

Michael Hudson: This Changes Everything: The World After Iran War

#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Wednesday, April 8th, 2026, and our dear friend Michael Hudson is here with us. Welcome back, Michael.

#Michael

I'm glad to be back—what a day.

#Nima

Yeah, exactly. And we—Michael—we had the ceasefire yesterday, late last night. And today we've learned that these attacks are happening again and again. Israel has attacked Lebanon more than a hundred times. There were also some attacks in Iran, some kind of bombing—Iran, the UAE, and Kuwait together. It seems the ceasefire is starting to shake. But after all, what we've heard from the White House press secretary, Caroline Levitt, is that they're going to meet on Saturday—J.D. Vance, Steve Witkoff, and Kushner.

They're going to meet with their Iranian counterparts to talk about the ceasefire—a two-week ceasefire. So far, it's... the ceasefire is shaking. But the main issue is what's going on—why the United States decided to go for some sort of ceasefire—is basically related to the reality of war, the reality on the battlefields. But we know Iran has something important right now that it didn't have before: the Strait of Hormuz. They call it a "nuclear bomb" for Iran. What's your understanding of that, and what's the importance of the Strait of Hormuz? And how do you see the current situation with the war?

#Michael

Well, the Strait of Hormuz controls the OPEC oil trade, but it's only part of the picture. It's not going to matter that much. If Donald Trump had carried out his threats to blow up every bridge in Iran and every power plant—which would take a century to replace—then Iran would have wiped out all the oil export capacity of the Arab OPEC countries, from Saudi Arabia to the Emirates. That would have left no oil to export at all. But no, I don't think that even if there are violations of the ceasefire—and Israel is going to do everything it can to break the agreement—it's going to keep attacking.

The idea of making a ceasefire with the United States is just as absurd as the thought of Russia making a ceasefire with Ukraine while letting Britain, France, Germany, and Estonia keep sending missiles at Russia—because you have to have all the parties involved. And Israel has already said, “We’re not a part of this. We’re going to keep shooting.” Well, I think that probably the Iranians are only going to retaliate against Israel for this. They’re going to try to do what they can to provide arms to their cohorts fighting in Lebanon—arms to Hezbollah and others. But I don’t think there will be any major, total attack such as Trump has been threatening, at least for a two-week interim.

And that two weeks gives the rest of the world a chance to create an alternative—because if the fighting resumes, it could trigger a world depression on the scale of the 1930s. That depression would come from stopping 20% of the oil trade, and I think 30% to 40% of the gas trade, along with much of the fertilizer, ammonia, and sulfur that are needed. All of that would force huge industrial shutdowns, and the whole world would be threatened by chaos. Well, threatening chaos has been the U.S. strategy all along. And now, suddenly, the threat of chaos—the tool used to force other countries to follow a policy to avoid it—is in the hands of Iran.

It’s through its control of hormones—and the means of exporting the OPEC oil and gas that remain in production right now—that this continues. So the question is, what are other countries going to do to support Iran in bringing pressure on the United States and on Israel to prevent the resumption of hostilities that would result in a chronic depression lasting three or four years and leading to a whole restructuring of the world’s economic and financial system? I want to get into what that restructuring would look like, but first I’d like to talk about the general strategy—because 50 years ago, what’s happening today had a general logic to it that was all spelled out.

It was all spelled out at the place where I happened to be working—the Hudson Institute. The strategy that Iran is following now is very similar to what was discussed back then as a way to avoid world chaos in the 1960s, which at that time meant atomic warfare. The question was: how can the world avoid the chaos of being blown up? The answer was the doctrine of mutual destruction—MAD, Mutual Assured Destruction. The idea was that if only one country had the atomic bomb, as the United States did in 1945, it could threaten others with nuclear war. But what happens when Soviet Russia develops the bomb, and then other countries start developing it too?

The threat of atomic war was the single major concern in foreign policy during the 1960s. Don Brennan at the Hudson Institute coined the term “mutual assured destruction,” and Herman Kahn, in the same year—1962—wrote a book called **Thinking About the Unthinkable**, spelling it out. The idea was that if other countries not only had the atomic bomb but also maintained military parity, with the ability to improve their weapons technology in step with each other, then every major country would be afraid to use the bomb, because their opponents could strike back and both sides would be blown up.

So as long as there was parity among the atomic bomb powers, war between them was avoided. The United States, of course, kept fighting its own wars—from Southeast Asia to Latin America and Africa—but those weren't world wars, and they weren't atomic wars. The whole idea was that countries understood if they escalated any kind of warfare, their own existence would be threatened beyond just their economies. Well, that's the situation we're in today. What was threatened in the 1960s was called "atomic winter." In other words, if there were an atomic war, the whole world would essentially go into a winter—production would stop, agriculture would stop, trade would stop. What's threatened today is a financial winter.

And the financial winter would be suffered by the oil-importing countries—from Europe to Japan and Korea in the Far East, and most of the Global South, including many Asian countries. So the question is, how can this financial winter be avoided? Well, what makes the situation between Iran and the United States different from the military standoff between the United States and Russia in the 1960s is that Iran can't say, "If we blow up the oil-producing capacity of the Arab OPEC countries, that'll leave the oil-importing countries in desperate positions." The United States had already thought through what the result would be. And Donald Trump bragged, saying, "Well, sure, Iran may very well do all of this."

And Iran has demonstrated its military power—at least enough to wipe out its neighbors' ability to produce oil. But Donald Trump said, well, America is an oil-surplus country and a gas-exporting country, thanks to all the fracking technology that's been developed. And if blowing up the OPEC oil trade raised world oil prices, that would be a bonanza for American oil and gas companies. While the United States began releasing its oil reserves to keep prices down at home, the oil companies would export their oil and gas at enormously high world prices to Western Europe and Japan—and essentially give America power over its closest allies.

And so it's up to these allies to decide: well, we cannot afford a fight between the United States and Iran, which would destroy our economy. You may talk later with me about how it would also destroy the U.S. economy financially, but for the time being, the most immediate crisis would be in countries that need oil to power their factories, heat and light their homes and office buildings, produce fertilizer, and power their railroads and transportation—all of that. Well, making that threat of destroying other countries' access to oil has been at the center of U.S. foreign policy for the last half century, as you and I discussed in earlier broadcasts. And now that threat is in the hands of Iran.

And the question is, will other countries—will Western Europe and East Asia—realize that it's up to them to stop this war? Because if there's another attack on Iran, and Iran has already demonstrated its ability to wipe out OPEC oil and gas, just as it's already wiped out Qatar's helium export capacity, the result will be a global war. What will they do? Well, I guess yesterday at the United Nations, the vote sponsored by the Arab Emirates was to blame Iran for being attacked—for having the power to

retaliate against the Israeli and American attack by fighting back. That was called aggression. It's aggression, apparently, to fight back against being attacked with the threat of being wiped out. If you defend yourself militarily, you're the one to be blamed.

Well, China, I think, helped bring some sanity into the discussion by blocking that action from being passed by the Security Council and voted on in the United States. But it shows how totally insane the U.S. opposition to the rest of the world is. The United States and Iran together are threatening the entire world with utter chaos if there's a war. What are the other countries going to do? So far, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Bahrain, and others have said, "Why is Iran bombing us? We didn't bomb it." And Iran's response is, "Well, you're allowing the American bases there. You're letting American planes fly over your territory. You're not doing anything about it."

Well, Europe has also said, "We're not joining. Why are you making us suffer? We didn't join the war." Look at Italy, Spain, and other countries—even France—they've blocked the United States from using their airfields and military bases for planes to take off and bomb you. "Why are you blaming us?" they ask. Well, what's to be blamed is their passivity, their inactivity, their refusal to do anything at all to stop the American attack on Iran—which is basically an attack on all the rules of civilization, as we've discussed before: the rules of international law, the rules of war against bombing civilians, the rules against bombing basic infrastructure and utilities.

In the last few days, there's been the assassination of professors and the physical destruction of universities—to do what Israel said: "We must destroy the culture. God has commanded us to treat Iran like Amalek. They are our existential enemy." Where are the other countries moving to accuse Donald Trump and Hegseth of being war criminals, of bringing charges against them to prevent them and the rest of their staff from traveling? It's as if the whole rest of the world is paralyzed and unable to really cope. It's very hard to see whether it even realizes this. For the last week, I've been amazed that the stock markets in the United States, Europe, and even Asia have hardly gone down at all with this threat of world depression—only maybe one percent at most, just marginally up and down, hardly anything.

And even more surprising has been the fact that today, despite none of this danger of national war being discounted, the Dow Jones Industrial Average soared over 1,000 points. Stock markets in Japan and Korea—the most vulnerable to a cutback of oil and gas—recovered by 3%, 4%, even 5%. I mean, just amazing gains, not from any depression that had gone down, but as if somehow everything is going to be okay. The question I guess all of us have to ask is: is the world just in a state of denial? Can it not think about the unthinkable prospect that the war will really result in mutual destruction—assured destruction—between Iran and the oil-importing countries, to what the United States hopes will be its own benefit, to pick up all the marbles? How can they proceed without realizing this?

#Nima

Yeah. When it comes to this, one of the main questions right now is: what will be the future for the GCC countries—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain, all of them? Looking at what's going on, can they survive this situation of hostility against Iran? Somehow they want to fight Iran. Today we've seen the UAE trying to strike some targets in Iran. This is the future they're seeking, but can they survive the situation they're creating for themselves?

#Michael

No, I don't think they can survive. These sheikhdoms—these basically little family sheikhdoms—were created right after World War II, with Kuwait a bit later, with the intent of dividing and conquering all of the Arab countries. Most of them are small family dictatorships, and I think about 88% of the population in the Emirates and Bahrain consists of immigrant labor working there. Saudi Arabia is really the only Arab country in OPEC, I guess along with Qatar, that has a fairly large native-born Saudi and Qatari population.

The others, like Jordan, are populated largely by Palestinians and increasingly by Indian immigrants working under almost feudal, near-slave conditions. The immigrants have their passports taken away. There are no courts for them, and they're regularly abused. These are countries that are backward in their treatment of immigrants. Essentially, they're a legacy of the whole epoch of Western colonialism—from the Middle East to Africa to Asia. And not only should they be replaced, but Iran makes the following point: even if you get rid of American military bases, as we've insisted, the problem is that your economies are inextricably tied in a symbiotic relationship with the United States.

For instance, American artificial intelligence companies—computer companies like Google, Amazon, and others—have all built huge data processing plants in Bahrain, the Emirates, and other countries to have access to energy. It's going to be very, very hard for these companies to get enough energy in the United States, given the country's inability to create electric utilities quickly enough to support the data processing they'll need. The so-called "Magnificent Seven" stocks—all the information technology, internet, and computer chip companies—can't keep soaring without some reliable source of energy, probably outside the United States.

And of course, that energy outside the United States is exactly what's being threatened. That's why Iran has focused on bombing American affiliates in these other Arab OPEC countries. It argues that, to protect its own national security, it needs to break the symbiotic economic relationships among the OPEC countries—from Saudi Arabia down through the smaller Emirates and little family dictatorships. And I don't see how that can be done without some sort of takeover. Iran used to control the Straits, and Oman is right across the Strait of Hormuz, where it sits.

The territory was part of Iran until the 17th century. The British East India Company seized Oman and broke it away because it wanted to control the seaborne trade route to India, which was the key to British prosperity there. Iran wants to reverse this legacy of colonialism and to prevent the

financial and economic colonialism that has made the other OPEC states basically Western. That's why these countries have joined the United States in attacking Iran and trying to push through a United Nations resolution blaming Iran for the war—for defending itself.

So even if the immediate war with the United States is settled, that's going to lead to what looks like an Iranian conquest of the rest of the countries on the oil gulf. And there will be some sort of rapprochement or agreement. Saudi Arabia has tried to reach a modicum of an agreement with Iran, but its own national savings funds—and the funds of its wealthiest families—are all invested in the United States, largely in the information technology companies that have been investing in their own OPEC countries for what I've described: the data processing plants, and also just because they thought that by investing in the United States, that was supposed to provide them with military protection.

Well, what Iran has shown is that all of this is a fiction. The whole idea that Israel protected itself with the Iron Dome is gone. The idea that the United States is protecting the Arab OPEC countries from attack, takeover, or any threat to their way of doing things has been blown up. The United States is not the protector—it's the United States and its attempt to control the world's oil trade. Now that it's seized the oil of Venezuela, now that it's been able to isolate Russia's oil trade, it's gained the ability to create chaos in other countries that would be subject to U.S. oil sanctions if it so desired. Well, you've seen what the basic dynamic is. What the United States has done by its attack on Iran has led Iran to respond.

And essentially, it's now in the very position the United States had hoped to be in. U.S. policy has been so self-defeating that it's produced the exact opposite of its intended effect. That's what happens when you underestimate the fact that if you try to take over other countries, they'll fight back. Other countries aren't stupid, and they don't have a corrupt private-sector military-industrial complex making weapons that don't work. Their governments—like those of Russia and China—have actually created weapons that do work. And that's left the United States at least a decade behind in missile technology, air technology, and other military technologies it needs.

The United States was completely unprepared to really wage a war with Iran. But the neocons around Trump—who financed his political campaign and supported his appointment of a cabinet that's personally loyal to him and doesn't question him—have cut themselves off from any kind of realistic feedback to make a sound estimation of what the effects of this war would be. They've left out of account all the trade dynamics, the financial dynamics, the military dynamics at work. There's been a kind of tunnel vision in U.S. policy. And now you can see the genius of the Iranian strategists, who look at the big picture and understand what they have to do to defend themselves.

And there's no way they can attack the United States the way they've been able to attack Israel or the Arab OPEC countries. But they can stop the oil trade. Again, by controlling the Strait of Hormuz—or simply by bombing Hormuz and wiping out the oil and gas production of the OPEC countries—they can hold that threat over the rest of the world to show that you'd better bring pressure on the

United States and isolate it from attacking them. Because if they're going to be destroyed, their only defense is to destroy the OPEC economies, and that would destroy your economies as well. So an attack on them would be an attack on your economies, causing a depression, an economic collapse, financial collapse, unemployment, and all the things that happen in a great depression or financial winter.

#Nima

Michael, I think the situation right now with the Strait of Hormuz is that Iran, for such a long time after the revolution, was under U.S. sanctions. Basically, the whole West was imposing sanctions on Iran. And to this day, they're still under those sanctions. But under that regime, they couldn't sell their oil or trade freely through the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait was open to them, but the sanctions prevented their economy from flourishing. So this is the new strategy on Iran's part: if you hit us with sanctions, we'll hit you with the Strait of Hormuz. But how is that going to help Iran in the long run?

#Michael

Well, this was spelled out, I think, in Iran's response to Trump's actions yesterday. Iran listed the terms that it wanted, and one of the terms it insisted on was reparations for the attack that destroyed so much of its industry—its oil production, its refinery capacity. I don't have to go down the whole list—its schools, and so on. The fact is, how are you ever going to go through the court process of getting reparations? It would take a whole Nuremberg-type commission, and that would take years to enforce. So Iran has only one way of gaining restitution to rebuild its economy, and that's to impose a transit fee on traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, just as the Panama Canal charges a transit fee and the Suez Canal charges. Well, the U.S. said, "The Panama Canal cost money to dig."

You know, that's man-made. So was the Suez Canal. They're both man-made—but that was over a century ago. And it makes no difference whether it's man-made or not. We're not now repaying the investors in the Panama Canal Company or the Suez Canal Company. That's the legacy of colonialism. It was the United States that seized Panama and broke it away from Colombia. So Iran can say, well, as you say in America, possession is nine-tenths of the law. The canal is ours—take it or leave it. And Iran is in a position to enforce its control over the canal. There's nothing the United States can do. So when Trump says Iran must open the canal—the straits—Iran can say, well, we've been doing that all along.

Of course, they've been open. Ships have been going back and forth; they pay the tolls. If you pay the toll, we'll let you through. The difference is, so far, they've only been letting friendly countries through. They didn't want to let the countries that are attacking them—or their enemies—through

the strait. But now they've agreed, for two weeks, to let all the boats through, to let trade resume, so the world can say, "All right, look at the panic you were in, even if the stock market didn't show it. Look at the panic you were in when we closed the strait."

Now look at how good it can be. If trade resumes, we're going to let the Saudi ships, the Emirate ships—we're going to let everybody through. They'll pay the amount of money due. That two-million-dollar fee was only charged against the supertankers; lower fees will be charged for smaller tankers. There will be a graduated fee, like there is for the Panama Canal and other canals. This is all going to be done rationally, and countries and ships that sail up and back out of the straits will have to file papers—who owns them, where the oil is coming from, where it's going—and here's the money they're going to pay. And I gather it'll be in Chinese yuan, because Iran can't use dollars, since the United States has said, "We'll grab every dollar you have."

If you use dollars, we'll simply steal them from you. So the United States has prevented Iran, Russia, and other countries from using dollars. Of course, they're using the best currency they can find, and that's the Chinese currency—in the form of, I gather, Chinese bonds, which have outperformed the U.S. stock market and the U.S. bond market considerably so far this year. So all of that can be arranged. And Iran, by doing that, will be showing the rest of the world: which future do you want? Do you want a depression, or do you want a return to normalcy? This normalcy will never again be under U.S. control.

The United States must move all of its military bases out of the Middle East—or West Asia, as people are now quite correctly saying. I mean, in the middle of what? Of course, it's West Asia. It's not really part of the middle of Europe anymore; the European element is now being removed. Well, the question again is, what's going to happen to Israel, which is America's largest military base there? As I've heard American generals say—often, back in the 1960s—they looked at Israel as America's landed aircraft carrier in the Near East. What's going to happen to Israel?

Well, my guess is that Israel is going to continue to make mischief—not only refusing to stop its genocide in Lebanon, but also refusing to stop attacking Iran. Iran will respond by wiping out what's left of Israel. My expectation is that there's going to be an enormous emigration out of Israel. It will have lost its industrial capacity; its ports and import-export trade out of Haifa have largely been bombed. I think the destruction of Israel will be largely completed. And I think the Israelis seem to want to move to Lebanon. There's talk of their moving to Ukraine, of all places, or going back to their home countries from which they emigrated.

But obviously, that's going to be the wild card to be decided. And again, the fact that U.S. policy is all about pay-to-play—we don't know what the United States is going to do on that. That's the wild card. Only foreign countries can control the United States; it can't be controlled from within, given the political system the U.S. has and the Supreme Court's ruling that you're allowed to privatize the

election campaigns of politicians, senators, congressmen, and everyone else. There are no laws against bribery. Bribery essentially means you've privatized the political process—and it's one of bribery, to make a long story short.

#Nima

Michael, the war—the American, the U.S.–Israeli war on Iran—has brought something big to the surface: the difference between Europeans and Americans when it comes to the Middle East. The United States was used by Israel as a proxy in this war. I don't know if you accept that or agree with me, but this war is an American–Israeli war on Iran. Europe, however, has decided not to participate actively. They tried to defend Israel, using their air defense systems and everything to protect it, but when it came to the Strait of Hormuz, they decided not to go on the offensive with the attacks.

Then, you know, today, Michael—Israel is violating the ceasefire by attacking Lebanon. They hit a hundred targets in Lebanon; many were destroyed, and many people were killed in these attacks. Just moments ago, we learned that the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sanchez, said that today Netanyahu launched his harshest attack against Lebanon since the offensive began. His contempt for life and international law is intolerable. It's time to speak clearly: Lebanon must be included in the ceasefire. That's Pedro Sanchez, the Prime Minister of Spain, talking this way. The international community must condemn this new violation of international law.

The European Union must suspend its association agreements with Israel, and there must be no impunity for these criminal acts. You know, this is just something so direct, so obvious—the way he's talking about Israel, he's going against it. He knows who the enemy is, in my opinion, and that's why he's talking this way. Who's the enemy of peace? Not who's the enemy of Spain—who's the enemy of peace, which would be Israel in the Middle East. Your understanding of Europe and European policy—can we put all of them together, or do you see some sort of difference among European countries? You're taking that—here's the issue: how is international law going to be enforced? Remember Stalin's statement at the end of World War...

#Michael

I think at Yalta, when the Pope criticized Soviet policy, Stalin said, "Well, how many troops does the Vatican have? How many troops does the Pope have?" You could say that Trump has said, in effect, "How many troops does the United Nations have?" Trump has said, "We are immune from international law. We make our own law." That's why we in the United States have insisted on veto power over the laws and rules of any organization we join—from the United Nations to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. And the United States, by supporting and providing all the arms and financial aid to Israel, allows it to join the United States in being immune from international law. You treat Israel as a proxy of the United States, and in many ways it is.

But I think, as I mentioned before, on one occasion when I was traveling abroad—to Korea and Japan, around 1974 or '75—with Uzi Arad, who later became the head of Mossad and Netanyahu's main economic advisor, we were at an airport and a general came up to him, patted Uzi on the back, and said, "You're our land and aircraft carrier there." Uzi's shoulders hunched, and you could see how embarrassed he was. The Israelis have their own agency in this, and their own agency is so extreme—and has become so biblically based—that it's brought support from American Christian Zionists who say, yes, the Bible says that if we have a war, if Trump will only fight Iran, use atomic war, let Israel use atomic war, Jesus will come and save us all and send all the Jews to hell and the Christians to heaven.

But what the hell? Israel knows that's just craziness. But the fact is, Israel feels free to act on its own whenever it wishes, because the United States has given it the leeway to do whatever it wants. We saw that in Israel's attack on the USS Liberty—shooting the ship, killing American naval officers and crew—without any American response. So Israel does have its own ability to act independently, even at the cost of breaking things up, and without the United States really pushing back, because it's put all its hope in using the Israeli army as its client army, along with the Wahhabi, ISIS, Al-Qaeda head-shoppers in Syria. So what can you do? It's appalling how Britain and Germany have made it a crime to oppose the genocide in Gaza and the West Bank.

And Switzerland has moved against the soldier Baud, who was a great military commentator. You've seen Europe completely knuckle under to the United States—not only in supporting Israel, but in fueling race hatred against Arabs. And as far as Europe's concerned, all Islamics are Arabs, including Iranians. This is a defect that can only be cured by an election, but there's no European election in Britain, France, or Germany for the next few years. It looks like they're really unable to do anything as long as they remain dependent client countries of the United States, as if they were its colonies. So it's really up to countries outside Western Europe to bring enforcement procedures against the United States.

Well, obviously, they can't bring enforcement procedures by military means, because the United States would be back in a mutual assured destruction scenario—an atomic war—if they did that. The only way other countries can counter this alliance of Western Europe and the United States against Iran, and against any other country outside U.S. control over oil and global policy, is to create their own alternative set of institutions. That includes the United Nations and the international monetary system as such. A Russian diplomat earlier this week gave a wonderful speech, saying the United Nations will have a new Secretary-General appointed soon.

And this is an opportunity to change the whole United Nations, to remove the Western influence. The diplomat said he's appalled at some of the U.S. toadies and cronies saying, "Well, we want a Secretary-General who will continue the wonderful reforms of Guterres." And the Russians said, "We don't need Guterres; we need a return to the original principles of the United Nations." That can only be achieved either by reforming the UN to get rid of the Security Council—which enables the United

States to maintain control of the United Nations and the Atomic Energy Authority under it—or by some other means, because all of the UN institutions are under U.S. control.

We have to remove U.S. control. And the implication is that most United Nations member countries may need to withdraw and create their own institution. I think I mentioned on last week's show that Guterres said the United Nations is broke—by this July or August—and will have to abandon its New York headquarters. Well, if the United Nations is broke, again, the Russian diplomat who spoke said that Guterres has not pressed the United States to continue.

Under Guterres' leadership, the United States has been able to go year after year without paying its support to the United Nations and its agencies. That's what's driven it broke. So other countries can say, "Well, since we're financing it all anyway, let's create an institution that we're financing—and this time we're going to make changes. We're going to make it really do what the United Nations claimed to be setting out to do in its original charter: assuring the rule of international law and the rules of war, autonomy, self-reliance, and sovereignty for all countries as equals." But this time, they're presumably going to give it some authorization for military power.

What can be done is that the countries of Eurasia and the Global South can impose their own sanctions on U.S. owners, creditors, and investors in their countries, saying, "We are now isolating you until you join our organization under our rules." As long as you're threatening us with the power to control the international economy—through weaponizing world trade in oil, weaponizing agricultural trade, weaponizing tariff policy, and replacing the rule of law with your rules-based law—then we're going to do what communities throughout archaic times did. A lawbreaker was exiled from the community. There were cities of refuge. All of that's in the Bible, but it was practiced in other countries too. A lawbreaker had to be exiled from the community.

They were usually allowed back. When a new king or ruler took power, there was a general forgiveness if they agreed to behave once again. Well, something like exiling the United States and Western Europe until they agreed to a policy that did not threaten the rest of the world with either atomic warfare, military attack, or the economic equivalent of nuclear winter in the form of financial winter—that's the only way other countries can protect themselves. And so far, as I mentioned, they've been thinking about the unthinkable. Well, the show that Richard Wolff and I have been doing with you has been discussing this for over a year now. The rest of the world has not absorbed these ideas into the mainstream discussion—or even the academic discussion, to put it mildly.

#Nima

Michael, before wrapping up—one of the main problems right now with the ceasefire, as mentioned just moments ago by the head of the Iranian parliament—is that they're saying without considering the case of Lebanon or the case of Gaza, there can be no peace. There's no solution for the war that's been happening between Iran and the United States. So you have to find some sort of understanding of the whole region. It's not just about Iran and the United States; it's about the

whole region altogether. Is Donald Trump capable of making that sort of agreement? Or are we heading toward something like what we had with the Minsk II agreement? You remember Minsk II—the guarantors were Germany and France, and Russia was one of the signatories to that agreement between the eastern Ukrainian ethnic Russians and the Ukrainians. Are we going to have the same sort of, you know, fake agreement?

#Michael

Well, the big question is, what is the United States going to do? I think Iran has calculated that it seems unlikely Donald Trump would renew his threat to blow up every bridge and every electric utility in Iran—to bomb it back to the dark ages—just because Israel says, “We want to kill all of the Shiites in Lebanon.” Iran figures, well, we can do what we want as long as we’re pointing out that it’s Israel violating the terms of the truce. And if the United States can’t enforce it, who else in the region could? The only country with an army strong enough to do that would be a country like Turkey. So, what’s Turkey’s role in this? What’s India’s role? They’re powerful countries in the region, but they’ve been trying to play both sides at once.

Turkey’s trying to be part of NATO, and it’s trying to be part of BRICS. Same thing with India, where Modi has just returned from Israel, doing everything but converting to Judaism in his praise for it. So I don’t think they can really be trusted as honest brokers. And China and Russia are too far away. Russia would certainly be a logical choice, but then that would leave it open to America saying, “Well, if you just double-cross Iran, we’ll let you do whatever you want with Ukraine,” to which Russia would say, “Well, we’ll do whatever we want with Ukraine in any case.” Then the U.S. could say, “Well, you can do whatever you want with Europe,” and Russia could reply, “We’ll do whatever we want with Europe in any case.” What would Putin do? We don’t know. But how would you find a guarantor?

#Michael

That is immune from U.S. diplomatic threats. Remember when the United Nations reporter found Netanyahu guilty of genocide? All of her bank accounts were closed, and she was blocked from traveling anywhere. And when Iran tried to negotiate with the United States, twice its negotiators were killed. So how are you going to find an arbitrator or negotiator? The international court judges have all found themselves under attack—their bank accounts closed, their movements restricted. How are you going to protect against this without... It has to be a larger alliance than just two countries. It has to be a group alliance of nations that have the capacity to economically and financially isolate the U.S. economy—the U.S. dollar, U.S. foreign investors in raw materials, U.S. bankers, and bondholders. All of these would have to fall subject to the same kind of sanctions that are now used against others. That’s the scale on which any regulation would have to occur.

#Nima

Yeah. Thank you, Michael. Thank you so much for being with us today, as always.

#Michael

I think the last two days have been the biggest turning point in the direction the world is moving.
Yeah, exactly.