb Iran, supposedly without fear of losing aircraft, for decades—a long period of time, too long.

But up until now, whatever claims to the contrary, for the most part the U.S. and Israel have been restricted to standoff munitions. Now, what Dan Cain, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, announced earlier this week was that, oh, now we’re going to start flying directly over Iranian airspace for the first time. We haven’t done it before, but we’re about to start doing it. And that’s going to change everything. I was asked a question about this on my own show, in a Q&A session this week, and I said, yeah, you know, I don’t know. I keep seeing Reaper drones being shot down, right? And, you know, other things. I’m not sure that Iranian air defense is that badly deteriorated. And they have a very large supply of MANPADS.

Russia just signed a deal with them for a very large supply of MANPADS. I don't know how many of those have been delivered, but I assume they have their own as well. And even MANPADS can be extremely dangerous to tactical aircraft. We saw an F-18 that was hit by one earlier. So, you know, even without mobile air defense systems or fixed air defense placements, a country with lots of MANPADS that are actively using them—unlike, say, Delcy Rodríguez’s Venezuela—can still pose a significant threat. Yeah. What’s more, the Iranians have learned some air defense tricks since last June. Essentially, they started operating in quiet or ambush mode—they would go passive.

They wouldn’t turn on their systems—which would alert the U.S. to their presence—until they had signals from other radars, probably from the Russians and the Chinese as well, indicating aircraft launches. That helps them hide their air defense systems. Evidently, reports say they’ve also begun using an advanced thermal detection system—a passive thermal detection system—that’s been successful in spotting U.S. aircraft, even stealth aircraft, we’re told. And the U.S. can’t detect or target the launchers using that system to track aircraft. So the U.S. thinks, “Oh, we haven’t had any air defense launches in this area for a while; it’s probably pretty safe. We’ve probably wiped everything out.”

#Danny

And then they fly over it and get shot at—because, you know, ambush tactics.

#Mark Sleboda

Right. That's what they've switched to. And this is something that the Kiev regime learned handily in Ukraine—the, uh, conflict in Ukraine. So that has been somewhat effective for them and is becoming very effective for the Iranians. And I said, well, let's see what happens. I think the switch—the beginning of these overland missions—has more to do with the exhaustion of their supply of Tomahawks and JASSM standoff munitions than with any real achievement of air superiority. And thus, to be able to continue the conflict and keep inflicting damage on Iran—to bomb them back into the Stone Age, where they “belong”—that type of rhetoric is genocidal, and we need to call it that.

That is the textbook definition of genocidal rhetoric coming out of Trump—that they're taking a big risk, that they're making assumptions about Iranian air defense. And I said, let's see. Let's see what the real conditions and the real reasons for this switch are, for this announcement. Let's see if U.S. aircraft start falling out of the sky. Bingo! Bingo! Twenty-four hours later, we start seeing U.S. aircraft falling out of the sky like there's no tomorrow. And these are significant losses—more significant because they happened in such a short period of time after this announcement. We saw this: one got shot down, and then the others came in for a search and rescue mission and got hit repeatedly.

That's what we saw with the A-10 Warthog and several Black Hawk helicopters that were at least damaged. And that's significant because it tells us that Iran is capable of springing ambushes and still has significant air defense assets left. And that is going to be a problem for U.S. plans to bomb all of Iran's bridges and electrical generation facilities. They started bombing Iranian universities, particularly science and technology universities—war crimes, by the way. I mean, no question. And it's quite clear that they're going after Iran's intellectual base, their capabilities. They're specifically targeting scientists, engineers, that sort of thing—civilians. And they're bombing pharmaceutical companies.

What the hell? I mean, there is no military justification for that. That's just pure spite. And, you know, again, it's meant to punish Iran for not just rolling over and playing dead to the U.S. hegemon. You can't do that if Iran has that type of air defense. I'm not an expert on the Iranian electrical grid, but from everything we've heard, it's fairly decentralized and robust. You see that Russia has been bombing Ukraine's electrical system for several years now, right? And they're still working on it. The repairs get done, but, you know, the Soviets also built with a lot of redundancies and a very robust, decentralized system. It seems the Iranians are supposed to have something very similar, which means that would take a long time and a lot of munitions—two things the U.S. does not have, particularly if it cannot hang out above Iranian airspace.

And the same thing with bridges. Bridges are remarkably hard to destroy. We're told that the bridge in Iran that the U.S. targeted—the B1 bridge that Trump was gloating about this week, right? The highest, you know, uh, bridge not only in Iran but, I believe, in the Middle East. But from what I

understand, it wasn't even fully completed, so that may have, um, and they specifically targeted it, I think partly because of that, so they were able to do significant structural damage to it, whereas other bridges may be more resistant. Again, we've seen that in the conflict in Ukraine. I don't know about the engineering status of bridges in Iran, but I know the Soviets built bridges to last, and they can take quite a beating.

You'd be surprised. It takes a significant amount of munitions—often multiple serious impacts—to cause any kind of real structural damage rather than just superficial damage. So this is going to be a big problem for Donald Trump. If he can't bomb Iran back into the Stone Age to make them capitulate without losing large numbers—maybe even higher numbers—of U.S. aircraft, then the only thing he has left is this "suicide squad" card of ground operations. And, you know, military analysts who actually understand military potential, the size of the forces being discussed, and all that, say they would never do that because it's stupid. It would be a slaughter.

If you look at U.S. operations in Iraq and so forth, the U.S. built up hundreds of thousands of troops over half a year or more, getting all the logistics into place and transferring the troops and everything. And, uh, you know, with this, we're talking, what, a max of 20,000 troops here—max. You know, if the 82nd Airborne and Special Forces and everything else are brought in along with the Marine Expeditionary Units. Iran has a standing army of three hundred and some thousand, and then another one-point-something million reservists and everything like that. This is not a serious argument. But we're not dealing with sane or rational people in this administration—not Trump, but many others. And it seems that, you know, some people within the Pentagon who might have been somewhat more sane and rational—we had a huge purge.

#Danny

You're gone. Twelve?

#Mark Sleboda

Twelve. Right. You know, just in the last week, three big generals. But, you know, more in the weeks before that—more quietly. So we can't count on them operating from a sane military standpoint. It looks like they really intend to go through with this ground operation. And now, I'm going to speak cold-blooded, realpolitik, sitting in Russia.

#Danny

Go for it, baby!

#Mark Sleboda

Go for it, right? Waste all those standoff munitions, waste all those air defense interceptors. Throw your troops into a suicide mission, right? Russia—the oil price is through the roof, right? The U.S. is even somewhat relaxing a few sanctions on Russia just to get any money into the market. The price of fertilizer and agricultural goods is going through the roof. And what is Russia a huge provider of to the world, other than oil and gas? Oh yeah—fertilizer and agriculture.

Now we're told there are shortages of aluminum and helium because those industries are byproducts of the extraction and processing of natural gas and LNG. Oh, and what else does Russia have a huge capacity to provide? Oh yeah—aluminum and helium. And the U.S. is wasting every type of offensive and air defense munition, and if they start an actual ground operation, everything else that could theoretically be transferred to Ukraine instead. And there's no sign—none—that regime change is even on the table anymore, right? No one is seriously talking about that. Now Trump is saying, "Oh, I never talked about regime change. That was never the intention. Never said it."

#Danny

Or he already has it.

#Mark Sleboda

Right. Already have a bunch of people, right? It's a whole new regime. No, no, that's not the way—you misunderstand the change of regime. You assassinated, right? You targeted a bunch of people. But there was a line of succession, and those people were replaced. And if anything, the people who replaced them—they're not, no, sorry, they're not more reasonable or whatever. They're more hardline. First of all, he started talking like the president has changed, and I'm like, what is he talking about? Because Pozeshkin is still there. And if there's one person I wouldn't really miss in Iran, it's Pozeshkin, because he was half a pro-Western liberal to begin with. But anyway, he's still there.

And, you know, what we saw instead was Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the one who was keeping Iran from developing a strategic deterrent—he's dead. And his son has replaced him. Now, his son, Mojtaba Khamenei, has worked extensively over the years with the IRGC and the Iranian security apparatus. He's much more hardline and, I would say, more pragmatic than his father was. Maybe less academic in the, you know, ethereal or spiritual sense. That's how some people have described him. But you just killed his father, his wife, his kids, his grandkids, and supposedly injured him. I mean, I remember not so long ago that Warbur Hexeth was bragging about how they disfigured Mojtaba, right? "We really messed him up."

His face is ugly. So, yeah, no, not more reasonable—hardliners. And this system continues. That is the regime. Whatever American fantasies—"oh, we just take out this one evil dictator we don't like, and everything becomes fine, everyone suddenly becomes a compliant U.S. puppet"—that's not how

it works. Like, oh, I don't know, Delcy Rodríguez in Venezuela. Not that I'm going to name anyone. But that's not happening in Iran. There has been no regime change. So Trump has no good options. Even **The Atlantic**, one of the most pro-U.S., Western, global-hegemony news and commentary magazines out there, had a piece this week saying Trump has no good options. They defined four options, and they said none of them are good.

And that's where Trump is. He can't just leave and give up, because as compliant and sycophantic and generally pro-U.S. as the Western mainstream media is—especially when it's against Iran—even they're kind of like, "Yeah, I don't think things are going the way they're supposed to." And they're definitely not. Now, the Strait of Hormuz—you know, people talk about it—if there's a peak in the effects of the, well, it's not closed, right, but the selective closure or management of the Strait of Hormuz, the big effects of that haven't yet hit the Western economies. South Asia has been pretty badly affected already, but there are still a number of oil tankers out there heading around the world.

They've all hit port now. Now we're going to start to see the effects of it. They're talking seriously—like, in the very near future—about energy rationing in Europe, right? The first world, in the old parlance. So this is going to raise the political and economic pressure on the Trump administration, just as it's becoming impossible to hide how bad the military situation is. Politico reported this week that the U.S. is running out of targets it can easily hit because everything is hidden in these massive missile cities and underground fortifications. And we were told originally that the U.S. had wiped out 90% of Iran's missile launchers. Some of us were like, yeah, really? I don't know.

#Danny

Meanwhile, have you been on X lately? Have you?

#Mark Sleboda

I don't know. No, I mean, not even videos, right? Maybe some viral videos and everything. But the number of recorded missile launches in the last week or two is actually going up on a daily basis. The number of drone launches is going up too. They've consolidated, they've hit their running pace, and, you know, they've got their schedules for a long conflict. And they keep dishing out the damage. So first it was 90%, then 80%, then 70%, then 60%. Now CNN's saying 50%. We're getting closer to the real number, which is probably something more like 20% that they've managed to take out, with 80% remaining. Meanwhile, what we see is that it's Western air defense—it's U.S. and Israeli air defense—that's just completely, not only exhausted already in terms of interceptors, as nearly everyone predicted, but just incapable.

I can't tell you how many videos I've seen—real videos—of four, five, six interceptors being fired at a single incoming Iranian ballistic missile and missing them all. Ted Postol's been saying it all along: air defense, you know, particularly the Patriot, is a myth. It doesn't actually do anything. And that's being borne out. That is being borne out. And David's Sling didn't perform any better. It's a very bad

situation for them—militarily, economically. And this is existential for Iran. They can take a beating and keep on ticking. There are no observable cracks. None of the ethnic minorities have successfully been activated. We haven't seen any substantial Mossad-backed insurgency like we did a few months ago. There's nothing. In fact, everything appears to be the exact opposite.

#Danny

The exact opposite.

#Mark Sleboda

Especially around the flag effect, just like what happened last year, except to an even greater extent. And I'd say it's much stronger because, as the U.S. said, we're running out of targets but we're going to bomb Iran back to the Stone Age. So now they're hitting universities, pharmaceutical companies, and of course there's the Manab situation, which was probably atrocious collateral damage due to AI targeting and other factors. But it's led to the Iranian population being more solidly behind the Iranian government than I can remember.

#News 1

Yeah.

#Danny

Yeah. I mean, you've seen Abbas Araghchi walking in the streets multiple times during this war. And that usually can't happen if you have, as you said, Mark, an active force, right? Because they're all into decapitation. So if they had an active force inside the country, Iranian officials wouldn't be out there. It's the exact opposite—people are rallying around them.

#Mark Sleboda

I'm not normally a big person for judging the body language and so forth of political figures and making assumptions from that. But the Iranian foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi—that SOB is as cool as a cucumber. I mean, he is. He's like... you know, the level of coolness, coldness, and confidence he's showing is on the level of Putin at his best, right? You know, when he's doing interviews like that. I'm not seeing an Iranian political elite here that is in any way particularly stressed. Their plan is actually, largely, I would say, going according to plan, right?

Their strategy is bearing fruit, and they know it. We hear from Trump all of these insane— I mean, let's— I'm not speaking hyperbolically or rhetorically. Trump is an unhinged, mentally deranged, psychopathic megalomaniac, as, you know, of course, is war bro Pete Hegseth. And we've long known that about Netanyahu. It's a dangerous position because the U.S., in acts of desperation—

God knows, all the gods know—what they could do at this point, particularly when they appear to be purging anyone from the military who's questioning any of these orders. There are options for ground ops.

Did you, Danny, see the one in the Washington Post where they're talking about a plan to extract uranium? It involves flying forces into the central mountainous region of Iran under fire—oh, sorry, there is no fire, because they've supposedly suppressed all Iranians. There are no drones, no missiles, nothing like that. And no one is supporting them, so they wouldn't face any organized military or anything like that. But they have to storm an underground fortified complex, then bring in excavating equipment to get the uranium out, and even construct an airport runway in the middle of Iran.

#Danny

Yeah, I saw that about the runway. I remember it. As if the United States ever builds anything quickly, by the way.

#Mark Sleboda

Let's be honest. James Bond flicks— even old Sean Connery James Bond flicks— have more realistic plots than this. That's why, again, from the Russian position, particularly when there's obviously no danger right now of regime change in Iran, Russia's just like, "Go for it, bro."

#Danny

Keep going, keep going.

#Mark Sleboda

That's the—never stop your enemy when he's making a mistake.

#Danny

Which is what the economists say. I mean, they referenced Xi Jinping on their cover. They quoted Napoleon Bonaparte saying, yeah, never interrupt your enemy when he's making a mistake. And, you know, that whole ground operation scenario reminds me of, you know, the old Photoshop thing— like if you have a photo of the war in Iran and you just wipe out the Iranian military, then everything actually makes sense. You can do all of that. But if you factor in the fact that Iran has military capabilities and has been hitting pretty hard, which everyone is admitting now, then this idea is an absolute disaster.

#Mark Sleboda

It's this fantasy, blinkered thinking. I mean, it's just childish—literally puerile. We're told that Trump was informed before the conflict that Iran would probably close the Strait of Hormuz, right? And not that anyone needs to be told this. I mean, everybody—the barista at the coffee shop, the guy selling me kofta and shawarma down the street—knows that Iran would use their nuclear option of closing the Strait of Hormuz. But Trump chose not to believe that Iran would do that. Why? Because that would make everything really inconvenient and impossible.

So let's just pretend they're not going to do that. I mean, that's the kind of fantasy thinking that went on inside the apparatus. When they say, "We have no plan, we're just flying by the seat of our pants, therefore the enemy doesn't know what we're doing"—right? That's not serious. It's dangerous for the U.S. and everyone else in the world when the world's fading hyperpower is operating without any strategy, without any real plans—at least not any that mesh with the real world the rest of us live in.

#Danny

Yeah. Well, Mark—yeah. I mean, it's people like Danny Haiphong—why are you laughing? Have you seen what's been going on? I mean, everything you just said makes for not only a bad Hollywood film but also some kind of dark comedy. But, you know, amidst all the carnage and war crimes...

#Mark Sleboda

This is how we stay sane, people.

#Danny

Yeah, exactly. Well, Mark, let me get to some of these developments that go along with what you were just outlining. So here's Donald Trump—his only reaction, his only words so far. I mean, with regard to the Air Force Black Friday disaster for the United States, he was supposedly briefed. And then this morning, this is what we got from him—his most recent Truth Social post: "Remember when I gave Iran ten days to make a deal or open up the Strait of Hormuz? Time is running out. Forty-eight hours before all hell will rain—rain as in rain down on them. Glory to God." So, as he's saying this...

#Mark Sleboda

Glory be to God. Who are the crazy religious fanatics here? Oh, yeah—it's the Christian Zionists in the Trump administration.

#Danny

And Bloomberg is confirming exactly what you outlined earlier, Mark. The United States is committing to exhausting all of its JASSM-ER cruise missiles and taking whatever it can from the rest of the world where it has them stationed, using them in this war. And then I wanted to get into something else—we were talking before the program about Iran's propaganda game, or its PR game, in this war being absolutely on point. They're trending all over social media—various Iranian official and non-official accounts. Here's the Iranian embassy in Tunisia posting this meme, calling it the "U.S. Chair Force," in reference to all the pilots who had to eject in the last 24 hours.

So, Mark, what do you make of this? I mean, right now it sounds like the only option for the United States, if it doesn't concede to Iran in any way, is to do exactly what Trump says he's going to do—which will require more of what we've seen in the last 24 hours. The U.S. getting closer and closer to Iran's air defenses, or even trying to invade and getting closer to whatever the hell Iran's going to unleash at them—troops, drones, missiles, whatever.

#Mark Sleboda

Come closer. You know, you're standing out there where it's hard for us to hit you. We can hit your bases, you hide in hotels, and we can hit Israel and the Gulf states. But yeah, you come closer so that we can hit you back. And that's exactly what the situation would be. Then Iran would really be able to fight back on a much more equal footing. It's not equal, because they'd be fighting from a strong defensive position with unquestioned logistics—while the U.S. would have none—and with a massive amount of manpower and force. And the Iranians, they've been at various levels of conflict over the years.

The IRGC has been heavily involved in Syria and Iraq, you know, fighting ISIS and everything. They're not some country that hasn't seen combat in decades—that's not the situation. So they're blooded as well. I think if the U.S. put troops on the ground, first of all, their logistics would just be a joke. And quite obviously, the U.S. would not have air superiority, and drones and missiles would rain down on them. Not in the sense of the Trump tweet—"all hell will rain down on them." No, all hell will rain down, but that hell will consist of pieces and parts of U.S. aircraft falling to the ground. It's just madness, right?

I mean, to quote Tyrion Lannister from the TV version of Game of Thrones: madness, madness, and stupidity. I mean, that's what we're looking at here. I try to be black-pilled, hard-focused, but Iran has all the leverage in this position. They've done everything right—at least since the beginning, when all their leaders decided to hang out in Khamenei's apartment or whatever it was that got the whole leadership wiped out in the first few hours. But I don't know, it seems like their replacements are more level-headed and taking this conflict even more seriously. Maybe they're better off for it. I mean, that's a terrible thing to say, but at the very least, command and control has not been...

#Danny

Seems like they almost, maybe, already were in command and control. I mean, that's the level of it. Some have made note of this, of course—I think we've also said that on this show. It was a very rapid response from Iran, so rapid that the United States and Israel had no idea it was going to happen that fast. I think they thought they had a few days to lay waste to whatever they wanted.

#Mark Sleboda

They had a fantasy version—that the government was just going to completely collapse. It didn't. And that is, again, a result of a continuing problem for the U.S., right? Whenever it's dealing with an adversarial country, the so-called experts—both within the security state and in the universities, the think tanks—you know, a Russian expert is an anti-Russian ideologue, an Iranian expert is an anti-Iranian ideologue.

They look at their opponent rather than putting themselves in their opponent's shoes and trying to understand them on an objective, realist basis. They have, you know, these fantasy anti-Russian, anti-Iranian, distorted caricature views, right? Because they're so focused on encouraging, you know, military and other action against them. But it leads them into these situations where they believe the Iranian government would just collapse like a house of cards, and the Iranian people would rise up in the streets and, you know, all start—what is it? I mean, it's not really blue jeans and Coca-Cola these days. I've been outside the U.S. for a couple of decades. But whatever it is that characterizes American life on a simplistic, consumer-based façade now—that's what they imagine the Iranian people would do.

And they sorely mistook the Iranian nation. They made so many mistakes in their assessment and judgment of Iran—politically, economically—just like they did with Russia, right? You know, the belief that U.S. sanctions would crush Russia back in 2022, blah, blah, blah. Well, they made the same type of mistakes in underestimating the strength and unity of the Iranian state and people. And that has led them to this disastrous situation where, you know, I mean, Trump, of course, being Trump, could walk away, blame NATO—he's certainly made steps in that direction—blame NATO, that's the reason why we fail. But we haven't failed. We achieved regime change.

#Danny

Then we won.

#Mark Sleboda

And they're never going to build a nuclear weapon now, when they weren't going to build one to begin with—at least not until now—and then declare victory and try to walk away. But, you know, there's that whole problem that the Strait of Hormuz would be left under Iranian control. And you can't really ignore that. You can't pretend that's not happening, because it affects energy markets, right? That's something even Trump can't just, you know, wish away and declare victory, pretending

it doesn't exist. So even that isn't an option at this point, which has led credible people like Jeffrey Sachs and many others to say that this is it.

You know, the conflict in Ukraine may have stress-tested U.S.-led Western global hegemony, but this could very well be the death blow to it. They overreached. They were already in a weakened position, facing too many hard geopolitical limits, with low numbers of offensive and defensive munitions and, you know, other military problems, and their economic power starting to fade relative to the rest of the world. And what did they do? They went all out. You know, they said, "We're not doing very well in Ukraine, and it looks like Russia is going to win this one. What should we do? Oh, I know—let's start a major war with Iran."

#Danny

Yeah, and go out front with it, too.

#Mark Sleboda

They've overstretched imperially to the breaking point. I mean, Ukraine was already a world-order-changing, world-order-shaping conflict, almost certainly in its endgame. This is even more so—if anything, even more so at this point—because of the huge effect on global energy and, therefore, every other market in the world. And it's really just stunning. I mean, I'm always against saying that the U.S. stumbles into anything or is dragged into anything—and they definitely weren't dragged into this. But yeah, it looks like through their own incompetence, ignorance, and hubris, they've really stumbled into it. And I'm not seeing any silver lining for them.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's exactly what it looks like, Mark. Well, how about some final points on this? You know, earlier you said you believe 20 percent of Iran's missiles have possibly been destroyed by the United States and Israel. Iran is saying 10 percent. But what they're also saying is they have years to do this. Regardless of the numbers, they're saying they have years to do this. And I want to play this Fox News report because—I don't know if you've noticed, Mark—but every time Fox News covers what's happening with the Iran war from Israel, it's looking more and more like a Mark Sloboda analysis and less and less like a Fox News analysis. Here's one such example.

#Fox News

I'm like a container.

#Danny

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. The black pill's contagious. Oh, look, it's starting to affect his wardrobe. Here we go.

#Fox News

Straight to the breaking news that's been coming in over the last few minutes. Another alert here—another strike. And as you look into the distance over central Israel, you can see that fire, a thick plume of smoke from the impact site. Now, from our experience, that's not one of those smaller cluster munitions, a bomblet from those. That looks to us like it may have been a direct bomb or missile strike, which would be one of the first we've seen in this area for quite some time. You can tell just by the thickness of the smoke that this is much more than one of the bomblets from a cluster munition. We've been under attack here in central Israel for several hours this morning. This is the second or third alert we've had. We usually get word pretty quickly on the number of injuries or casualties in a strike like this, so we're awaiting that information right now.

#Danny

So, Mark, no need to belabor the point here, but that's what these reports are looking more and more like—attempts to hide how bad it's getting, because they're certainly not showing everything. Where's that air defense?

#Mark Sleboda

Where's that Patriot? Where's that David's Sling?

#Danny

Now it's just obvious what's going on. And so Iran is saying, "Yes, Iran is releasing leg-wrap songs."

#Mark Sleboda

And the United States and Israel are—Iran's InfoWars, by the way. If you haven't been watching Iran's Lego Wars videos and other things, you're missing out. I mean, I put them in my own videos.

#Danny

Yeah, I would. I would. I don't know if I could take it.

#Mark Sleboda

They make U.S. propaganda look like what we imagined Iranian propaganda would look like, right? You know, before this conflict. So even on the info-war front, they're doing extremely well. And

when Western mainstream media journalists can't quite hide the panic in their voices, you can hear that their whole conception of how the world is and should work is being turned on its head. And, you know, that's what we're seeing—boom, boom, television.

#Danny

Every single night. Every single night. I mean, as we speak—every time I'm on live, Mark, it's happening. Every time I go off live, it's happening. While the waves—yep.

#Mark Sleboda

Let me just make a point here, because Iran—I mean, Israel, sorry—is, yes, they're doing very poorly with the U.S. in this conflict with Iran. But on the other side of that, they're taking advantage of the opportunity to push their genocidal agenda on two fronts. One, they just passed this bill allowing them to hang Palestinian detainees, with Ben-Gvir popping champagne over it. And even the New York Times is openly talking about Israel rejecting the Shia population of southern Lebanon. I mean, they don't actually use the words "ethnic cleansing."

But, I mean, it's painfully obvious even from their own headlines. They're saying—Israel... I mean, the New York Times is reporting this, right? So, the New York Times is reporting that Israel is telling the Christian and Druze population of southern Lebanon, "Don't hide Shias in your attics, right? We want them all driven out. Don't try to protect them. Don't try to hide them." I mean, where have I heard that before? Oh, I don't know—people searching people's attics, looking for an ethno-religious minority? Oh, yeah!

#Danny

You didn't learn that one in school. Or maybe you did, right?

#Mark Sleboda

Yeah, I might have learned that one. So obviously they learned a really good lesson there. I think they learned the wrong lesson, but they definitely learned a lesson. And just on a— I mean...

#Mark Sleboda

From a cold-blooded, realpolitik position, we all know there's no such thing as war crimes, right? Because war crimes are only something that happen to losers, right? The victors—the permanent members of the Security Council—war crimes don't exist for them. War crimes, and those sheltered by them. So they don't exist for the U.S., for Israel. They never have, until... I don't know, that sea change in power may actually be coming, you know, in the not-so-distant future, now that maybe the rest of the world can actually, you know... But we're looking at the most grievous war crimes

and crimes against humanity being conducted by Israel and facilitated by the U.S. here. And so even in the heightened geopolitical situation and focus on what's going on in Iran, we cannot ignore what the Israeli regime is doing in Palestine and in Lebanon.

#Danny

No, and with that has come, of course—well, we haven't even gone into Hezbollah's role in this war, which has been very fierce. It shocked me, even. Well, maybe not shocked, but the level of organized response has surprised me a bit, given what everyone else was saying. And then Yemen—the Houthis—they're also in this war, possibly holding a card that could, as we were talking about earlier, affect the Strait of Hormuz and plunge the world economy into crisis because of what the U. S. and Israel are doing, and because of Iran's ability to control the Strait of Hormuz. The Bab el-Mandeb Strait is right there, ready to be closed—and that could very well happen soon.

#Mark Sleboda

Iran is never going to run out of missiles and drones. Because, simply, I've heard now that there are up to thirty-six of these fortified underground missile cities. That was actually a shocking number to me. They produce missiles and drones there—they have facilities to make them on site. But even, let's forget that. On a geopolitical level, Russia and China are Iran's logistical rear right now. The Western press is full of stories that Russia is providing drones to Israel now, right? Iran stepped up in 2022 and provided Russia with the designs for the Shahed-136, and Russia has evolved it into the Geran-2, -3, -4, and -5—black, stealthy, air-to-air missile-launching, mine-dropping monsters, Wunderwaffe-style—that it really is in the conflict in Ukraine now.

And they're returning the favor, using those hard-won tactics to the greatest effect now. Russia's getting some payback there. And you can be sure that, uh, China will be providing anything—chemical precursors, materials, components, whatever Iran needs as well—to, yeah, keep production going. So, um, it's that attrition race: Iran can produce more drones and missiles than the U.S. can produce air-defense interceptors. The cost difference is huge, just beyond the production itself.

#News 1

And those air-defense interceptors don't even fucking work.

#Danny

It's a bleak scenario for the United States Empire right now. I think it's one that many people weren't expecting—many people really weren't expecting it.

#Mark Sleboda

Evil black-pilled laugh.

#Danny

Yeah, seriously? I mean, it's like the whole world is looking at this like, well, you had it coming, right? This is how the world sees it. It's—

#Mark Sleboda

At least the world outside the West.

#Danny

Exactly.

#Mark Sleboda

And even many in the West, right? You're out there watching—you know who I'm talking about.

#Danny

Yeah, people are not happy about this. Every poll that comes out—even in the United States, Mark—every subsequent poll, it doesn't get better. Donald Trump went up in front of the entire country for 18 minutes. Not only did he not mention the ground operation, or whatever cockamamie plans they have, but he didn't even try to convince people in the U.S. that anything had changed beyond what he's already said, either on Truth Social or in previous speeches. Everything was just a rehash. So that—and then that left the markets going crazy. Now what, Brent crude is up to, what, 140?

#Mark Sleboda

It's like, yeah, so it—

#Danny

Public opinion on this war only gets worse. And if Americans start dying in any significant numbers, it's going to drop even more.

#Mark Sleboda

When has the U.S. political elite ever cared what Americans think about foreign policy?

#Danny

No, never. Never.

#Mark Sleboda

Not unless—the war was the last time.

#Danny

Right. Well, not unless the American people begin to exact costs for that, and that hasn't happened yet.

#Mark Sleboda

The Democrats would never. Oh yes, they would. Never mind.

#Danny

Right. They're not even launching any kind of opposition. So, Mark, maybe your final comments now on the larger geopolitical shift this is bringing up. You just mentioned Russia and China. And you might remember one of the earlier Lego-style videos that the Iranians put out, where Donald Trump was watching through a grate as Russian and Chinese ships were moving through the Strait of Hormuz. That's been the reality since the beginning of Iran's assertion of control over the Strait of Hormuz. And the numbers are out there—Chinese imports of Iranian oil are at record highs. The relationship is going quite well. Iran is exporting a huge amount of oil through the Strait of Hormuz in general, and they're talking about tolls in Chinese yuan, the Chinese currency. So, I mean, this is a huge shift. What do you see as some of the larger implications? Yeah.

#Mark Sleboda

We're at a watershed, right? Let's not even get into the larger geoeconomic changes coming out of all this. There are people better positioned than me—like Richard Wolff and others—to talk about that, but it's clearly happening. But let's just say the war stopped tomorrow. Let's look at the hard geopolitical limits the U.S. would be left with, coming out of this conflict with no air defense interceptors, right? And with no offensive long-range standoff strike capacity. It's because they've wasted all of it. It would take years for the U.S. to rebuild those inventories.

And during that time, they couldn't conduct any kind of major military operations against Russia or China, or even Russia's second-tier partners, if they wanted to. That's a hard geopolitical limit now. Trump once said that the only limitation on what he could do was his own nonexistent sense of conscience—and I completely disagree, right? There are hard geopolitical limits to what the U.S. can do, and that's reflected in the state of their military munition stockpiles and the relative strength of their opponents' militaries and military-industrial complexes now. If China wanted to take Taiwan

militarily tomorrow—or say six months or a year from now—the U.S. couldn't, in any real way, stop them without resorting to nukes.

And, you know, we all know where that leads. That's a hard geopolitical limit because they've overstretched themselves to such a degree with this. I was shocked even last June when they launched it. I said, how can they do this? Their inventories of air defense interceptors and standoff munitions were already so low. Now it's even worse. It's a hard geopolitical limit. The U.S. is weakened—hegemon is weakened and enfeebled—coming out of this conflict, even if it ended tomorrow, which it's not going to for years into the future. And if China wanted to take Taiwan militarily, they could. They don't have to fear the U.S. like they used to.

Russia is just, like, they're in the driver's seat in Ukraine now. They can take whatever they want at this point, right? It may take them time and blood to do so, but they can now be so confident about the outcome—not only militarily, with the lack of U.S. military strength, but even economically. Everything is going Russia's way now as a result of this. It's such a disastrous... I don't want to say chess move by Trump, because we know Trump doesn't play chess or actually read books or anything like that. But he played a really, really bad hand of cards. And he—and the U.S. hegemon—is going to pay for it now and years into the future on multiple levels.

#Danny

Everybody, I'll pull up all the Super Chats as I make these announcements. So, everyone, make sure you go to the video description—you can find Mark Sloboda's Boosty account, where he publishes all of his original work, all of his work in general—and that's where you can support him. Thanks for all the Super Chats. Of course, tomorrow I'll be back on at about 1 p.m. Eastern time with Mohamed Marandi. Sunday was April 5th. Mark, anything you want to say before we close the program?

#Mark Sloboda

Yeah. This guy right here has been making a video about the Iran conflict—the U.S.-Israeli illegal, unprovoked war of aggression on Iran—every day for the last five weeks. And look at him. It shows. This poor man at Goddamn Coffee.

#Danny

Yeah. My grinds are only getting harder now, Mark. All right, everybody, hit the like button as you leave—that helps keep the conversation going because more new viewers will see it. Check the video description, where you can support Mark and this channel—Patreon, Substack, and much more. See you tomorrow at 1 p.m. Eastern time. Until then, bye-bye.