

Iran HITS Saudi Oil, RIPS Trump's Ultimatum | Sharmine Narwani

Sharmine Narwani of The Cradle joins the show to break down the massive Iranian response to Trump's threat to wipe out Iran's civilization as his "power plant & energy" ultimatum ticks down to zero. We break down the latest in Operation True Promise 4 and whether this war is heading toward an apocalyptic escalation plus much more! Subscribe to The Cradle: <https://thecradle.co/> <https://www.youtube.com/@UC2liaNc5y50YBVjgXiQxdHQ> 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> #iran #trump #israel 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. I'm joined by Charmaine Narwani of The Cradle, editor of The Cradle. Charmaine, good to have you back.

#Sharmine Narwani

It's always wonderful to be here, Danny. Thank you.

#Danny

Of course. Well, let's get started right away. First, let's talk about the developments that happened overnight since the last show ended. We know that Trump has this 8 p.m. Eastern deadline where he's promised to, quote, wipe out the entire civilization of Iran if Iran doesn't capitulate—especially to the demand to "reopen the Strait of Hormuz." During this overnight period, though, Iran was quite busy retaliating against, as I know you've covered, the U.S.-Israeli strikes on its petrochemical industry. And Iran hit back hard by targeting the Saudi industrial hub.

This hub was Jubail, which is its main industrial center. It operates around 300 active industries and produces about 7 percent of all petrochemicals in the world—fertilizer, steel, aluminum, chemical products, energy itself. It's a critical hub. And this is what it looked like last night after Iran launched missiles and drones. This was confirmed by Iran itself in its latest wave of Operation True Promise 4.

You provided some good context here—that this came immediately after two petrochemical plants in Iran were struck by the U.S. and Israel. So we have this deadline, Charmaine, and it's gotten more and more rhetorically apocalyptic.

Here you have Donald Trump saying that a whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again if Iran does not meet the U.S.'s demands. So, Charmaine, help us understand these events. Iran does not seem to be capitulating. Actually, it says it continues to communicate with mediators about what it wants, and the operations speak for themselves—especially this hit on Saudi Arabia, which Iran had promised for every escalation the U.S. and Israel carry out. Iran is going to hit back in kind. Not an eye for an eye—I think they said an eye for an arm, an eye for a leg, and so on. So, your comments, your thoughts on what's going on here?

#Sharmine Narwani

It just shows that at this point in the war, when the Americans and the Israelis had predicted that Iran would be out of missiles and in shambles with no clear leadership, Iran is actually speaking with one voice. There's no doubt—whether you're hearing from the prime minister, someone from the IRGC, or someone from a think tank—it's the same message, right?

And Iran, which has been notoriously awful at propaganda, has just been spinning out these—trolling the American president and the administration—in a way I don't think we've seen before. War propaganda like this, with humor and sort of deadly precision. And of course, they aren't missing a beat in terms of responding militarily, just as they said they would before the war. So, one interesting part of this is, you know, we thought maybe Saudi would be a little bit of a—well, Iran had drawn a bit of a line there. Because, as we've talked about before, the Gulf, the GCC countries, are kind of split in two: Oman and Qatar refusing to join any aggression against Iran; Kuwait, the UAE, and Bahrain very much wanting the Americans to wipe Iran out, if you will; and then Saudi Arabia, I guess, sitting on the fence.

Because, of course, they had Chinese-brokered relations from a few years ago, and those have been going pretty well. So... the surprise here is that they hit the facility in Saudi Arabia. Does that mean an operation against Iran's petrochemical industry was launched from Saudi Arabia? Or does it just mean that the facilities in Saudi Arabia are, in fact...

#Sharmine Narwani

You know, the crown jewels of petrochemicals in the Gulf—why aim for just messaging when now Iran is going for the big ones? And I do believe the U.S. has investments in this, or the Saudis and the Americans have investments in this particular facility. So yeah, I mean, they're doing what they're doing, and they're doing it importantly. OK, this comes right on the eve of Trump's deadline to the Iranians, and the Iranians are showing that they're not going to miss a beat. If he has any illusions about things being different—about Iran sitting back and having its power plants, electrical

infrastructure, bridges, civilization destroyed—he should look forward to that happening within his own strongest alliances in the region. But of course, I think most people would rather see that happen in Israel than in the Gulf countries that have already taken a beating, or in the UAE, because that seems to be another target of mass Arab ire.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, definitely. Well, there have been some reports, Sharmin, that Russia—of course, these are all from Western sources—has actually supplied Iran with information about Israel's energy infrastructure and how it could be hit, how their energy systems could be struck to devastating effect if this gets out of control. And here, as you alluded to, Sharmin, yes, indeed, when Iran was hitting Saudi Arabia over the last 12 hours at the al-Jubail and Juaymah facilities, they were hitting Chevron. This is what Iran is saying: they hit Chevron, Phillips, ExxonMobil, Dow Chemical—American interests that operate there. And the market has responded.

I think there's about a trillion wiped off the market. Oil is up to \$115 a barrel, and it's only been rising. And then here you have how Iran has responded to this latest ultimatum: "Sharmeen, we will obliterate the infrastructure of the U.S. and its partners and ensure that the U.S. and its allies are deprived of oil and gas in the region for years." So it seems like if the U.S. and Israel are going to take it to this level—the bridges, the energy, the oil in Iran—then Iran is promising something quite devastating, Sharmeen. I mean, this is going to be... I mean, Iran is saying this could be apocalyptic for U.S. interests. Your reaction—does this happen? I mean, does this happen?

#Sharmine Narwani

Yeah, you know, when people were talking about potential nuclear—well, I guess, aggressions by the Israelis—and, you know, we've all learned about Iran's mosaic strategy. And what that means is the dispersion of entire military ecosystems throughout 31 Iranian provinces in a country that's about the size of Western Europe. So, in this case, let's imagine a blitzkrieg over Iran, which is the size of Western Europe, right? How are you going to do that? You're going to have civilian targets, and the Pentagon will already have those civilian targets lined up.

But, you know, I just want to remind people that during the Iran-Iraq war, for years—absolute years—the Iranians didn't use their electricity properly. At night they used kerosene lamps so the Iraqis wouldn't see any light in the cities. And everybody, everybody took part in this. If you had been in the air any night over Tehran, you wouldn't have seen any lights. So I want to say, this is a country that has lived through a situation like that. We're also in the spring—it's not a time of year when people are going to, you know, succumb to heat or die of the cold. I don't know what they're thinking, because missiles can come from any part of Iran and do exactly the same to any one of the U.S.'s allies.

And they'll be done, because they don't know how to get past the day after. These are sort of plump, fattened, very comfortable—for several generations—populations. Small populations, relatively wealthy populations that will get on planes to go to Europe or even the Far East, as many of them do now. And that's what the refugee problem would look like, suddenly, overnight. Because in the Gulf countries, if you don't have air conditioning, you're going to die. I mean, nobody's used to that, except for some of the Bedouin tribes that live in those conditions. So, I mean, I think none of us know what's going to happen. But what I'm saying is, the Iranians are by far the most prepared.

OK, they've lived under the sanctions hammer for 40 years. They've done without. They've had shortages whenever the Americans wanted to yank this or that out of the economy. You know, they've rallied unlike almost any country that's been under these kinds of severe sanctions for decades, and they've created everything themselves—from food products to missiles. And if you talk to Iranians today—and I don't know if you plan to have any guests from Tehran—they'll tell you that people are out on the streets all day and all night. And when they're not, they're going to cafés and restaurants, and nobody's cowering in their homes.

You know, I was talking to somebody in Lebanon today, and obviously Beirut—and areas of Beirut that the Israelis don't typically hit—have taken a real hammering in recent days. And I'm like, you know, what's the mood there? And they're like, well, you know, everyone stays in while the bombing is going on, and then they go to work, they go to the restaurant, they go to the supermarket. And that is what Iran and its allies, its axis, are used to—and the American allies are not.

#Danny

Yeah, no, certainly the kingdoms—the families that rule over, I mean, Bahrain and Saudi—because of these strikes, Sharmin, their bridge, that critical bridge, I think it's called the King Fahd Bridge or something like that, is suspended, it's closed. So, I mean, the consequences are already there. And Iran is now saying, whatever restrictions we had before, if this happens, if these red lines are crossed, Iran can do even more damage. And we should believe them, because Iran has said over the last several days that it has the ability to produce and fire missiles that its military has absolutely no connection to.

If they turn the power off in certain areas, it's really just hurting civilians, because they've obviously prepared for these contingencies. It's not as if the U.S. and Israel haven't already shown a penchant—a kind of lust—for targeting civilian infrastructure. Yeah. Um, so I want to actually—uh, that example you gave of Iranians in the street—let's, um, I want to... so Donald Trump, he said this yesterday, and then I can show how Iranians have responded to it. So yesterday, during that horrific press conference—absolutely a joke—this is what he said about what's going to happen. And then this is how ordinary Iranians have responded to that threat.

#Donald Trump

We have a plan, because of the power of our military, where every bridge in Iran will be decimated by twelve o'clock tomorrow night, and every power plant in Iran will be out of business—burning, exploding, never to be used again. I mean, complete demolition by twelve o'clock. And it'll happen over a period of four hours if we want it to. We don't want that to happen. We may even get involved in helping them rebuild their nation. And you know what? If that's the case, the last thing we want to do is start with power plants, which are among the most expensive things—and bridges.

#Danny

So that's what he said, Charmaine. And did Iranians run, you know, leave the country? They did the exact opposite. Iran has been—Iranians have been—forming these human chains, as they're calling them, to protect bridges and to draw wide attention to the possibility of these strikes. So you have Iranians in droves. President Xi has said there are 14 million people ready to volunteer to help in any capacity with the military situation. So this is the scenario they're confronting—the one the United States and Israel are confronting.

#Donald Trump

Yeah.

#Danny

Human shields, essentially—the just kind, right?—protecting their own infrastructure. And of course, you have now 14 million, according to the president, ready to defend the country in any capacity. It's not a good equation, I don't think, for this war to be resolved anytime soon on the U.S.'s terms.

#Sharmine Narwani

No. And, you know, I think the other thing people have realized—other than, you know, the Iranians being humorous and super efficient and truthful—is that people are looking at what Iranian officials are saying, not what Trump is saying, to figure out the truth of the matter. They're also getting to see the Iranian people. There are so many videos I'm seeing every day showing what regular Iranian people look like. Hey, this could be Brooklyn—but guess what? It's not. It's Tehran.

And, you know, young people—young people who you'd assume would be sort of reformist and anti-government—are all rallying behind the flag, all rallying behind... well, they were saying Ali Khamenei, you know, the Supreme Leader, all rallying behind the IRGC and their military forces, smiling, waving flags. You know, the other thing that was honestly surprising to me, too, was when there was word that there was a downed U.S. pilot on the loose, we saw this huge line of cars making their way up the mountain to try to find him themselves.

You know, I mean, I don't know—could there be a sweeter, braver population willing to take on the monstrous American military beast? Okay, the rule of the jungle—willing to take that on and make the sacrifices to change this world. And I mean, I'm smiling because never in a million years would I have expected that kind of rhetoric from regular Americans. And, you know, on your show, in your comment section, as on our show, The Cradle, and in our comment sections, it's full of Americans saying, "Please, Iran, we love you, wipe out the Epstein class, the whole lot," right? So it's kind of—I mean, I'm almost speechless. But the other thing about Trump's speech is, I mean, with all that bluster, the evoking imagery of absolute destruction—remember, in the early days, he was so careful not to say "war." Do you remember that?

#Danny

Yeah.

#Sharmine Narwani

Now he's announcing war crimes—like, by the day. And last week, over a hundred U.S.-based legal experts signed a letter saying that the war declared by Trump, jointly with Israel, was not only a violation of international law, but that the strikes were constituting war crimes. And in the U.S. media discourse, we've heard this too—Trump announcing war crimes. So I don't know what he thinks his exit is. I mean, Danny, if he doubles down again, this would be the third time he's had a deadline and then come back super hard. And if he does that, there will be an outcry from inside Iran. He'll rally everyone—tens of millions more—to the destruction of the United States, its forces, its industry, and its associated organizations in the region. And Israel, obviously. You know, Israel hit a Jewish synagogue in Iran yesterday.

Iran has the largest community of Jews in West Asia—outside of Israel. And we had an Iranian—this was probably the first time a lot of Americans knew this—but Iran's Jewish member of parliament stood up and raged against Israel and its criminality, that it would even target Jews in order to hurt Iran. So many things people are seeing now, and I feel like the world's turning on this—we can't unsee these things anymore. Whether it's Trump not being able to hold himself as a professional and letting loose with expletives against an entire country he claimed he wanted to help and save—he's lost the plot, right? So if he escalates, there will be an Iranian response, and then there will be extraordinary prices, not just for energy but for basic commodities across the world. And nobody will blame Iran; everyone will blame Trump and Israel. If he backs down, there will be plenty written about the losing president.

#Danny

Those are great points, Charmaine. The gravity... Look, Donald Trump is—if there's anything you can say about him—someone who's obsessed with ultimatums, obsessed with threats, obsessed with hubris. He's obsessed with making himself and the United States look powerful and especially lethal.

And he does it primarily with words. And these words, though—the ones I showed earlier—were so grave that you had people on social media wondering, people who watch this show, your show, people who follow these things all over social media, wondering: is Trump going to use a nuclear weapon? And then suddenly you have The Guardian reporting that Trump's advisory circle is worried that this rhetoric signals he may be thinking about using a nuclear weapon.

The extremity of Trump's threats, coupled with his growing desperation to find a way out of the conflict, has increased fears that a volatile president could use a nuclear weapon. A military aide who's always close to the president would open the nuclear football. The only way to stop the order would be for those in the chain of command to deem it illegal. But top officials—you know, these advisory people who counsel him—they're concerned. They don't do anything about it, but they're worried that he's this reckless. What's your reaction to that? Because we're in a period in this war—and we've been saying this on this show—where the Trump administration doesn't really have any good options to assert its objectives, whatever those happen to be.

#Sharmine Narwani

Well, Trump is under extraordinary pressure. I mean, he's not just hearing from the Republican Party honchos saying, "You're screwing our midterm chances." But as you can see, his administration is fracturing, right? Some of his diehard members are no longer there, with others reportedly in line for the axe. And then, of course, you've seen some military firings as well, and questions about why the firing of senior officials has taken place. Were they against the war, or certain tactics like putting troops on the ground? Sorry about that. Is that why they were sacked?

There are others talking about Trump wanting to set up a Praetorian Guard to protect him in the way he couldn't on January 6th, right? He couldn't stop someone else from coming to the White House. And there's this notion that he is— I mean, I have friends who work at the Pentagon, and they're like, you... forget 10 years ago. These people are— they're not even looking— the Pentagon used to be a place of balance, believe it or not. They used to do these red team exercises, constantly challenging their own assumptions. And that era is gone, you know? You have diehard people in there who are just like, war, war, war.

I mean, and Hezbollah has certainly, you know, helped buoy the morale of those—his cabinet, his administration, his military—during a war. You don't see Iran doing this, you know what I mean? You have, of course, in Israel, you're hearing about fractures there. The Netanyahu-appointed head of the army saying, you know, "We're fracturing from within. The army is going to collapse on itself. I'm raising all the red flags." We heard a few days ago from Israeli television that in Lebanon there are soldiers dropping their weapons and running. You know, I would. Yeah, yeah.

#Danny

If I were in their shoes, I would.

#Sharmine Narwani

So you have this incredible pressure at the same time—for whatever reason—you have this pressure on Trump from the Israelis, right? And they're trying to do everything to make sure he can't negotiate a way out by killing anyone he could negotiate with, right? Now, Harrazi—obviously, targeting Kamal Harrazi, the advisor to the Supreme Leader—well, they didn't manage to kill him; they killed his wife. That was another such attempt. But here's what... so you can understand why Trump—already nobody dares to stop his bluster, right? You can see that they have prepared speeches for him, but he goes off script, right?

#Danny

Yeah, he was on it for, what, like five minutes, and then suddenly he's rambling about—yeah, the greatest ballroom in the world, you know, or whatever.

#Sharmine Narwani

And the thing is, it's not just what he said that's shocked the world. For me, it's the fact that he's still allowed to post those things on Truth Social—that suggests to me that people around him are scared. You've got his chief of staff, his vice president, the people around him who kowtow to him, even his son-in-law. Nobody's taking this away from him. Nobody's saying, "You've got to stop," right? That suggests to me a real problem.

So, as you're saying—the nuclear football—no, I think if it comes to that, someone will tackle him to the ground. But obviously, nobody's saying no to him. I had Larry Wilkerson on maybe two weeks ago, and he was like, "He's not letting anyone in the army do anything other than take his orders." I'm like, "I'm sorry, Larry, but it seems to me the military's job is to stand up and say, 'No, this is wrong. This will hurt us. We will die.'" And it doesn't seem like anyone in the military is doing that either. I mean, that's the truth of it—everyone's a bit scared of Trump.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. I mean, it's a disastrous situation. The United States and Israel have put themselves into one of the biggest and most disastrous corners they could have. In my assessment, it seems like they've accelerated this war to a point where they can't handle or control any of the outcomes, short of their standoff strikes. And now Iran, Sharmin, is threatening that its allies—we know who they are—will close the Bab al-Mandeb Strait if Trump wins and makes good on his word. It's also promised, of course, to put Saudi Arabia and the rest of the region into darkness.

But the Bab al-Mandeb Strait—this is a big one. This is one that I think a lot of people are sleepwalking past, Sharmin. Because while Yemen is involved in the war, they've basically limited their activity to coordinating with Iran and Hezbollah around strikes on Israel. But nevertheless, we

know what happened: from November 2023 to 2024, it was a whole year plus where the Bab al-Mandeb Strait was closed because of Yemen's blockade for Gaza. And they've promised to do it again, in really different circumstances. So maybe you could comment on that—what impact that could have, and what kind of card that is to play here amid these threats.

#Sharmine Narwani

Yeah. I mean, 20% of the world's energy goes through the Strait of Hormuz. Most of it—virtually none of it—to the U.S., but East Asia is certainly dependent on it, and Europe as well, especially since Russian gas was taken offline. The Bab al-Mandeb, on the other hand, is where a huge amount of global trade passes. From the Indian Ocean—if you have a map, you can see it—through the Indian Ocean from Asia, right? Everybody buys from China, from Vietnam, from Korea. It travels through the Indian Ocean, into the Red Sea, up through the Suez Canal to Europe, and then on to the Atlantic, and so on. So this is the major thoroughfare for international trade that moves east to west. Right.

And what happened during the Gaza genocide, when the Yemeni armed forces decided to take control of those waters and not allow Israel-aligned ships to pass through, was that these ships had to make the long sail all the way down to the southernmost coastline of the African continent—the Cape of Good Hope—and then go around through Europe. Sorry, yes, through Europe that way, into the Mediterranean, which is, you know, a huge diversion. And so, obviously, shipping costs, insurance costs, everything rises. I think the Yemenis haven't needed to do that because the amount of leverage Iran enjoys right now—just having the Strait of Hormuz, not even closing it, but deciding who goes through and who doesn't—is world-altering.

You know, I don't think you need that. But if the Americans want to, and the Israelis want to take this to a worse place, Israel can be completely besieged—completely. Because Hezbollah has already, you know, in past wars as well as this one, reached... So you have two main Israeli ports on the Mediterranean: Haifa and Ashkelon, right? And those—obviously, Haifa has been hit a number of times recently. Then you have the Eilat port, which declared bankruptcy, I think, a year or two ago. And that's where the Yemenis were hitting and the Iraqis were hitting. That's the southernmost port that would, you know, get things from the Red Sea. So Israel gets 80% of its goods via vessels—sea, right? Waterways. You could besiege Israel, essentially.

And I think, you know, Israel is the piece that's going to be saved for later. Right now, Iran's trying to groom and tame the world to understand this new reality: "Okay, we control this. We're going to be fair. We're not like the Americans. We're going to be fair. If you show no hostility toward us and aren't trying to undermine our security or arm our adversaries, you can come through the Strait of Hormuz—but you will have to pay." And payment even seems to depend on whether they can afford it or not. There's nothing standard yet. So Iran, with the help of Oman, a GCC member, is working

on the legal framework for administering the Strait of Hormuz. And that's kind of all it needs to do—and it can do it. It's one of two littoral states on the Strait. Oman and Iran—they can do what they want.

That's their waterway. Right. So you can't even—I mean, I feel like legally and otherwise, Iran has such a lock on this. You can bomb all of Iran; Iran will still have the Strait of Hormuz. Oil prices will go through the roof. Food prices will go through the roof. Things will stop working. Americans won't get components to make their missiles. Israel will run out of luck and get pounded from the Iraqi, Yemeni, and Lebanese sides. Why would Iran give up anything? And maybe that's something to talk about too—these negotiations we keep hearing about. I don't see it. I mean, it's bizarre that Trump wants a ceasefire, whether it's 15 days or 45 days. Why would anyone ever trust an American-brokered ceasefire—ever, ever, ever, right? What is that Russian term? "Agreement incapable."

#Danny

"Agreement incapable," yes.

#Sharmine Narwani

Americans are agreement incapable. We've also learned that Israelis—well, we haven't just learned it, we've seen it through Oslo, all the way up to two Gaza ceasefires and a Lebanese ceasefire—that the Israelis are agreement incapable. Nobody's going to start an agreement with them. They want the very nature of the end of conflict to be the deterrent forevermore, for the Americans or Israelis to ever strike any one of these countries again. And why shouldn't they? The world favors their position, right? I think we're learning. Were you talking about Iran targeting information?

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, there were reports that Iran was getting targeting information from Russia about Israel's energy infrastructure—how it works, which facilities are vulnerable, and what could essentially turn Israel's lights out in rapid fashion.

#Sharmine Narwani

I think that's—yeah, but what Reuters is saying, I think today, is that the Russians—well, the Americans are saying that Russian satellites have provided Iran with information about 11 West Asian countries. So not just Israel, but Qatar, Iraq, Bahrain, uh, Israel, Diego Garcia, even the UAE, Jordan, Turkey. So, you know, I mean, where this comes from...

#Danny

Before you, uh, continue—it's a shocker where it comes from. It comes from Ukraine, right? Yeah, yeah. It's like one mouthpiece, uh, one mouth—from the horse's mouth, right? Like, because...

#Sharmine Narwani

Right. But this is, in fact, what the Americans are suspecting—or have suspected—for a long time. But they're suspecting the same from China, too. And I mean, we both know some great independent journalists who have very good connections in those countries, and nobody can confirm that. This is what the assumption is, right? But nobody can confirm that Iran's demonstrated greater targeting capability in this war is necessarily due to these allies. I mean, the thing is, we're discovering a new Iranian capability every week. Right? First time ever shooting down an F-35 in history—that's Iranian. The graveyard of half a billion dollars' worth of U.S. military weapons we saw two days ago—right, Iranian. The Iranians are now saying, "We were following..."

We were tracking enemy activity in that area before. Right. Press TV, as I was telling you earlier, said today that they have sources claiming the Iranians saw the Americans had an activity plan and didn't react—didn't react, didn't react—basically drawing them into a trap. And then, you know, on that night, they did attack. So who knows? But yeah, I mean, I can't see a situation where Iran would give up any of its leverage until it extracted every last thing. And part of the reason for doing that, and not showing goodwill, is because its adversaries—the Americans and Israelis—have shown none. Lied, cheated, stole, murdered, gleeful, racist. Right? Why would you give an inch?

#Danny

Yeah, exactly. Why would you give an inch? And this is the shape of things. You know, there have been many reports, Sharmeen, about what it looks like in terms of Iranian communication with the United States right now. Some have said diplomatic channels were completely closed after that threat—wiping out the entirety of Iran's civilization. Well, it seems like what's actually happening, and what's probably been happening for a while now, is that you have mediators continuing to scramble from these various countries—Pakistan, Qatar, Turkey—right? They're scrambling, they're trying to, and it's just passing messages along.

And Iran has said, "We are not actually—there are no negotiations with the United States because the position of the U.S. remains the same," which is such a ridiculous, maximal position given what's happening. They continue to demand capitulation—just do what the U.S. says, let go of your control over the Strait of Hormuz—and then, of course, all those other ridiculous demands, which have honestly fallen by the wayside. We don't hear them that much. Sometimes Trump says, "Oh, we don't want them to build a nuclear weapon," and most of the time we don't even hear him say that anymore, or mention the missiles or anything, right? It's all about the straightforward news. And I guess there's no secret as to why that is. But this is what it looks like now, Danny Haiphong. I mean, maybe if you wanted to comment on this and anything else you had in mind.

#Sharmine Narwani

On the negotiations?

#Danny

Yeah, on how Iran is portraying it—as simply messages being passed by mediators.

#Sharmine Narwani

That's in fact what it is. There are a lot of people trying to mediate because there are a lot of countries with a lot of interest in this—not just the Gulf countries, but, you know, Pakistan has a mutual defense pact with the Saudis. It really doesn't want Riyadh to enact it, right, or to call on them. There are ways out of this. The clearest way out is for the Americans to just exit and leave Israel to Iran's—well, in Iran's hands—because nothing's ever going to stop. The Americans are never going to stop being dragged into this region as long as Israel has the ability to incite, instigate, wage war, right? And we saw something we haven't seen in a really long time: actually managing to bring the U.S. directly to lead the war, okay?

So I think this is maybe a unique situation—it's derived from the constellation of these two characters, Netanyahu and Trump, leading their countries at the same time. I don't think it would be easy under other administrations. But nonetheless, Israel has managed in all its wars to get 100% U.S. assistance, financial and military, to wage them. So the U.S. might as well be in them. Yeah, I don't see... Again, we come back to the same thing: Iran has leverage now. Here's maybe what needs to be explained. This is not just about Iran. The world needs to turn. We need to get away from—well, basically what's driven the world since the world wars is Western-led financial systems, Western-led shipping, Western-led insurance, and so on. Globally, Western-led telecommunications—you're not allowed to let Huawei in here.

You know, there are others, though, that are smart and efficient and have better products—cheaper, smarter products—that aren't allowed entry. And so... this is why so much conflict is brewing. Now the Chinese want to create routes. The Indians and Russians—sorry, the Iranians and Russians—are rushing in to also create routes. The Americans can't stand this. More conflict, right? What you need to do is basically disable these Western-led global networks, because we're capable of doing these things regionally. We don't need a Chinese-led one. We don't need a Russian-led one. In every region—I mean, you know—we're going very clearly from an era of globalism to regionalism. In every region, you'll have the big agricultural state and then the big industrial state, and, you know, let them work out their balances, right?

But we've already seen people transacting across borders in every region of the world using their own currencies and their own device systems. The Americans can't have that. So what Iran is doing is far greater than just defending Iran. It intends to be the catalyst—or intends the Strait of Hormuz

to be the catalyst—for changing the way many of these networks are controlled. It intends to build its own critical network, which will include shipping, insurance, and, you know, transactions and payment systems, just through the Hormuz situation—let alone Bab al-Mandab, let alone the International North–South Transportation Corridor that it runs with the Russians. You know, let alone the Chabahar Port. And, you know, there's so much there.

And I was having a discussion with—who was it? Someone. And it was quite interesting. We were talking about how—wait, wait, wait—why is the name not coming to my head? Andre. Andre. We were talking about the Second World War and how Americans just don't understand that it was the USSR that weakened Germany's eastern flank, right? So much so—tens of millions of Soviets were killed—to weaken the German front. And then the Americans swept in during the latter phase of the war, right, with their little V signs and assumed victory. But in a sense, if you think about how Russia's four-year war with Ukraine has gone on, it's kind of interesting. They've worn down a lot of the Western military myths during this war, right? It hasn't been a short one.

I mean, in a sense, Iran has shown far more victories in one month than Russia has during that period. However, could it have done so had the Ukraine war not happened and made the world realize that oil and gas were nothing to just sniff at? You know, they were the underpinnings of everything. Do you know what I mean? To make them realize that all of NATO's weapons could not move a determined sovereign actor. Right. So these things are all—and, you know, of course, China's next. So it's very critical for Iran to stand its ground and ensure that these changes take place. And the Strait of Hormuz is ground zero for that. But there will be many changes as a result of this. I think, most importantly, the first beast felled at the gate is probably the propaganda—the narrative story, right? I mean, Iran are the heroes. Iran are the David to the American-Israeli Goliath. When did that happen? It happened in 30 days, you know?

#Danny

Yeah. Oh, rapidly. I mean, rapidly. The U.S. can't—the U.S. has no capacity to increase support for this war. And the longer this war goes on, where there's no support—very little support—the easier it is for Iran's, well, very, very good... I mean, they're very good at it. We're learning about their ability to craft their own kind of narrative about what's going on. And that narrative is resonating with a lot of people, especially. And I think you brought up Ukraine—it's like Ukraine and then Al-Aqsa Flood.

What's happened since 2023 has already played such a huge role in shifting people's opinions away from the way the U.S. and Israel do things. You know, Janice, I mean, literally, Trump is threatening genocide right now. People just aren't—most people, even in the United States, are not excited about that because of what it's done, not just to the U.S. politically and economically, but especially to its image in the world. It just doesn't feel good to be part of that. It doesn't feel good to be complicit in that.

#Sharmine Narwani

No, no, no. Those events, no doubt, laid the groundwork for Iran to be able to do this at all. I mean, what the Palestinians sacrificed—and what Gaza sacrificed—no doubt.

#Danny

Yeah, totally. Yeah, exactly. And that's why Palestine, Lebanon—that's why they're all in Iran's... I mean, it's not just that, that's not the only reason why, but it's a big reason why they're part of Iran's core demands. And, you know, to your point, Sharmeen, about how the world is changing—the ruling elite, the ones who are usually very excited about wars, are admitting this as well. The New York Times is talking about Iran becoming a major power because of this war, and Bloomberg has basically said that Iran has broken the petrodollar.

These are the kinds of pieces you wouldn't have seen in the past, and now we're seeing them. The control over the Strait of Hormuz—they're already implementing it. The legal framework isn't there, but we can see it. Ships are only going through if they're following Iran's and Oman's terms, and those terms have a lot to do with not bypassing the U.S. dollar—essentially, not using that dollar. So, your thoughts on this, especially the admission part, because I think it's causing a lot of fear about what happens if this war gets out of control.

#Sharmine Narwani

Yeah. Well, these headlines are ten years behind our headlines on the same subject. You know, so it's fine—whatever. Let them come to their discoveries and bang their heads against the wall. I feel like they're just catching up, and it's suddenly accelerating for them. They could have opened their eyes and seen all this coming. But I don't think Iran aspires to be a global power. That's a Western way of thinking, right? Like, of course China is going to try to do what the U.S. has done and have global hegemony. Of course the Russians are going to try to do this. That's not how they think, right? These are countries—Russia is, in terms of landmass, the biggest country in the world, right?

And it doesn't seek to do that. It has enough of its own troubles—economic development, modernization, taking care of its population, and growing its population because, you know, it needs to. That's of paramount importance in order to maintain such a landmass. The Iranians just want, again, economic development and sovereignty. What they've had to do is dance around it. You know how Mark Carney went on—was it the Davos stage?—and basically let the cat out of the bag? He said everything we've been saying forever, like they know it. They've always known it. "Well, maybe we shouldn't have done it this way, and we kind of knew we shouldn't, but we did."

So Iran's just not willing to play the facade game anymore. It's like, "Okay, I'm a sovereign country. I have these capabilities. I will exercise them. I will not pull back in fear of people looking at me badly or in fear of how I'll be cast by the Western narrative." The Western narrative doesn't dominate anymore. We have a voice now—we're asserting our voice. We also have strategic allies, and our interests are in Asia. Europe is welcome, because we're connected by landmass. They don't

have resources; we do. We can supply them at fair prices. But after years of absolutely trying to destroy us, there's a penalty, right? Pay up. Pay up. The fact is, that's another thing—the West has never paid for its carnage. It should pay up.

Of course, the West doesn't have the money to do that, so there will be new institutions to levy taxes and sanction these countries. I mean, this is the way it should be. I don't know why anyone thinks otherwise. So, is Iran going to be the next global power? No. You know, countries have to act according to their size—geographically, in terms of industrial output, scientific output, agricultural output. These are natural things. I mean, there were periods in West Asia when the Americans weren't playing such a big role, and at those moments you had the Saudis, the Syrians, the Iranians, the Qataris, the Turks—all sort of jumping in to try to, you know, help iron out differences in Iraq, in Lebanon, and in Sudan.

That was, by the way, that golden short period that existed just before the Arab Spring kicked off and the Americans came full force back militarily into our lives. So, yeah, this is a great time for West Asia. This is a great time for people of the Global South. And it will be a difficult time for Western populations. But you'll have every reason to unseat your leaders when they can't provide the basic goods and services you pay taxes for. So, you know, it's just the world changing. And Iran—there's always going to be a trigger. Gaza was a huge trigger, right? Veils dropped over Gaza. Then Ukraine happened—further veils dropped. Iran's happening now, and people are starting to think, these are the good guys. These people have ideas, they have efficiency, and they're building smarter, cheaper, faster, right?

America doesn't have a manufacturing base. All these ideas—I mean, all the guys at Davos know it. It's just that nobody puts it in a speech and says it honestly. So these are good things, right? Listen, what do I always say? Change never comes from good times in our personal lives. You know what I mean? Like, when you're having a good time, you're not learning anything from it. It's the really hard times when we learn the lessons that move us forward. This is a really difficult time in human history. But what I'm grateful for is that we have adults in the room. We have actual powers rising on their own steam—not by stealing from others or murdering others, but through innovation, manufacturing, and so on. And they're willing to put up a good fight. So, yay, Iran.

#Danny

Yeah, I mean, that's a really good way to put it, because on this show, you know, I think sometimes when times are bad, people see this show as having an air of optimism. But that optimism—when we look at the situation objectively, at history objectively—yeah, I mean, massive changes for the better have never really occurred without a massive level of struggle. And unfortunately, that's not something I wish, or you wish—very few people wish for this suffering. It comes out of suffering that's imposed. And if we just look at the history of the West, of the United States, any good things that

have come out of this era of Western so-called hegemony are the byproduct of people struggling against it. And Iran has built up a capacity, a capability—militarily, politically, and now economically—we're seeing more and more that it's able to fight back in a way nobody really expected.

Nobody expected this. A lot of people were saying, you know, Iran is done, it's finished. Everyone was finished. Hezbollah was finished. Right? A lot of people live in the moment—they don't live in history. And there are a lot of things we can't see being reported or analyzed from the collective West. But now we're seeing it. We're also seeing that the calculations made by these three major forces in the multipolar world—China, Russia, and Iran—were correct calculations. Whether you liked what happened during this time, especially in the last three or four years, they were correct calculations, and they're now bearing major fruit in a time characterized by this incredibly desperate, disastrous, disgusting, and criminal lashing out by the U.S. and by Israel.

#Sharmine Narwani

And look at—how are we still dependent on fossil fuels in this time of innovation? Well, maybe not in the West, all right, but look at China. It has way more electricity capacity than the United States. It's not energy-rich, but it's invested in all kinds of things—hydroelectric power, solar panels everywhere in the country, and electric vehicles. My goodness, they're so much better. But guess what? In the U. S., there are just a few companies that have that market share, and they're expensive.

And they don't want China to have a piece of it. Excuse me, what about American consumers? Why can't they buy something that's really good and inexpensive? You know what I mean? There's too much protection of the capital class in the West, and that's why innovation isn't happening—because they're really not innovating. They're not creating manufacturing bases; they're just moving capital around and making little gains through loopholes all along. So I just think it's time for a change. I fear the West doesn't have—certainly this lot of Western leaders don't have—the capacity to understand how to do this.

You do need revolutionary thinkers—let's say even economists; they don't have to be politicians. But yeah, I mean, Iran—I went to the Tehran nuclear reactor, I think it was in April or May of last year. I was with a group of journalists for a big journalism festival in Iran, and I think maybe eight or ten of us were invited to see it. And, you know, I'd known some of this, but to see up close that they were creating—well, the Tehran reactor, what it produces is used exclusively for medicine and scientific purposes, okay? And Iran has a big plan so that nuclear energy will power about 20% of the country's needs in, I don't know how many years, but they have a plan for that.

It's not all nuclear energy, but what we discovered visiting the reactor was that they were creating, from this process, non-chemical ways—meaning pesticides, right?—how to preserve crops using new byproducts from what they were getting out of the reactor. They were making food preservatives, things like that. I mean, of course, the entire range of medicines, all the chemotherapy drugs. Anyway, you know, there's a lot of innovation in the Global South. Iran is among the top, maybe

five, countries in the world. In terms of the largest amount of scientific output, in 2010 it was number one in the world. So they started sanctioning Iranians, preventing them from attending scientific conferences around the world. You know, there's so much possibility here. But I'm sorry—I'm sure you want to talk about something else.

#Danny

No, I mean, we're coming to a close. I think these are all great points. I just wanted to reinforce this point about innovation. It's incredible what we're seeing in the multipolar world and where it's going. I mean, I'll eventually be back in China—I won't say when on air here—but I will be back there. And every time I'm there, that's the lesson you learn.

I was telling some friends of mine—I was talking about Iran—and we were discussing these escalations, with the U.S. continuing to essentially destroy the oil markets. I said, well, there's this meme of a guy behind a tree in a Miami Vice outfit, licking his lips and rubbing his hands, and I said, that's China's renewable energy sector. That's what they're doing as they watch what's happening to the world energy system because of how the United States and Israel are behaving in their war of aggression. This is only going to accelerate and push things to a point where China ends up with a natural monopoly over these resources, because it's the one country with both the means of production and the will to invest in it. And that's only going to skyrocket—it's going to skyrocket globally—and China provides it on the cheap.

#Sharmine Narwani

Yeah.

#Danny

Which is, you know, I think one of the reasons there's so much panic among the energy monopolies we see in the West. They're looking at short-term profits like, "This is nice, but it doesn't bode well for the future." And that's why we see these prices go up.

#Sharmine Narwani

But listen, just a thought—I mean, a depressing thought. Empire is not going to go down without a fight. They may try to destroy everyone else. The thought of the Americans even using nuclear weapons wouldn't surprise me. I personally always thought it would be biological weapons, because they could just pretend there was some kind of crazy pandemic, right? But I do think that's something they'll do. I really do. I think they're absolutely raging animals—racist animals—who just want to kill everyone who's brown and black, take the resources for themselves, and then they'll end up killing each other, because that's what Europeans do when they don't have an "other" to fight.

#Danny

I've been saying this forever, Charmaine, and we can close on this. I'll pull up what people are saying here—people are happy to see you—and I'll just read some of these comments. Nevertheless, Charmaine, what I've been saying on this show forever is that the U.S. empire—capitalism—when it loses, it becomes very desperate. And the more it declines, the more desperate it gets. Iran, I think, should be a lesson to people in the collective West that the United States—and Israel too, we should include them—will go to incredibly desperate lengths not even to try to win, right?

I think there's no winning anymore. It's not like they can make Russia or China budge. They can't make Iran budge either. So the only other option is, "Hey, how much of it can we destroy so there's nothing left, and maybe we'll end up on top out of that?" There are people in high levels of politics in the U.S., and in the ruling elite that pulls their strings—their puppet strings—who think this way. And we should expect that. That's why they have thousands of nuclear weapons and are the only country to have ever used them. So, any final thoughts as I pull up these comments here?

#Sharmine Narwani

No, no, no. Go ahead. I mean, there's a whole lot of bad that could be coming. You know, it looks... one hopes that Trump will be smacked down a bit. And actually, there's a way to do this. The U.S.—I mean, Trump would like, you know, MAGA would like—the U.S. more isolated. Just go back into your corner. Right? You have resources, you can manage. Take Canada if necessary—no, no, no, I don't really mean that—but just let everyone else function as they are. Truly, there is the possibility of an absolute madman doing otherwise, and this is something Americans need to be vigilant about. We cannot police your countries; you're going to have to do it. No, I'm not lumping you all together, as one person in the comments says. And by the way, another person in the comments says, "What about women's rights in Iran?" I'm like, what about the 50,000 frigging rape kits sitting with spider webs over them in New York City precinct offices?

#Danny

Okay? Yeah, let's be honest. Women's rights in the United States are absolutely—well, I mean, they're always in shambles. And Iran... from what it was under the Shah to what it is now, I think women are doing far better. That's why they make up a huge portion of the people standing and rallying in the streets to protect their government. So, Charmaine, this was great. I want to make sure everybody knows that The Cradle—both the YouTube channel and the website, the publication—are in the video description below. So definitely support The Cradle.

Hit the like button before you go. I want to thank everyone who was very generous today—gave super chats, was very active and lively in the chat and everything. Thanks for viewing, and thanks to all the moderators. Where to support this channel? Also in the video description—Patreon, Substack, and more. Tomorrow I'll be back on with Dave DeCamp for the first time from Antiwar.com, and

Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson will join me at 2 p.m. Eastern time. Charmaine, anything you want to announce before I head out of here with you?

#Sharmine Narwani

No, as usual, The Cradle—it's based in West Asia—does daily live podcasts at, what is it, 1 p.m. Eastern time in the United States, bringing you news from the ground. It's us just chatting about the news of the day. So for those who really want to dig deeper, it's a good place to go. I would, if I wasn't involved.

#Danny

Yeah, everyone should definitely be following The Cradle. Definitely subscribe and support if you can financially, of course, because we need independent media to be supported—especially in these times, but really all the time. So everybody, hit the like button before you go. I'll see you tomorrow at 2 p.m. Eastern Time, April 8th. See you then. Bye-bye.