

Iran STRIKES Oil Tanker, Re-Blocks Hormuz – Trump HUMILIATED | Patrick Henningsen

Patrick Henningsen discusses Trump's audacious announcement that Iran has reopened the Strait of Hormuz fully, and breaks down Tehran's retaliation against ceasefire violations both in Lebanon and in the US blockade via game changing moves that tell the world just who is in control. The US and Iran are at the precipice of war, and Patrick helps Danny Haiphong give you the analysis and news the Western mainstream media won't PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #Hormuz #trump

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. I'm in Hangzhou, China, and I'm going through some crazy VPN issues. So if I disconnect, Patrick's going to take over, and then I'll come back a different way. But hit the Like button, everybody — that helps keep the show going. And I just want to say thanks to Patrick. Thank you for coming back on the show.

#Patrick Henningsen

It's great to be with you again. Great to be with you, Danny.

#Danny

Yeah, well, let's get started. So, the latest updates — a lot of people, Patrick, were very disappointed when they heard that Iran was reopening the Strait of Hormuz in light of the ceasefire in Lebanon. Well, the ceasefire in Lebanon is essentially not a ceasefire, because Israel is continuing to strike Lebanon and target civilians, especially in the south. But more importantly, or additionally to this, we now know that Iran has not reopened the Strait of Hormuz, because it was never really closed. They have now retaliated very strongly against Donald Trump, especially with the continuation of the blockade. They've been sending messages to all ships in the Strait of Hormuz, saying, "Attention," to all of them.

Regarding the failure of the U.S. government to fulfill its commitments in the negotiations, Iran has declared the Strait of Hormuz completely closed again. No vessel of any type or nationality is allowed to pass through it. And according to Reuters and other media reports, a tanker has now been struck — an Indian tanker — about 20 nautical miles off the northeast coast of Oman. So, Patrick, it seems like things are falling apart with the Trump administration's push to—well, I'll let you answer this—

whatever he's trying to do with Iran. It really seems like things are falling apart. Talks have also been rejected by Iran, so we're kind of back at square one here again. What are your thoughts on what's been going on with these latest developments? Yeah.

#Patrick Henningsen

It's really hard to keep track of it. If you're watching the U.S. media, if you're watching Donald Trump's Truth Social account and trying to follow these events through those platforms, it's going to be very confusing. And I think... I think the way I approach this, Danny, is that I don't trust anything the Trump administration says about anything. If they claim they've had a phone call and that somehow we're back on the right track again, negotiations are back on, we've got a deal in the making, the straits are open, or whatever — there's a ceasefire — I just don't believe it.

So the Iranians are now, I think, in that Reagan-esque "trust but verify" position, because they're really dealing with an unstable actor. The current regime in Washington is completely erratic, completely unstable from a foreign policy—or at least public communications—point of view, totally incoherent. And you really have to look at the cause of this. It's so funny that the U.S. press and politicians are so busy following the president's statements and not asking the fundamental question: what are the official channels of communication with the United States government? I mean, everything can't be funneled through one person, at least in a constitutional republic.

Far be it from me to point that out. The United States is not a dictatorship. It's not a monarchy. It's a constitutional republic. We have checks and balances, we have due process, and we have established lines of communication through which the government can speak to its own people as well as to the world, the business community, and the media. So what are the official communication channels? Is it the State Department? Is it Mike Pompeo, the Secretary of State? Is it the White House press secretary? Is it Donald Trump's Truth Social platform, a website owned by Trump? Like, what is it? And that's the basis of the problem.

And so Iran, I believe, has already priced this in. Iran is basically where Russia was probably two years ago—or at least a year and a half ago, when Trump came into office—realizing that there's going to be no serious negotiations with the United States because they're not even sending their top diplomats. So, you know, they've priced that in. They're making preparations. I think Iran's under no illusion that the United States isn't going to suddenly attack them or use this impasse as a cover for a sneak attack or the next wave of violence and aggression. I think the Iranians are well aware of this.

And so they've priced this in. They're still kind of going through the motions. But even if they wanted to play ball with the United States, how do you do that? Donald Trump's made some fundamental claims about what Iran has promised—like that Iran's going to give up all enriched uranium. Where did that come from? It certainly didn't come from the Iranians. Then he said Israel had stopped bombing Lebanon because he told them to. That's what Trump put out on his Twitter account. Of

course, that wasn't true. Israel broke this so-called ceasefire immediately. And now what Israel's done is a bypass—Israel's detonated.

They're detonating. They're rigging infrastructure in Lebanon with explosives in buildings and then just detonating them en masse. And they're saying, well, that's not a violation of the ceasefire, according to Israel, because they're not firing artillery. Okay. I swear. This is where we're at. So there's that. Or the straits are now open thanks to the great gravitas of the United States—make America great again. That's not true either. None of these things are true. So this is the problem. I think, from this point of view, it looks like Trump is doing what Israel—this is a standard Israeli negotiation tactic.

And they've done this since time immemorial—through Oslo, through all the different negotiations, through Gaza, and so on, and also with the Iran deal. What Israel would always do is basically make claims publicly, or obfuscate the conversation publicly, or try to insert caveats even if they weren't there. Then they could turn around and blame the other side for rejecting a perfectly good deal, and then resume hostilities. That's what Israel is really good at. They have many, many decades of experience perfecting this technique.

And I think, like so many things, it's hard to distinguish. I noticed this about a month ago—that the United States is adopting Israeli maxims, Israeli tactics, in terms of their communication and how they conduct their military affairs and policies. And Donald Trump has adopted this Israeli fake negotiation tactic, where you're not really negotiating; you're just creating a kind of show. Then you do straw man arguments, like, for instance, "Iran can't be allowed to have a nuclear weapon." That's a straw man argument. It's based on a fabricated premise. And they even projected this onto the Pope. Donald Trump had the temerity to project onto Pope Leo that Pope Leo said Iran can have a nuclear weapon.

He didn't. There's no shame with this White House. I mean, they'll do anything to project, to deflect, to obfuscate—and that's what you're seeing now. I think they're trying to set Iran up for an Israeli-style rug pull, where they'll accuse Iran of somehow wrecking the ceasefire or wrecking the deal. They tried this during the Islamabad negotiations. They tried to run the Strait of Hormuz with two U. S. destroyers, their transponders off. I believe they were probably trying to draw fire from Iranian boats. Then they could turn around in Islamabad and say, "Look, we came here in good faith, J.D. Vance. They just don't want to negotiate." And he even did that.

He said that, oh, we pulled out of Islamabad because it became clear to the Trump administration that they didn't have any decision-makers there, that they didn't have the authority to negotiate or make any decisions. So we packed up and left. The reality is, he's describing himself—J.D. Vance. He's describing the U.S. team. They're on the phone constantly with Trump or getting direct orders from Netanyahu. They had no agency whatsoever. Like so many things with this Trump

administration and with Israel, every accusation is a confession. It just sounds like a trope at this point, but it still rings so true. And you can apply it to pretty much every statement now by the U.S. government and by the Israelis, including what's going on right now.

#Danny

Yeah, those are great points, Patrick. And I'll just read some of what's happened in the last 24 hours or so since Donald Trump made all these grand announcements. I mean, Donald Trump, in many respects, Patrick, is seemingly always speaking in public on Truth Social about Iran, in order to, of course, achieve what seem to be very contradictory objectives—or contradictory notions—about this war. But here's what he said, here's what's been happening: Iran has now turned back 20 vessels attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz, just in the last 24 hours. And the U.S. blockade is still happening, and they've turned back about 20 vessels. So there's a lot of activity going on.

There's a really incredible video going around on X. I wish I could show it to you all, but it shows the Strait of Hormuz activity—ships sailing through, and then suddenly turning around because, obviously, they're getting the message from Iran that this is just not going to happen as long as the U.S. doesn't abide by very basic commitments. One of those is already in motion, like in Lebanon, which is just an absolute catastrophe. But also, this blockade—I'm wondering what your thoughts are on this, on what's driving this part of it, Patrick—because it seems like Donald Trump and the U.S. really want the Strait of Hormuz to have more activity through it. Yet at the same time, they're instituting this really ridiculous blockade now. We're almost a week into it, and Iran has responded and retaliated in kind.

#Patrick Henningsen

Well, that's an interesting question, Danny. Does the U.S. actually want the Strait of Hormuz open and free-flowing? I'm not convinced they do. If they really did, they probably would have come to some accommodation with the Iranians a long time ago, because technically the strait's never been closed. It's only been closed to certain ships from certain countries—namely, those that have been colluding with or facilitating U.S. attacks on Iranian soil. So, in terms of shipments to China and other countries like that, there's no restriction. They're doing business with Iran and so forth. Now, the other question is, is this legal from an international law point of view? This falls within a gray area during a time of war. So we have two default positions.

The first default position is: whose territorial waters are we talking about? We're talking about the Islamic Republic of Iran, and we're talking about the Gulf of Oman in relation to the Strait of Hormuz itself. Now, what's the context here? This is not a normal situation. Iran was attacked by the United States in an undeclared war of aggression. They've also been attacked by Israel in a coordinated fashion. So it's a conspiracy between two governments—the Israelis and the Americans—who

conspired to launch an undeclared war of aggression against a UN member state, a sovereign state, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Under international law, this has to be resolved. Precedent says there has to be some kind of accord or treaty to end this war.

Until that happens, Iran is well within its rights to exercise control over things within its territorial waters and over what it deems a direct threat to its national security. So this could go on indefinitely, Danny, in this sort of frozen state of war. And that's why the U.S. is dragging its heels and doesn't want to negotiate, because in a certain way this situation suits the U.S. and Israel—to maintain a constant war footing and not come to an agreement. I said this before the straits were closed: it's more likely the United States is trying to buy time to reload, rearm, and then launch the next wave of aggression against Iran.

And if you look at the U.S.—not what Trump is saying, but what the U.S. is doing—the U.S. is moving military assets further into the region, and they're making threats to Iran. And then the other thing, Danny, is that if they really wanted to come to some kind of deal with Iran, they wouldn't be putting new sanctions on Iran, which is exactly what the U.S. is doing this week. Scott Bennett said putting more economic sanctions on Iran is an act of war. And then blockading Iranian ports—that's an act of war under international law, which the U.S. is doing or attempting to do as we speak. So this kind of doublespeak—saying, "Oh, we want peace, we want a deal," while during negotiations trying to basically sabotage them last week with that stunt by the U.S. Navy—is just blatant.

And what they're doing now is basically preventing any chance of real negotiations in good faith. The United States is not a good-faith actor. This administration does not negotiate in good faith. It enters negotiations with the intention of either doing the opposite of what it promises, hijacking them, or using its partner, Israel, to attack the counterparty during negotiations. All of these things the United States has already done. Why in the world would you ever trust them? They're not capable of coming to any agreement—they're agreement-incapable, the United States. That's the number one problem. The second problem is they're never going to be able to restrain Israel—and they don't want to restrain Israel. There's nobody in the White House who's interested in ever restraining Israel.

So far as they get a ceasefire with Lebanon, that's not even a real ceasefire, because the party they should be negotiating with is Hezbollah, not the Lebanese government or the Lebanese army, who aren't even involved—who don't even engage with the invading, occupying Israeli forces at all. The only people defending Lebanon are Hezbollah in the south, because the Lebanese army isn't, since the Lebanese president and the prime minister, Aoun and Nawaf Salam, are under the direct control of Washington and Tel Aviv. They're effectively U.S.-Israeli puppets, acting on behalf of the United States and Israel.

And then they're going to Washington, against Lebanese law, and doing direct negotiations with the country that's slaughtering their own citizens during a war—and this is worse than a war. These are the worst Israeli atrocities they've ever inflicted on Lebanon. And the reaction of this puppet government in Beirut, shamefully, is to go along with the charade stage-managed by the Trump

administration. Meanwhile, Trump's special envoy, Tom Barrack, has been working hell for leather to foment a civil war in Lebanon by trying to get the Lebanese government to disarm Hezbollah by force. That will lead to a civil war—that's exactly what the U.S. and Israel want. So that's what's going on with Lebanon. Okay, that's a front Israel is prosecuting aggressively right now.

And I'm telling you, Danny, probably within the next six months you'll see a case filed at the ICJ—a second genocide case against Israel for the attempted genocide and ethnic cleansing in South Lebanon. So that's two genocide cases. The United States is propping up and defending Israel, a regime that's carrying out two simultaneous genocides. And then we're supposed to say, what, Hezbollah are terrorists? Seriously? Or Hamas is a terrorist threat? Are we serious here? I mean, I think the world is starting to see what a farce all these labels actually are, and how these fake, phony labels mean that basically anyone who fights back against Israeli occupation is labeled a terrorist—including the IRGC. And now people are seeing how ridiculous that is.

That's what undergirds all of our policies—all the flimsy justifications for these wars and the war crimes the U.S. and Israel are committing. They're all propped up by these phony terrorism labels imposed by Israel, the U.S., Brussels, the U.K., France, and Germany. That's it. That's the long and the short of it. The rest of the world doesn't see it that way. And by the way, under international law, the people in South Lebanon have the right to an armed liberation struggle—they have the right under international law to resist an illegal occupier.

And that's exactly what they're doing in South Lebanon. The same with the Palestinians. Right. And the same with the Iranians, for that matter. So, you know, this is just an incredible web of lies that's been constructed in the West. And the last thing I'll say—one of the accusations that the President of the United States was flinging at Pope Leo was that Pope Leo wouldn't do anything about the 45,000 protesters supposedly slaughtered by the mullahs. It's a total fabrication—120% a lie, completely made up. Those numbers come from U.S.-based fake Iranian human rights NGOs funded by the State Department, and probably cutouts of the CIA, one of them based near Langley, Virginia. So, I mean, at some point, the media just don't do any due diligence on any of these claims.

The president repeats it. Sean Hannity repeats it. Half the people in America—just like half of Americans who believe the Russians installed Donald Trump as president in 2016—believe this fake claim that Iran slaughtered 30,000, or 50, or 45, whatever the number is. These are completely fabricated, 100% fake claims. I was on the ground after those protests in Tehran, and I saw firsthand a lot of the available evidence. I can say categorically those claims are completely made up and used as justification for the war that the United States and Israel wanted, in order to sway public opinion to support an illegal war of aggression. That's the only reason for that propaganda campaign—it was an attempted regime change.

The United States, Israeli intelligence, and Donald Trump himself admitted to flooding activists in Iran with weapons. He publicly, accidentally, was bragging about it. But he's also undermined his own fake narrative—along with admissions by, I don't know how many, Israeli and U.S. intelligence

officials—that they had agents and agent provocateurs on the ground directing hostilities during these so-called democratic protests in January. It's just unbelievable that people are still running with this. But that propaganda is actually the whole basis of the kind of moral legitimacy—the thin veil of moral legitimacy—that the U.S. and Israel are trying to use to justify somehow attacking the Iranians.

And they just add the nuclear straw man argument—that Iran is developing a nuclear weapon or can't be allowed to have one—when they're not developing a nuclear weapon. So it's all lies, one after another. It's so easy to knock down all these lies. It's easy for me to do it, for you to do it, for half of your guests who come on these podcasts, Danny. We can all knock these lies down. But somehow these lies stand as almost religious totems. In the Western mainstream media and among Western politicians, they lean on these lies. They use them to build all their arguments and policies. There are costs attached to these lies, and that's one thing I'm going to keep pressing until we obliterate all these various pillars of their illegal war.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. I mean, at a certain point, for the United States—it's the empire, the Trump administration now at the helm—it becomes almost like this continuous process of self-humiliation leading to more aggression, leading to this cycle of, you know, the cycle of war. And that only leads to, um, of course, catastrophic consequences for civilians and ordinary people who are just trying to live their lives, make a living, and, you know, have some kind of livelihood. But then, for the empire, it seems that everything the U.S. is doing now just comes back manyfold in more and more disasters. Like we have Trump, for example, on Air Force One.

And he said, well, you know, it seems like these talks are probably not going to go anywhere and we'll have to start bombing again. Yeah. But it was the U.S. bombing Iran that led to Iran's response, which led to what's going on now in the Strait of Hormuz—causing massive, irreparable damage to the global economy, to the energy markets, and, of course, to U.S. hegemony, influence, and prestige. And we can go on and on. But there are consequences, as you said, Patrick. Maybe you can get into exactly what you see as those consequences, and how comments like Trump saying, "Well, we're just going to restart bombing again,"—how do you react to that, given that if made real, those comments and the actions behind them have consequences? So, your thoughts.

#Patrick Henningsen

I think it's just becoming more of a shambles, really. And I think we've been conditioned to accept that there's a certain level of shambles with everything the Trump administration does—that Donald Trump himself does or says—that it's mostly going to be a shambles in some way. But I think there are even limits to this. And this is the level of BS that's just been pushed over and over, and where

so many failures happen here. One of the other big failures is the fact that they had one of the most disastrous special forces raids in U.S. history, presided over by our, you know, great Secretary of War—this sort of unhinged Pete Hegseth, the self-styled Secretary of War.

It was his Jimmy Carter moment. That was Donald Trump's Jimmy Carter moment. And this is what led to Trump's outburst about annihilating Iranian civilization. It was a direct result of the fact that this was the worst botched U.S. special forces operation probably in history. And the media completely glossed it over, and in the interest of national security, they collectively decided not to report on it. They reported on the briefing, but not the actual failed operation. So that's just one example. The other thing is—did you notice there's a new term that suddenly got coined? And I pay attention to the details on this. It's called "nuclear dust."

Nobody had ever heard of this term before, and suddenly the president says it—and then, almost as if by magic, you start hearing J.D. Vance repeat it. He even says, "As the president says, nuclear dust." And then the media starts saying "nuclear dust," and then U.S. officials are saying "nuclear dust." Why on earth would they adopt a term like this that didn't exist before Donald Trump said it three weeks ago, on, I believe, a Fox News segment? Nuclear dust. What on earth is he talking about? And you go back and listen to the clip, Danny—the original clip, when Trump invented this term—the context in which he invented it is damning. It's damning.

He's basically bragging about U.S. B-2 bombers attacking Iran's civilian nuclear power plants, creating "nuclear dust." And they quickly went into emergency management mode to try to give the impression that he was talking about enriched uranium. I'm sorry, but that's not the case. He said "nuclear dust," and Trump doubled down on it, saying "the nuclear dust that our great B-2, our beautiful B-2 bombers created." That's what he said just recently. So he's having to run with this term to cover up what looks like a kind of gloating about nuclear terrorism by the United States—almost bragging about spreading contaminated radioactive dust. That's the way I read it when he originally made the statement.

And I just find it very suspicious that somehow this term got adopted. They didn't bury it—they had to basically co-opt the term, then sort of ease it out and start using it to legitimize it. I pay attention to these things because I study propaganda, so that really was a big red flag. It shows you the level of corruption we have in Washington—institutional corruption. The media is also part of this corrupt ecosystem because they're covering for the president. Instead of one conscientious journalist among all those major media outlets going after him and saying, "What exactly do you mean, B-2 bombers creating nuclear dust? Did our B-2 bombers create enriched uranium, or what is he actually talking about?"

This is the President of the United States. It's not just some guy on the corner. It's not Lindsey Graham. It's the President of the United States. So there should be some clarification about what he's talking about here. Personally, I think he's alluding to a huge crime against humanity. The United States is guilty of nuclear terrorism, as are the Israelis. And that's reason enough to shut this

down—shut this war down, shut this government down, shut Donald Trump down. I mean, if we had a system that was actually worth its weight as a real republic, we would be shutting this down now. Trump would be getting shut down now. This has gone way, way beyond the point of general risk.

Now we're in a really dangerous period, where you have somebody who's just all over the place—attacking everybody, attacking his allies, threatening his allies, threatening the Pope, threatening everybody. And who knows what comes next? If we can't depend on our own government to make a truthful statement through official channels, then, you know—and we're Americans—what are the Russians thinking? What are the Chinese thinking? Nobody's going to regard anything this president says as reliable. They're just going to let the wheels spin. The United States is going to go deeper and deeper into the mud on this. So, I mean, I'm looking at all these things, adding them up, and seeing Pete Hegseth almost threatening the Iranians yesterday, or two days ago, saying this is not a fair fight.

“We're going to crush you. We're just waiting to get the green light, basically.” And that's how you're going to run negotiations? Yeah, I don't know. He's also attacked all of his former supporters. He just called Joe Kent a loser and a sleazebag on Truth Social. I mean, this is a decorated Special Forces veteran who served honorably in his own administration. And then, just because this person resigns for good reason as a whistleblower, he gets attacked. That should send a message to other people who are currently supporting the president—that you too will be thrown under the bus and insulted if you somehow disagree with this administration. That really says a lot about this White House, the culture in it and around it, and the types of people who are still there supporting the president.

And allowing this to happen—allowing the office to be degraded, the reputation of the office. And then, you know, some of us who are critics of the president, Danny, his supporters will say that we're not respecting the president by calling him an idiot or whatever. I mean, what do you call Donald Trump at this point? He's not showing any respect to the American public. He's disrespected the office of the presidency. He's insulted, slandered, and libeled just about everybody within his blast radius. So what are we supposed to do then—say, “Yes, Mr. President, yes, Your Honor”? That kind of sucking up and bowing at that point is ridiculous.

If you act like an idiot and a total buffoon, then don't be surprised if people address you as such. Because if you don't show respect as president—to your own people, your own government, or even those within your administration—how do you expect anyone to respect you? I think world leaders are looking at this and thinking, “The United States is in real trouble here politically. The U.S. is in real trouble. The U.S. is a risky investment going forward, at least for now, with this administration.” I can't imagine what they're thinking in Moscow or China, just watching this meltdown take place—or, you know, a whole host of other countries. So yeah, yeah, well, you know...

#Danny

I'm here in China now, and the mood is very similar to what it's been like for many years—under Biden, under Trump before that. You know, come what may, there's been, of course, for China in particular, a continuing U.S. policy. It really hasn't changed at all. But the focus is different. The focus is now on Iran. The U.S. is totally entangled and is actually trying to make what's going on—what they're doing to Iran, the aggression, the blockade—all about China. But really, most people see it, especially those who do the kind of thought work here—thought leaders, experts, academics, people who are, you know, the writers or communicators of what the government thinks and says and does.

This kind of thing helps China a lot because it isolates any force that might think, "Maybe it's a good idea to partner with the United States. Maybe going the United States' way of living, organizing politically, policy-wise—all of it—maybe that's a good idea." I don't know. Maybe 20 or 30 years ago, there were more people, especially in these upper-echelon institutions, who thought like that. Now there's really nobody who thinks that way, whether it's the general public or people who work within institutions—government, academic, anywhere. So that's only continuing. But with the Iran situation, Patrick, what does it say now that we're in this—I feel like the Trump administration has zero options that amount to anything except really escalation or just surrender.

Either you stop or you go again. And that's really where Trump and his team have put themselves. Everything that's going on with the Strait of Hormuz, everything he's saying about Lebanon, everything he and his administration are doing really only leads to outcomes we've already seen before. And this is really—I don't remember, Patrick, do you remember a war the U.S. has waged directly like this, where so quickly this outcome has come about, or this scenario has come about, and there's really no possibility for an exit ramp unless the way these warmongers are thinking suddenly changes?

Or, as you said, we'd need popular pressure and a government that actually responds to it. But no, we don't have that. So we're depending on some kind of "aha" moment, and it doesn't seem to be coming. That leads me to ask you, Patrick—so what now? How do you see this? This is a very surprising moment in history, I think, in terms of how quickly we're seeing this war turn into—I can't even call it a quagmire. We have pretty specific outcomes right in front of us; it's just a matter of how the actors go about them. So, your thoughts?

#Patrick Henningsen

Well, I haven't seen it happen this quickly, but we have seen elements of this in the past. So we can look at those and try to figure out what the motivation was behind them. I've been saying for quite a few years that if you look at the Iraq War, it was never about taking the oil. In fact, the net result of the Iraq War was that oil production went down in Iraq, so there was less oil on the global market as a result. And, you know, I knew people who were in the oil trading game through various exchanges, including London, and it was very clear in the late 2000s that the word was being put around by the U.S. and its allies not to buy oil from the Iraqi state oil company.

So they kind of froze them out of global trade for a while, and they had to gradually work their way back in. There were political caveats attached to that and all sorts of things. The same with oil—the sanctions on Venezuela. I mean, that's taken a lot, including seizing the Venezuelan state oil company, Citgo, and its assets in the United States. All of that happened under the first Trump administration. I look at all these different examples, and more often than not, people say the trope is, "Well, the Iraq War was the U.S. all about oil." The assumption is taking the oil. And Trump says, "Take the oil." But he's a bit deceptive in that sense.

More often than not, U.S. actions are about taking oil off the market, not putting it on the market. That includes sanctions as well. So who would be the beneficiary if you have the world reserve currency—everything denominated in dollars, bought and sold in dollars—and control over SWIFT and the U.S. dollar payment rails? The U.S. is the beneficiary. Who benefits from the United States' operations? The U.S. carried out a covert operation during the NATO Baltops 22 drill in the summer of 2022. What they did was prepare the Nord Stream pipelines for detonation, and then those pipelines were detonated in September during the subsequent NATO drill. What was the net result of that?

I say that confidently because we've done the work, which we published at 21st Century Wire. You can look at it on our website right now—it's still pinned at the top of our feature section, the NATO Lake feature. The net result of that was taking Russian oil off the European market and replacing it with American natural gas and oil. The Ukraine war, the Nord Stream sabotage, has led to a U.S. monopoly over the European market. So, what's the net result of the Ukraine war so far? No peace negotiations, no serious talks by the Trump administration. The U.S. was never serious about negotiating an end to the Ukraine conflict. If they were, they wouldn't have sent a couple of shady agents—you know, shysters from Long Island—to go and LARP as diplomats.

I'm talking about Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner. They were sent to Russia to make sure nothing happens—the same reason they were sent to Islamabad, to make sure nothing happens. Meanwhile, the United States and Israel have very conveniently engineered situations in the Middle East, but the U.S. even more so in Ukraine and Venezuela, where the United States is directing or creating a kind of global monopoly—or at least steering the balance of power in the global energy markets. And they'll profit off the spike in prices, with their competition taken off the market. Do they really care about the Gulf?

The United States, I believe, has made a value judgment that they can withstand a drop in Gulf oil being denominated in U.S. dollars—or bought and sold in U.S. dollars—which creates artificial demand for the dollar, the so-called petrodollar system. They've made this kind of hedge, thinking they can afford a decline in that trade and somehow make up the difference through financialization, quantitative easing, and by dominating the energy markets and creating demand for U.S. products. A British journalist, Richard Medhurst, did a very good short documentary on this, showing that the U.S. has replaced the Persian Gulf petrodollar basin with a new European gas and oil dollar basin.

And if you look at the net results of all this—allowing Ukraine to take out Russian refineries and export capabilities, just like they're allowing Israel to take out Gulf and Iranian petro-gas and oil facilities—the outcome is very clear. This is sabotage, subterfuge, demolition, and piracy. This is what the United States government has been doing, not just under Trump but under Biden as well. This has been their policy. So, Trump, then Biden, and then Trump again—this is basically what the United States is doing. It doesn't have the ability to build a future for the world, and it sees the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative as something that needs to be disrupted and sabotaged.

And that's basically it—the U.S. is acting like a pirate. The British and the Americans are notorious pirates anyway, and they've adopted this as their new sort of *raison d'état*, if you will. They don't build anything; they've got nothing to offer the world except to destroy and disrupt what other countries, coming up through the BRICS networks and so forth, are building. That's the priority in Washington: how do we stop this? How do we stop China, because they regard it as a peer competitor, and Russia too. They don't want them to have any sway over European geopolitics. So they're going to disrupt them and then blame it on somebody else. This is not sustainable.

It's not sustainable. The U.S. can do this, and in doing so, I'd predict they could delay the demise of the U.S. empire maybe by 10 or 20 years, but it's still going down—for the simple reason that the whole premise of it is based on a world that only existed in the 19th century, where there was no China, no India, no Brazil, no Russian Federation. So they're working on an old Anglo-American operating system—that's like the equivalent of MS-DOS, geopolitically speaking. And it's run by a bunch of boomers who are about as relevant as Bill Gates in terms of modern society, culture, and how they relate to people in the world.

That's what you're dealing with there. And there's a lot of money tied up in this, and they're not going to give up. So it's going to be painful, Danny. I'm afraid to say they're not going to give up. The U.S., Israel, the British—they're locked into this mode, and they're not going to give up. They believe they have the technology, through drones and AI, to win this technological war of attrition against Russia, China, Iran, and others they consider enemies or competitors. That's the mode of thinking at the moment. Now, that could change, Danny. That could change. Political reality could set in. Economic reality could set in. But at the moment, I listen to the speeches of people at RUSI in the United States and U.S. think tanks.

And the Israelis, and all the big AI companies that are being steered from the inside by Israeli intelligence and U.S. intelligence—it does seem pretty clear they have a sort of worldview right now that's quite caustic. So, you know, how successful they're going to be in their endeavors, we'll see. And what's the cost going to be? This type of technological warfare is automatically pushing toward a very harsh response. Russia made some statements this week that they're regarding all of the drone manufacturers spread around Europe. The Europeans have created a whole network of arms manufacturing to feed Ukraine in order to attack Russia. So basically, this is Ukraine's strategic career that's been constructed and then diffused throughout Europe, with the United Kingdom and other European countries creating components and hosting joint ventures with Ukrainian companies.

Russia is saying—and then allowing their airspace to be used, in the case of the Baltic states and Finland—allowing their airspace to be used for Ukraine's drones to attack Russian refineries and export facilities. Okay, that can go on for a little while, but would Russia be within its rights to send Kinzhal missiles and Iskanders to hit those factories? They can do that, and they may do that. And if they do, what's going to be the Western response? Are they going to cry like victims? "Oh my God, look what Putin has done now. Look at what Putin has done now. He really is just hell-bent on dominating us Europeans." I mean, it'll just be like the next chapter of this insane vaudeville act we've had to suffer through for the last four or ten years. So we'll see. Yeah.

#Danny

Those are all great points. I'm glad you brought up Richard Medhurst. He's a great journalist and a friend. He made that film, and I've been hearing his arguments for a while—actually even before the film you mentioned. I think they're really important because, as you said, it's pretty clear that the sabotage, or what we're seeing with the oil markets, is not simply Iranian retaliation. Iran definitely had a very coordinated and concerted strategy to take advantage of the vulnerabilities of the Gulf states and U.S. assets in the region. But it was a very strategic one, very deliberate.

It was very escalatory in the sense that it wasn't meant to wipe out the energy markets in one fell swoop—not at all, actually. It was meant to create pressure. I think we're back. Uh, they try to blame Iran—the Gulf states, whether it's the UAE or Saudi Arabia—they blame Iran for attacks that have no real known origin, likely Israeli drones. And so, yeah, the question is why do this? But it seems obvious why; you outlined it there. Then there's the other side of it, like, okay, is this effective? It's effective at making money, it's effective at manipulating energy markets, and even, hell, maybe you could call it seizing control of them for the time being.

But I think your point about the outmodedness of this, as well as the broader consequences—the fact that what makes one appear stronger could actually make one weaker in the medium term, long term, or even the short term, given how quickly things are changing—is really important. So I think all of these are great points, Patrick. We're heading into the last ten or so minutes here. What are your thoughts on where things are going? And could you elaborate on how trying to seize and manipulate energy markets in this way, through this particular war, could go wrong? I think it might be important for people to hear that in detail.

#Patrick Henningsen

Yeah, yeah. I mean, the first thing is, there are just some fundamentals about history and empires that you need to observe and take on board. I put a video up on my Substack last night kind of explaining this—that if you study late-stage empire, one of the key characteristics is that a country will start expanding the definition of what constitutes an enemy of the empire. And then a lot of former allies become enemies, or frenemies, or just all-out adversaries. That's a characteristic of late-

stage empire. So it's not just attacking your enemies or pure competitors, but also attacking your allies. The United States has done this really comprehensively under Trump—through the tariff wars especially, the threats, undermining NATO, pulling out of NATO—so it's ticking all the boxes historically for a bona fide collapse of an empire. This is what happens. And it doesn't necessarily need to be Trump, but Trump has accelerated it.

He's the guy who's going to deliver the collapse of the U.S. empire for the globalists he supposedly campaigned against. And the other thing is the Israeli question— a lot of this is accelerating because Israel has operational control over much of U.S. foreign policy. That's why the flashpoint is going to be the Persian Gulf at the moment, uh... and it has to do with the shared destiny—or the shared fate, I would say—of the Israeli project in the region. So those are two fundamentals that are kind of irrefutable, really, if you look at history. That's exactly where things are headed. So this can go wrong—this piracy, sabotage, foreign-policy-wrecking approach—it has a short lifespan.

And the biggest risk in the United States, of course, is the internal political situation and the internal economic situation. They can do a lot of things to stave that off, to delay it—quantitative easing, stimulus checks, trying to buy off the population with these sort of paltry little things, you know, band-aid checks that you receive in the post. "Oh my God, Trump sent me \$1,500 or \$1,776," whatever. These kinds of gimmicks, like they did during COVID and so forth, might seem like a short-term win, but all they do is kick the can down the road and create a cycle of hyperinflation. I think inflating is the only thing the U.S. really has left at the moment.

You have to realize that when Donald Trump came in, the whole thing about Elon Musk and Doge was really important because it gave the fake impression that Trump wanted accountability in government spending—reducing the federal deficit and avoiding total bankruptcy, total Chapter 11, for the U.S. government. What happened was the opposite. The government is now overspending, with deficit spending at record levels under Trump's first year. It's probably going to come out to around \$2.5 trillion over budget, which means that real money, in terms of receipts from the government, runs out in May, and everything else is borrowed and added to the deficit at that point. So who's going to be the beneficiary of that deficit? Well, one of the main beneficiaries of the increase in deficit spending is the military-industrial complex. And who's going to benefit from that? It's going to be Elon Musk.

So this was a complete con job—a total scam by Elon Musk to insert himself into government, pretending to be patriotic, like, "We're going to go to Mars." Everybody said at the big rallies, "Isn't that cool?" It's sort of like Bill Gates dancing on stage with Jeff Ballmer at the Windows '97 launch or whatever it was. It's just ridiculous tech IPO energy that Musk injected. And so he, Alex Carr, Palmer Luckey—all of these tech bros that have now moved into the defense industry and are merging AI with the military—they're looking at this like a bonanza. This is what's driving the next bubble, driving the next market.

But it's all based on an AI bubble and a defense bubble—or a war bubble, we'll call it—that really just requires the United States to be constantly at war with everybody for the foreseeable future. And that's where all of our money is going. That's where all of our debt is going. And we're going to pay for that in inflation. If you're the first recipient of that money—if you're in the defense contractor business—you're going to profit off it. Everybody else downstream is going to pay for it in the hidden tax of inflation. So when Americans—if they haven't realized this by now—that that's how the system works, and many people have warned about it, Ron Paul included, many, many times over the years—then what can we say at this point? It's really hard to get the message across.

So, I mean, if the message does get across and there's a democratic leader who can somehow infuse fiscal responsibility and fundamentals into the conversation, or if a Thomas Massey could be successful politically and somehow change thinking in America about its place in the world—and its place in the future world, if there's going to be a future world to have a place in—if those things happen, then yeah, there's a chance that America could avert total disaster and sort of gracefully wind down its empire. But currently, that's not what's driving government, policy, spending, or politics. The political economy is geared in the direction of the things I just mentioned. So I don't think it's going to be a happy ending. It'll be a happy ending for the people in the war business, but even then, they might trigger a thermonuclear war at some point, and they can't build enough bunkers fast enough for all these billionaires. So, I don't know. Yeah.

#Danny

No, yeah, those are all great points, Patrick. I think what we're definitely witnessing is a—you know, it's a historic moment. And I think one big problem politically that this presents, especially for the United States, is that when precedents are set like the ones the Trump administration is setting now, we haven't seen a track record of U.S. administrations that follow those precedents and then reverse them. So that, I hope people watching this program can digest a bit, is that with every move that's been made against Iran—with these kinds of headwinds that have exploded, whether it's the energy markets, whether it's the Strait of Hormuz, whether it's the way this war is fought, the direction of how the war is fought, how the United States and Israel are engaging with the world and with the region in the way that they are.

This notion that the Democratic Party, as it's currently constituted, could materially make a difference when they come in—not only gets harder, it's hard to believe given how they are politically—but also, once the precedents are set, they become new standards for the empire. We've seen this over and over again, from the surveillance state to the war on terror to, you know, Libya, Syria—we go down the list, and then Ukraine. I think, or I hope, what people can take away in part from this on the U.S. side is that it's difficult to bring the horse back into the barn once it's been let out. So that's something to think about, given the huge need to rein these forces in. And I think this begs the question, then, how—how does that happen when these new standards are set for Europe?

#Patrick Henningsen

Well, there's one thing that could make that happen, and I think we'd agree, Danny. There's no chance of the United States being agreement-capable—being able to design a framework, sign a treaty, and actually honor it. At least under this administration, that's not possible. The only thing that could create a paradigm shift is for the U.S. to lose militarily, economically, or politically—or all three. Then there's a chance. That's a key point. Now, that could happen. It would probably take Iran shooting down a U.S. B-2 bomber during one of these scorched-earth annihilation attacks by Pete Hegseth and the U.S. Pentagon.

Or that could happen in Cuba—with Trump's invasion of Cuba, which he's planning right now as we speak. That could be the moment when this house of cards of U.S. legitimacy comes down, and perhaps even a military defeat—an embarrassing military defeat. I don't think the U.S. is going to be able to carpet-bomb Cuba, and I don't think people in our hemisphere will stand by and allow that to happen. So that means they'd have to go in on the ground, and that's probably not going to be good for the U.S. That could result in a defeat. Even a partial victory by Cuba would be seen as a resounding defeat for the U.S. It would re-energize Cuba—re-energize them in a big way. Danny, it would re-energize the Global South.

And it would probably re-energize left-wing governments across the world and give them a whole new lease on life that didn't exist before Trump. So that could also be a paradigm shift. And the other thing is, Joe Kent said something recently—last week—that I believe is the reason why Donald Trump attacked him. Joe Kent publicly said he's a whistleblower, a former counterterrorism chief who left the Trump administration because of Israel's undue influence over U.S. policy and dragging us into this war. He was correct on all fronts. He said the reason Trump is trashing NATO is because the U.S. is looking for an excuse to move out of NATO, albeit temporarily, in order to open the door for Israel to attack Turkey.

So there's no Article 5 obligation for the U.S. to defend Turkey, and Israel could then be free to attack Turkey. That's about control of Syria and influence in the region. I think Joe Kent was correct. I think this is an Israeli plan. Former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has publicly said that Turkey is, quote, "the new Iran." Turkey is the new Iran. So I think, besides the global oil and gas play that the U.S. is trying to engineer to hurt the Chinese economy and punish its perceived rivals, this is a big one. And that would also be a huge misstep if it happens, because that could lead to World War III—it would force Russia to be pulled into the conflict.

It would force them to be pulled in, and it would force the Europeans into whatever this conflict is, whatever shape it takes. That could accelerate things, and we could get a conclusion. I don't know which way it would go at the end of that, but we'd definitely get a conclusion in that situation. So, I mean, I think that's on the Israeli playbook—I think it is. And that's just another potential flashpoint,

aside from Cuba, Danny, that could give us the answer we're looking for. It might not be a good answer. It could be a good answer. I don't know. But those are real—those are real simmering situations.

#Danny

Well, Patrick, this is a great show. I want to make sure everyone knows that after the show, I'm going to fix the VPN issues—I've had no ability to change the video description—but I'll make sure Patrick's Substack and his YouTube channel are linked there as soon as this processes. Interestingly enough, for those who don't know, live streams actually don't process on the YouTube app on the phone until well after the stream. It's super annoying, so you can't change it there. So, with that said, that will be there. Be sure to support him on both Substack and YouTube. Hit the like button before you go. I want to thank everybody who gave a super chat—I'll pull those up. While I ask Patrick if there's anything he wants to plug, anything he wants to say to the audience before we head out of here—so, Patrick?

#Patrick Henningsen

Just keep up the great work, Danny. And also, yeah, if anyone can visit our YouTube channel, just like and subscribe—anything helps. It makes a huge, huge difference in getting more visibility because we've been throttled on that platform for a very long time, over a decade in fact. So it's only because of people coming in to physically help boost our channel that we've been able to get some visibility. I really appreciate anybody who's going to do that. So thank you so much.

#Danny

Yeah, so that is on YouTube. After you hit the like button here and head over to 21st Century Wire, you can search that right in the search bar. The video description will have it shortly. And if you want to support Patrick on Substack, just look up Patrick Henningsen Substack and it'll come right up. So, without any further ado, everyone hit the like button. I'm supposed to have Professor Mamanradi on tomorrow, Sunday, at the same time, but things might change if I can't get this VPN situation sorted out, because I really need a VPN to stream with him. I'll keep you all posted, but I'll be live regardless tomorrow, and I'll let you know what's going on. So hit the like button before you go, everyone. I'm heading out of here. Thank Patrick again by hitting the like button and checking out his work. Bye-bye.