

Iran AMBUSHES Special Ops, Trump BEGS for 45-Day Ceasefire | Elmer & Podur

Iran just exposed a major US ground operation masquerading as a rescue operation of the F-15 pilot and the consequences are devastating. Now Trump is responding with pleas for 45-day ceasefire while escalating the war rhetorically as Iran hits back for the 98th wave of Operation True Promise 4. Jon Elmer of the Resistance Report and Justin Podur of the anti-Empire project join the show to break down the latest military updates. Follow Justin: <https://www.youtube.com/@justinpodur> Follow Jon: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLHEvpbppx_4rb9ICZ9fRyQiTc5A7eS9FA 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> #iran #trump #israel

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong, and I'm glad to announce that, for the first time on the show, we have John Elmer from The Resistance Report at Electronic Intifada, and returning guest Justin Podur from The Anti-Empire Project. We have a lot to get to, so gentlemen, thanks so much for joining me today. Thanks for having us.

#Jon Elmer

Yeah, it's our pleasure.

#Danny

Yeah, well, speaking of The Resistance Report, John, how about we get started with you? I wanted to first play what Donald Trump said about this operation—the so-called rescue operation, now shrouded in all kinds of, I wouldn't even say mystery anymore, just various reports on what actually happened there. We do know that Iran did undertake an ambush of these U.S. special forces attempting to either rescue the pilot who was down, or a colonel, or steal the uranium—or both. I want your take on this, but here's what Donald Trump said about the size of the operation. And then I want to get your take on what exactly happened here and why it's significant. Here we go.

#Donald Trump

The second rescue mission involved 155 aircraft, including four bombers, 64 fighters, 48 refueling tankers, 13 rescue aircraft, and more. We were bringing them all over, and a lot of it was subterfuge.

#Danny

So, John, I mean, that's a lot of aircraft—and they did lose some, which I'll pull up as you're talking. But, John, what exactly happened here? How did Iran respond to this? What was the nature of this operation, in your assessment?

#Jon Elmer

Yeah, I mean, I think there's still obviously a lot we don't know, but from what we do know, the F-15 was shot down by Iranian air defenses. Both pilots ejected and ended up in roughly the same area. Over the course of several hours on the first day, in daylight, the U.S. attempted the rescue operation, and in doing that, basically got lit up. They lost an A-10 Warthog that crash-landed in Kuwait, a couple of Black Hawk helicopters, and a couple of Reapers in that operation—and they failed and withdrew from it.

And then what appears to have happened is that they went back the next day under the cover of darkness, and that gives, obviously, the United States a massive advantage, given their capabilities. And they successfully, apparently, got the weapons officer, who was—you know, I think a lot of the story that's left out is that he was in communication with the U.S. from the time he went down. He had a transponder; they knew where he was. He moved into the mountains. That was in a valley—what you're looking at there on the screen is in the valley. He moved up into the mountains and was in full communication with the U.S., and the U.S. didn't let anyone get within three miles of the scene.

So it just isn't as heroic a story as it's being told. The U.S. has all the advantage in this situation. I mean, even just talking about the troops that go in there—the two C-130s that were combat search-and-rescue C-130s—they come in with special forces who are trained to do this kind of operation. All year round, for the last decade, they've been the most elite, best-trained troops in the U.S. military. And they have two million service members to draw from, to select, to get these special forces that could be inserted into this. So, given all those advantages, the fact that they apparently needed to blow up their HC-130s before they left—blow up the helicopters before they left—

Because they were stuck in the mud. I mean, I don't know—that story doesn't seem, um, super strong. I imagine there's going to be a lot more that we learn in the coming days. But yeah, when you look at the resources the U.S. had, and that Trump quote you played, he was saying they literally took all their resources in the region and turned them toward this single operation in the southwest of Iran, in the mountains, away from cities. So a lot of the complexity of the operation

kind of washes away when you see that analysis. They did something they're pretty good at doing, both because of the resources they have and because of the training they have for their permanent war state.

#Danny

Well, Justin, I wanted to—now let's play the Iranian take. I'm actually going to read it, because it's the military spokesperson of the IRGC giving Iran's version of what happened here. Let me mute it and read it. So, following the desperate efforts of the U.S. terrorist army, he says, to carry out a rescue operation for the pilot of its downed fighter jet, several enemy aircraft entered our beloved country of Iran. In the early hours of April 5th, 2026, a number of these aircraft—including two C-130 military transport planes and two Black Hawk helicopters—were hit and forced to make emergency landings in an area south of Isfahan. A lot of people have been noting the location, Isfahan, as possibly a staging ground for an operation to do what Trump and the administration have been plotting, which is to seize uranium from a nuclear site like Isfahan.

And then there was this that I want you to comment on, if you saw it. It hasn't been—I don't think—confirmed yet, but this is from Iranian media, RT reporting that someone named Amanda Ryder, her U.S. Air Force ID, was recovered from the wreckage, and an Israeli visa was found. Hold on one second, let me pull that up here. Here it is: the ID of U.S. Air Force officer Amanda Ryder was recovered from the aircraft wreckage after the rescue mission, and an Israeli visa was found. So, Justin, your comments—what do you think is going on here? You know, Iran says they took American casualties, they saw it with their own eyes. But the U.S.—Trump, Hegseth—they came out today and said, "God is good, everything went very smoothly," other than blowing up the aircraft, as John noted.

#Justin Podur

Yeah, we don't have a lot of really high-quality information, so we have to use logic where we can. I just don't see how that much destruction could happen with manned aircraft and soldiers and have no one die, right? We also have to remember that, according to American sources, virtually nobody has ever died fighting Iran. There are always injuries—lots of injuries—and then people die in accidents afterward. So in this case, I think if there were a lot of U.S. casualties, that graveyard of aircraft we saw would have had lots of dead bodies as well, unless the Iranians took them away.

But the patterns I've seen so far are that the Iranians, more or less, have been telling the truth as they've seen it. And before this rescue operation concluded, I saw a message from, I think, one of the Iranian sources where they said, "If we did have them, we wouldn't tell you." So even that's truthful in a way, right? They're basically saying, "We're not going to tell you." But I don't see them manipulating the site in that way or anything like that. I mean, I don't know if there were huge casualties that the Americans are saying didn't happen. I do think, you know, if they wanted to—because we did hear a little bit about this uranium snatch plan—

Yeah, the idea, as I heard it, was that they were going to go snatch the uranium, build a runway, and fly out. I guess they found this runway near Isfahan, so that solves their runway problem. But it still seems like a big force—too big for a rescue—but too small for a uranium snatch. So I think maybe they were just trying to build a base. Like, the first step of a ground war is to set up a base somewhere, where you could then start loading tons of other stuff and material. And maybe they did their math, analyzed their maps, and said, "Here's a runway. We can turn this into a base and go from here."

And, you know, the other consideration, like John was saying—the dream of going in, doing something, and getting out—that's the model they're working from. They were really pleased with how that went in Venezuela, presumably, because Venezuela was preparing for a long guerrilla war against an occupation, and the Americans just went in for 20 minutes and left, leaving the Venezuelans with nobody to really fight and nothing to get going. So the Iranian defense plan is presumably similar. They have millions of men, people ready to fight, they know the Americans very well, they have lots of equipment—but they also have a gigantic area to defend.

So they're not going to be there in numbers in every corner where the Americans can fly to. It'll take them a while to get there—maybe a lot of them would have to drive. You know, the drones would get there first. So, in some remote corner where the Americans are trying to set something up and get it going, it takes the Iranians a while to arrive, and then there's a battle and the Americans withdraw. That all makes perfect sense to me in terms of what happened. None of the stuff about pilots and rescues and Amanda's—I mean, Amanda Ryder—it's a bit on the nose, like making fun of the name and all that, right? It's supposedly a real person.

#Danny

I don't know.

#Justin Podur

Did the Americans leave that there? I don't know. The whole thing is weird to me—like recovering the recovered passports after 9/11. How is there an ID? Why would she bring her ID on a mission? That's always the question. I don't understand it. Is that what you do? I don't know. Yeah.

#Danny

No, great. Well, I think those are really good questions. And, John, I mean, if what Justin is saying is true—and there are a lot of good points to follow there toward the truth of the matter—that means the U.S. failed dramatically, because there's no forward operating base coming out of Iran after this operation, and the U.S. has refused to acknowledge any such thing. This is just a heroic operation to

rescue one guy who happened to be a colonel, with what many say was a much higher rank than you'd normally see on a standard mission like the one he was on. But then, you know, there's all this talk about it being an operation.

Many people are saying this is a fake story—that it's really about stealing the uranium and setting up that forward operating base. So, John, your comments on this—I mean, how did Iran, in particular, hit back so hard? Because this is being underestimated. The Trump administration is saying they didn't do anything there, but there are videos everywhere of a gunfight. You can hear it. And Iran is saying, even in their little videos, that everybody was involved—people were stopping traffic and helping the local forces get to the location. I mean, obviously, a lot happened there.

#Jon Elmer

Yeah, I mean, I think—I'm not sure about the forward base. I'm not sure of the value of that, 200 kilometers inland. I think it's on the wrong side of the mountains if Isfahan was the target. So I'm not sure about that in terms of the military logic of why you'd have a long supply line from there. And that's going to be hit by the integrated air defense systems the Iranians run. They run them in a guerrilla style, where they set up ambush zones rather than have an umbrella defense. So if you were trying to feed that base, you'd be coming along a track of land—hundreds of kilometers—where the Iranians would be able to use their surface-to-air ambush tactics for air defense. So I'm not sure about that.

I mean, this is something we could speculate a lot about—what might be. But based on the evidence we have right now, I'm inclined to believe they lost a pilot to an air defense operation by the Iranians. And then, when they went to recover the pilot, they lost a bunch more assets, which made it a dicey operation. At that point, they withdrew—effectively for a day and a half—and then went back in at night and botched the extraction in a pretty spectacular way, losing those planes. So yeah, I mean, the difficult part is the way the U.S. has handled information in this war—lying about things that are already proven and hiding the fact that we know these bases have been targeted.

We know they're lying about their casualties. The question is, how much are they lying about their casualties? Um, all of those things—I think if we knew them—it would put a much more, um, you know, clearer picture of how many were injured just in the extraction of that single, um, that single weapons officer. And then, on the second day, they didn't have the A-10 Warthog close air support. So it's just—it took the most financed military on earth, the most well-resourced military on earth, with the most soldiers, to get one pilot or one weapons officer out of a pretty much barren mountain area. You know, if that had happened in an area where people could reach it easily, I think this would be a completely different story.

And I think that mountain range—I mean, I was looking, taking a Google Earth drive around, trying to see what would make sense for the Americans. You know, with those combat search-and-rescue C-130s, they don't need runways. I mean, that's the selling point of them. But it sure sounded like

they needed a runway. So it's not clear that this was as successful an operation as the U.S. is trying to frame it. And it would have been—well, it was really egg on the face of those ridiculous statements from Trump, saying there were zero air defenses, and then you get so many assets lost it doesn't fit on a single page. Yeah. Yeah.

#Justin Podur

With the right infographic, you can fit it on a single page and make sure it's to scale.

#Danny

Yeah, that's very true. Well, Justin, I mean, with what John just said there, we had Pete Hegseth call this operation incredibly humiliating for Iran—and they know it. They know this was incredibly humiliating for them. And yet Iran doesn't seem to be acting like they're incredibly humiliated. Actually, Iran, on the other side, is saying, "Well, we responded very quickly to this violation on our territory," and they're claiming that these losses I pulled up earlier are theirs—that the U.S. did try to blow up.

They claim that the U.S. tried to blow up the pilot himself, and that they tried to blow up anyone they couldn't retrieve as they were hightailing it out of there. But, you know, what do you make of these comments by Hegseth? Let me actually play this from Hegseth, because I think this is why people can't really believe the United States right now about anything in this war—the theatrics of it all. I mean, just listen to this short comment he made at the press conference about what happened at the beginning of this whole ordeal.

#Speaker 01

The airman evaded capture for more than a day, scaling rugged ridges while being hunted by the enemy. When he was finally able to activate his emergency transponder, his first message was simple and powerful: "God is good." In that moment of isolation and danger, his faith and fighting spirit shone through. Shot down on a Friday—Good Friday—he hid in a cave, a crevice, all of Saturday, and was rescued on Sunday, flown out of Iran as the sun was rising on Easter Sunday. A pilot reborn, all home and accounted for, a nation rejoicing. God is good.

#Danny

So, it's a biblical prophecy.

#Justin Podur

Everything that just happened here is just according to... You know, given that Trump said, you know, "praise be to Allah," I would have thought Hegseth might have said "God is great" instead of "God is good," right?

#Danny

I'm sure the pilot was probably saying that, for sure.

#Justin Podur

How do we translate "God is great" into Arabic again? So I just— And the other thing is, why is the pilot's name a secret? Wouldn't it be cool to have a ceremony with the pilot, you know, at the White House, maybe with his family?

#Danny

Especially for U.S. lore. I mean, isn't it the pinnacle of U.S. exceptionalism to show how heroic this guy was? They do this for lesser things—like shootings, all of that. I mean, this is crazy. But anyway, continue—sorry.

#Justin Podur

He should be on the—yeah, he should be at this meeting. I think it's unfair that he doesn't get to be at this meeting, this brave colonel. And I also feel like—what do you call them—the internet sleuths ought to be able to, by process of elimination, figure out who he was. I mean, colonels are not—he's not like a covert operator, right? Is he an Army colonel or a Marine or something? How many colonels are there? Are there thousands of colonels deployed? I just think this... Like, I don't know if people are saying it's because he's dead. I don't know if there ever was a colonel. I don't know. I don't know if there's any reason.

I don't see any reason to believe any of these plot points. Like, you know, I'm partly criticizing this as a fiction writer here. Some of this stuff is not very good writing. You want your story to hang together—you want there to be some logical progression from one part of the story to the next—and a lot of that is missing here. So we have only their word on all of this: the pilot going missing, the pilot even existing, the story of him hiding in a crevice and then flying to safety. We don't know anything, and I don't believe anything they say.

You know, the thing that I'm looking for is Iranian sources, and they're not saying all that much. So it's hard to know there, too, because even the ones that claim to know—like, I've seen officials say the whole story will come out—but they don't say, "Here's the story." They just say, "We'll see." They're all saying it wasn't a rescue. So the Iranian sources I've seen are all saying it wasn't a rescue; it was a much bigger thing, and it'll be revealed in due course. Yeah. The only credible—or

the only sources that have said anything resembling accurate information—are not explaining what happened.

#Jon Elmer

Yeah, and we should watch what we wish for, because this guy may end up getting a movie. That's fine—he can have a movie.

#Danny

Well, you know, there were also some reports. I don't know if you saw—one of the big questions people had was, how did this person walk so far in order to survive? I believe it was hundreds and hundreds of kilometers, likely up mountains or through various hills, whatever's in that region. Even Pete Hegseth said "a crevice" or "a cave," right? Those are two very different things. There's a lot of storytelling here, John, but maybe you could tell us—what exactly does the lay of the land, the actual battlefield, look like? Because Donald Trump, you know, just as all this is happening, it was reported that he, through mediators, is really trying to push a 45-day ceasefire. And that's kind of where we're hanging right now—either Iran accepts a ceasefire, or it's going to get obliterated again. So, your take on the lay of the actual battlefield right now?

#Jon Elmer

Yeah, I mean, I think the sites we saw burning—obviously the sites of at least a significant portion of it—look like they landed in a valley, in a wadi, with a mountainside there.

#Jon Elmer

Right up from there, he climbed some distance to get off the ground. They had drones over him the whole time, not letting anyone get within miles of him. Those engagements prevented, I think, any kind of Iranian rescue—which was the point, because they knew where he was. I think, you know, they have transponders, encrypted communications, a whole setup for this to happen. So it wasn't like they were looking for a needle in a haystack, even though they like to make it seem like they did this heroic, deep-inside-Iran operation. But in reality, he was pretty sheltered on the mountainside.

Um, if you have drones over him constantly, shooting at anyone who approaches—yeah, I think the heroism in this story, I just don't see it. I don't see it because of the evidence we've seen so far. The attempt to get him on the first day—or maybe it's a her, to get them on the first day—failed pretty spectacularly. Trump says every air asset they had was diverted away from the battle and focused on rescuing this person. And with that, the Iranian air defense systems were able to take down, I mean, basically one of every kind of plane the Americans have flown so far.

And I think that if they had tried that again in daylight, probably the same thing would have happened. They got that small window at night to get the person out, and I guess that's really all we know at this point. If you look at Google Earth where the plane went down, you can pretty clearly see the mountain he would have gone up on—and he could get up on it. It was pretty gradual, you know, not sharp cliffs. It was, um, yeah, I mean, I think the crevice idea comes from the fact that it looked pretty spiny all the way up. So you'd just get into one of those tracks and hike to safety.

At that point, your guys are communicating with you that you're going to be rescued and that people aren't going to come up to where you are. So from that point, it seems like the plane went down in a sparsely populated area. For sure, it's within distance of Isfahan. But again, I don't see how there could be a forward base there—it would be under fire from all sides. And then there would have to be this 200-kilometer inland supply line that would need to be completely secured. So, I mean, I don't think they can get a beachhead from the Strait of Hormuz.

#Justin Podur

Yeah. Yeah.

#Jon Elmer

Let alone hundreds of kilometers in. And I'd suspect the reason there weren't more planes taken down was because they didn't need to send more. Once they knew where the guy was, the goal was to find a time when you could go in and get him without losing all your assets—your human assets. And they did that, but then they lost their assets. So it's not really, you know, a clean mission. It's definitely not, you know, the Hegseth story. I mean, they said at one point he was injured. So if he was injured...

#Danny

He said he was seriously injured too. Trump did...

#Jon Elmer

Yeah, to then climb—I don't know. But yeah, I think, why do we not see the person's name? I can't remember a time when there's been a story like this and we haven't seen the names. And it just matches with all the secrecy of this war because... I mean, frankly, the Americans are not winning this war. They're just not. And, you know, all these threats about how tomorrow night this show might be stale by 8 p.m., when Trump escalates the war to a level no one's ever seen—yeah, no one's ever seen the biggest ever. But, you know, if that were to happen, the Gulf states are going to be eliminated.

And so that, you know, that style of warfare that Trump is threatening—I mean, it would be catastrophic for Iran, but it'll also be catastrophic for the U.S. footprint in the region, because the countries that are all in the Gulf, right across the lake from Iran, are all single-point-of-failure countries. Um, infrastructure, right? Like desalination plants, their fuel depots—I mean, they're small countries, so their fuel, their energy projects, aren't all spread out over the land like Iran's are. I just think that escalation is not going to win the Americans the war. It's going to redraw the map of the Middle East. And I don't know if Trump has—I don't know if he has that in him. I guess we're going to see.

#Danny

Yeah, well, he said, Justin, at this press conference that the entire country could be taken out in one night—and that night might be tomorrow night—referencing this, I think, 8 p.m. Eastern time deadline. Iran, though, has essentially given the middle finger to that deadline and to any ceasefire proposal like the 45-day one that's been relayed through Iran. Pakistan—Pakistan—Iran rejects a temporary ceasefire and instead demands what it's been demanding since the beginning of the war: a permanent end to all theaters in the Middle East—all war theaters—Lebanon, Gaza, Iran—with guarantees and implementation of a transit protocol that recognizes Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz, which is essentially already underway.

The lifting of economic sanctions on Iran, acknowledging its right to peacefully enrich uranium under the NPT and the UN Charter, and paying reparations for damages—so it doesn't seem like Iran is capitulating here, Justin. What does that say about Iran, then, and where this war is? It feels like Trump, the chief of staff, Pete Hegseth, and John Ratcliffe were trying to project a lot of confidence, that things are going very well at the moment. But maybe you can help us understand what this tells us—that Iran is rejecting the ceasefire despite these massive threats.

#Justin Podur

When you look at the overall picture of how this war has been conducted, and you just try to ask yourself: which side of this war looks like it's implementing a plan that it's following step by step? If they do this, we'll do this. If we see that, we'll do this. And we march toward our objective in a kind of systematic way. And which side seems to be making up objectives as they go along? Like the U.S. has. I had this tweet the other day that did pretty well, where I said, you know, they started off with their objective being to prevent weapons that weren't being made. Then they moved on to trying to open a strait that wasn't closed.

And then they moved on to trying to rescue pilots who weren't missing until after their operation. So they just keep, um, moving on from one plan to another. I don't—you know, even if you take them at their word about how wonderful and legendary and unprecedented this rescue operation was, it was still a rescue operation. So presumably, if you're doing a rescue operation, something has

already happened that you didn't want to happen in the first place. The escalation ability of Iran has, you know, for anyone who's paying attention—including the Americans—been definitively shown.

Every time they've said they were going to destroy something, they've said, "If you do this, we're going to destroy that." Then the Israelis destroy something, and they say, "Okay, you destroyed this thing. We said we were going to destroy that. Tomorrow we're going to destroy that." And then they do—the next day they destroy it. So similarly, now Trump has said, "Tomorrow I'm going to destroy the power plants and bridges." And the Iranians have said, "If Trump follows through with this foolhardy plan, we will destroy everything in an irreparable way." And I just don't see any reason anybody should think they're bluffing. They're not. They haven't. They haven't even once done that.

So there is... Now, the last thing I'll say about this is, if you take—like John was saying—he has this phrase, "the single point of failure infrastructure." If everything in the Middle East is turned into ash, Iran will rise from the ash. So will Palestine and Lebanon, and probably Syria and some of these societies. But the Gulf states will not. The Gulf states are, you know, they're not societies—they're theme parks, right? Somebody, I saw that online, said, "If the people who work in a place can't afford to live in that place, you don't have a city; you have a theme park." And the Gulf states are theme parks. They won't rise from the ashes.

And you can't—there's no such thing, by the way. OK, really, the last thing: there's no such thing as taking out a country in a day, not a ninety. You can, if you're willing to use nuclear weapons, take out a city in a day. And, you know, as horrific as that is, you can't take out—there's no mechanism for taking out—a country of ninety million people that's the size of France and Germany combined, in a day. If people think about France and Germany combined, or some context they know a little better, they'll see there's no way. You could maybe destroy the entire planet—it's a problem on that order. So again, Trump doesn't know what he's talking about. Yeah.

#Jon Elmer

I mean, just to second that—the Gulf would be wiped out, and it's not hard to do, because the Gulf is essentially a collection of cities, right? They don't have hinterlands. Yeah, it's...

#Justin Podur

They don't have mountains where they've buried their missile cities, or any real resilience.

#Jon Elmer

Or their desalination plant. Like, if that plant goes and you don't have water, it's not—you know—it doesn't take a water geologist, or whoever the rocket scientists of water geology are, to tell you that you're not going to last long in the Middle East if your desalination plants are gone. And those have been targeted. Those are said to be targets. And every time Iran says they're going to target one,

they do. And every time the U.S. tries for escalation dominance, they really just strengthen Iran's hand at this point. And now, sitting here thirty-eight days into the war, Iran is in the process of overthrowing the sanctions regime, recovering their currency through the Strait of Hormuz toll booth, and making their allies—the countries around them in their neighborhood—more likely to want to end this war than to keep saying, "We need more weapons to protect against Iran."

I think they're going to look at the Gulf differently and say it makes a lot more sense for us to be allied with the people who are, you know, controlling the strait where our fuel exits. So it's just really—Trump never has, like, a program—but whatever this program is, it's all in Iran's favor. And I don't see what the way out is for Trump, other than to wake up one morning and just say the war's over. And then, at that point, does Iran decide the war's over? Does Israel decide the war's over? I think one of the really important things that's come from this war is that Iran, in those points you listed, wants all the wars on all the fronts to end.

And that is the thing the region is desperate for, because the ceasefire in Gaza is garbage. It's just a license to kill, and it's been that way consistently. If it continues in Gaza—where you can just assassinate any Qasem figure or any government figure at any point—that cannot go on. That was the situation in Lebanon too, because they also had a garbage ceasefire that allowed Israel to assassinate everyone there. If Iran is able to enforce ceasefires in Palestine and in Lebanon, the strength of that axis of resistance, that alliance that over the last three years has been called into question, is absolutely not in doubt under these circumstances.

They have the power to be the dominant force in the region, and they're carrying out the war that way. They're not firing ballistic missiles that would leave them with nothing, or little, to enforce the period after the war. They're seeing a life after the war where being continually attacked, yet able to fire at any point, is a crucial part of their long-term strategy. Whereas the Americans are in this race where, you know, they have a finite number of interceptors—they're trying to make do with them—and at some point they run out. There's not more coming. So, the longer the war goes on, the more it's in Iran's favor.

#Justin Podur

And Bloomberg recently tried to count the JASSMs—the stealth cruise missiles they have—and they found there weren't many left. When they run out of those, or get close, they're going to start doing more bomber runs over Iran, exposing them to air defenses, and many more planes will be shot down. There will be planes shot down like we've never seen before.

#Danny

Yeah, Donald Trump might have a hard time holding himself back.

#Justin Podur

Yeah, and I do, by the way—I do think that's what's going to happen. I don't think the Americans are going to call it off. I don't think they're going to stop. I think they're going to go way beyond what most of us thought their tolerance was. I think their tolerance for protecting Israel and allowing the Gulf to be destroyed is going to prove to be a lot higher than we thought. And I think Iran would have liked it to be otherwise, but I do think Iran is prepared for that possibility as well. And I think that, like, the way you put it, John—I think Iran wants to inherit whatever is left of the region as the rightful hegemon of the region.

Morally, Egypt could have been the hegemon of the region, and Turkey could have been the hegemon of the region. They're both in the region, they're both big, they're potentially strong—but they just decided to give away their sovereignty to America and Israel. So it leaves it to Iran. And Iran doesn't want to destroy everything. They don't. Why should they? They're going to be running the place afterward. And so that's what I think is behind the restraint, such as it is, that we've seen. But once Bridge—what's he calling it? Bridge Day—once Bridge Day and Power Plant Day come, there's no longer any reason for Iran not to respond in kind.

#Jon Elmer

Yeah, and the U.S. propaganda is that they're firing at, you know, innocent civilians in these Gulf countries. But there's no record of that whatsoever. So they've seemingly been fighting this war as if these countries are going to be their neighbors when the war is over. And part of driving the U.S. out of the region is to be allied with those countries. So... but once you're destroying, you know, the Iranian nation, and using those countries to do it—especially if they're running out of, uh, long-range aerial cruise missiles—they're going to be firing their ATACMS and their precision-strike munitions from those Gulf countries. I—yeah, I think all bets are off. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

#Danny

I mean, what is it, you know, with this war—it's almost like a different kind of war of attrition. Not like the one we see in Ukraine, but one where—I don't know if you heard John and Justin—the Iranians are saying that not only are they firing very strategically, obviously, but they're also still producing. It's not like they're just loading up the missile launchers, their underground launchers, whatever, and the missiles go and that's it. No, they actually have a production system that's still running, mainly underground, that the United States can't hit—and that the New York Times even said the U.S. can't hit—because they think they're mistaking decoys for actual missile systems.

And that's led to this. Even JPMorgan is talking about how, especially against Israel, the hit rate that Iran is getting on Israel has increased dramatically. Now we're hearing something like eight out of ten missiles that Iran fires at Israel are getting through. Every day we see the results—and I'll put those up. Whoever wants to comment on this, I mean, it seems to indicate that what Iran is trying to do is go the long haul to get exactly what it wants. Regardless of what the U.S. says or does, they're prepared to match that.

#Jon Elmer

We haven't even seen the best stuff Iran has. They've been firing ballistic missiles, but they have better ones—more difficult to intercept—that they're not using. The Sajjils, the Hajj Qasims, you know, they have those ready and in large numbers. They've been preparing for this war for two generations, and the war is going exactly how they thought it would go, right? There's no military science in the United States that's, you know, going over the head of Trump to make a proper military strategy in this situation. So really, everything Iran planned for is happening. And the long-term goal, or the long-term benefit, out of this is that the Strait of Hormuz was never treated as an Iranian asset.

Iran treated it as an international waterway. They threatened wartime conditions should the war happen. They told us this before Trump launched the war—exactly what would happen. But that's not ever going back. So Iran has that asset now, and it completely changes this last generation of maximum-pressure sanctions and gives them a really strong position. At each of these turns you look at, Iran is in a very strong position. And what the Americans are doing—and the Israelis especially—is blowing up schools, universities, you know, that kind of warfare. They're not hitting deep bunkers over and over again, giving the idea that they know that's a missile base. We haven't seen any of that. We've definitely seen a lot of decoys.

And we've seen a lot of potshots—like taking out, you know, 40-year-old naval vessels—and then saying the Navy is destroyed, when the Navy is really a set of fast boats with missiles on them that can do whatever they want in the Strait. And they still have all those in underground bases, ready to be used. They haven't used them. There hasn't been a need for Iran to use any of these things, because fighting the war with their old missiles at a slow pace is still working. Israel gets 13 to 18 warnings a day, where people are running into their shelters. The warnings, because the early-warning radars have been destroyed, are slower and cover more area, since the radar can't hone in exactly on where the trajectory is landing.

So they have these huge swaths of area under sirens that they never used to have before. They used to be able to be pretty pinpoint about it. Um, if Iran decides to, and Iran hasn't been targeting civilian areas in Israel—you know, they've been firing those submunitions, and occasionally one will end up in a civilian area—but they're clearly targeting the military-industrial base of the Israelis. And they're not hitting Tel Aviv with, you know, two-ton warheads, even though they have many of them. So this war has a lot of room for Iranian escalation, and they hold escalation dominance over a country that has a multi-trillion-dollar military infrastructure. It's pretty remarkable.

#Justin Podur

They said the Iranians have said twice, you know, "Don't bother trying to count, uh, because our production—you can't touch it. It's where you can't reach it. And you'll never know, but we have

plenty.” The other thing—you know, there’s a podcast I was on, *Resistance Is Fertile*, and one of the hosts is in the UK. If you go to indie.ca, that’s his writing. And he said, you know, the way the Americans talk about the Iranians running out of missiles is like going to a bakery at the end of the day and saying there’s no more bread.

Like, if they bake it in the morning, you know there’s going to be bread again in the morning. So you can’t actually— that’s why I even found that kind of funny. I chuckled a little when you showed that chart, Danny, because these charts people are trying to make to count missiles and percentages, as if they can count down from some fixed number—there’s production, there’s a rate of production, there’s a rate of getting the inputs for that production. You can speed up or slow down the expenditure, and that all applies on the other side too.

I don't necessarily think that the Americans or the Israelis are going to run out of anything. When they get low enough, they're going to change their behavior and adopt a new policy that's a little different and less advantageous to them. But you can't count, you can't watch, and then come up with a strategy for out-counting the other side. That's not how this war is going to be decided. Ultimately, this war is going to be decided by Iran—it's going to be decided by Iran, and Iran is going to decide when it ends and when their conditions have been met.

#Danny

Yeah, and it seems like the United States is quite okay at this point, even though you see it in, whatever it is—the financial media, the mainstream media, the 24-hour news cycle, the military experts—all of them. They don’t like it, but they’re okay with the United States doing what it’s doing right now, which is pulling away from other parts of the world. That’s what they’ve been doing for quite some time over the course of this war—taking from Korea, taking from the Asia theater—because, despite the desire for there to be preparedness against China, which was always a fantasy to begin with, this is happening right now.

And they're getting their butts kicked right now, and they need this to keep going. John, your comments on that—because a lot of people are noting what Justin brought up there, and his earlier point about JASMs. We know about the air defense interceptors. It feels to me, though, that the economic consequences of this war may catch up far faster than even the military consequences for the U.S. and Israel—and for the region and the Gulf.

#Jon Elmer

That is absolutely the truth, and the longer the war goes, the more it’s in Iran’s favor. So each of these vectors that we analyze—it’s Iran each time. Because once there’s a certain amount of oil in the system, but once that starts to dry up, and because of the large-scale oil projects being shut

down, it takes time to fire those back up. And then there's just the straight-up flow rate issue—which is, even if you have the oil, how many barrels can you actually get to X, Y, or Z place in the world?

There's a limit to that. Even if the war ended yesterday, it's going to take months to repair the damage. And every day it goes on longer is more of a benefit to Iran, and it's also more of a deterrent for this, you know, marauding Israeli military and American military on their side. These wars—if you're going to start these genocidal wars—the world economy is going to be immediately impacted. That is such an advance in Iranian power, in civilization. It takes them from the three weeks before the war, when their currency was...

#Jon Elmer

Essentially annihilated—um, to now, mid-war, their currency has bounced back. The Economist is writing about how this war has made them so rich. Um, it just—yeah, like I said, every vector is not in the American interest. And to continually escalate against a country that has escalation dominance over you—um, because they can fire missiles from anywhere in the country. The Americans can go around bombing all the bridges and power plants, but that's not going to do anything to stop the launching of short-range ballistic missiles at the Gulf and Gulf infrastructure. You know, when we were talking about weapons, they haven't even brought out their better drones yet. They have far better drones—the Shahed-236s—that they could bring out but haven't really used yet.

And those are much faster. They have a heavier warhead, they're very difficult to jam electronically, and they're super precise. So those tools coming out of the toolbox—when you're supposed to be running out of things and you're pulling out higher-caliber drones, materiel to fight the battle—it's just, um, yeah, I mean, it's remarkable. And Iran had this, you know, sort of sitting there through all the geopolitical phases we've gone through in the last few years, even when you look back to True Promise One and Two, and I guess less so Three, because they hit pretty hard there.

Iran has been very—well, you know, they haven't been blustery about this. They took their time, they were very cautious about it, and now that their moment is here, they appear ready to seize it. And I think that's something you hear from the Iranian spokespeople and from the general vibe within the military in Iran—that they're going to seize this moment, they're not going to let it pass. With regional impacts, you know, my primary job is covering Palestine and covering Gaza, and the way that war ended is horrible. The genocide is still continuing. And the fact that you could have the resistance acts step forward in this moment and fight, take advantage of enforcing a ceasefire—it's the same for Lebanon as well. It's a genocidal war in the south of Lebanon, run by ethnic cleansing and targeting people for their race and nationality. Yeah, so...

#Justin Podur

Can I just say, Danny, I know you have an interest in China—and this is benefiting China. There's a book I read called *Here Comes the Sun*. My day job is to study environmental issues and environmental management, and the book, by Bill McKibben, talks about the rollout of solar energy all over the world. Someone in that book is quoted as saying—you're going to love this—that China is the Saudi Arabia of renewable energy. Yeah, that's hilarious. So, you know, if the idea is—and it's going to have to be—that the best way to reduce the world's dependence on Iran's power over the Strait of Hormuz is to go renewable, well, that's fine, because you're going to have to get that technology from China. So it really is not the West's time. It's not the petrodollar's time. The petrodollar's era doesn't seem like it's going to last much longer. It may already be over.

#Danny

Well, Trump was asked about this toll too, and he just redirected it back to, "Oh, we'll be running the toll because we're winning." I think he literally said that. But Iran is actually enforcing this toll right now and saying publicly that it's to accumulate reparations for the war because they need to rebuild. And it's their waterway—they're like, "It's our waterway with Oman." Yeah. But there are these consequences too. Now, Saudi oil—this is going to happen across the board. It's going to keep happening the longer this goes. Maybe just some final comments on this, guys. It's such an interesting trap to be in. Every time the United States and Israel go farther up the escalation ladder, the bigger the consequences are for the entire oil industry—the petrodollar-dominated global economy.

And so if this time tomorrow—or, you know, about 24 to 36 hours from now—they're hitting every power plant they can, as many oil fields as they can, we're going to keep seeing this. Saudi oil, everyone's oil—the entire oil market—goes up to astronomical rates. And that's, I guess, my final comment: how does that influence the battlefield? Especially since there's something even bigger that people miss, which, John, you alluded to—there's an entire resistance movement very much in motion. And Iran and the rest are not looking to step back until they get what they want, what they believe is just.

#Jon Elmer

Yeah, I mean, I'm hoping that's what it is. And I hope they stand firm on that regional element, for sure. The price of oil will go up—it'll benefit certain countries when it does. But when the Saudi infrastructure gets shut down, that's going to take a long time to fix. I don't think we even fully understand how long it'll take to repair Saudi Arabia. And that's something that's going to be felt in every household, probably all over the world.

#Justin Podur

If you need oil, you're probably going to have to go to Russia. No matter how you slice it, it's going to be renewables from China, oil from Russia if everything is destroyed, and oil from Iran via the Strait of Hormuz—which you'll have to pay Iran for—if everything isn't destroyed, whatever still exists.

#Jon Elmer

But you'll pay Iran less than the insurance that's being charged for these tankers, um, already. So you may get support from the tanker industry to actually do that in the Strait of Hormuz. And it's not that crazy—lots of other straits, lots of other canals, uh, charge tolls. It's a basic, um, you know, in some ways you might wonder—and I'm sure they do in Iran—why they didn't do it before.

#Danny

Yeah, well, Donald Trump would disagree with both of you. He'd say, "Everyone's going to buy oil from us," which is actually not the case at all. But that's the hill the United States—the hegemony of the empire—is dying on right now: Trump's belief that everyone's going to want to turn into, you know, be a Venezuela, for example. And then you find out that a lot of Venezuelan oil is going to China, and that this so-called control may not be as firm.

#Jon Elmer

And to rebuild all these weapons, they need those critical minerals that are in China as well. So it's there. Yeah, they're firing their arrows—they're doing it.

#Justin Podur

They're firing their golden arrows at the wooden heights that the Persian cats are sending toward them.

#Danny

Well, guys, any final comments you want to make? Anything we didn't discuss that you want to get in before we close out? We'll start with you, John, then Justin.

#Jon Elmer

No, I think we covered most of what I had in my notes here. I'm glad you had us on—I appreciate it. It was a good conversation.

#Danny

Yeah. Justin, anything?

#Justin Podur

Yeah, no, I also thank you very much for having us, Danny. It's always fun. And like John said, make sure everybody shares this with your friends before tomorrow night, because it's going to be completely obsolete by Tuesday at 8 p.m. And this is why the daily grind continues.

#Danny

Then you just have to clip those two parts where we talked about the Gulf. Yeah, exactly. Well, everybody, make sure you go to the description—you can find the Anti-Empire Project YouTube, as well as the Resistance Report on Electronic Intifada, there. That's where you can find both their work. Am I forgetting anything? Is there anything else you'd like me to put under there? I can do that even after the show. So go to the video description, find them there, and, of course, hit the like button—that keeps the show going after this is done. As John said, things are moving very quickly here.

So if you want more eyes on this, hitting the like button is a great way to do that. I also want to let you know there are places to support the show in the video description—Patreon, Substack, and more. I'll be back at 11 a.m. Eastern tomorrow with Sharmin Narwani of The Cradle. Thanks to everyone who gave a super chat today, and I'll see you again tomorrow at 11 a.m. Eastern. All right, everyone, hit the like button for our guests today—they did an incredible job. See you tomorrow, and thanks for having us.