

Iran FORCES US Navy to Flee | Mercuris

Alexander Mercuris of the Duran joins to break down the latest escalations in the Iran war as Tehran vows retaliation for US strike and seizure of an Iranian oil tanker. The world is bracing for all out war to restart and we cover this and much in this must-watch stream. Alexander's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@AlexMercuris> The Duran YouTube show: <https://www.youtube.com/@TheDuran/> SUPPORT THE SHOW: [PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG](https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong) Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: [chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com](https://www.substack.com) Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #usnavy #trump

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. I am here with Alexander Mercuris of The Duran, returning to the show. Thanks so much, Alexander, for joining me today.

#Alexander Mercuris

Thank you. It's always a great pleasure to be on your show, Danny. I'm very, very delighted and feel very honored to be here.

#Danny

Well, that's really appreciated, Alexander. Everyone, I'm joining from Hunan, China, the province of Hunan. I'm in Changsha, in Mao's birth province. And unfortunately, it's raining. I would have even done this outside, but it is raining, so that is not going to happen. But Alexander was generous enough to join me today. Hit the like button as you come on, and we're just going to get started right away, Alexander, with the latest news. Of course, the most recent breaking news is that Iran has rejected attendance in Islamabad, back to Pakistan. They're not sending any delegation there. They are rejecting further talks with the United States in light of what was a major provocation, a major act of aggression by the United States Navy, by the Trump administration, essentially attacking an Iranian commercial ship off the Gulf Coast of Oman.

And Iran says that right after that occurred, they actually chased a number of U.S. vessels out of the area via drones and that they are going to retaliate in kind at a time of their choosing, when they deem it fit. Now, this comes, of course, Alexander, as the Strait of Hormuz has essentially been closed by Iran fully now because this blockade continues, as they say, in violation of the ceasefire. So, Alexander, there's been a flurry of developments over the last several days, a lot of back and forth about talks, no talks. And then this, I think, is a really big step toward a restart of the war in a

big way. So your thoughts about what's going on and how you see this conflict in the broader and specific geopolitical sense?

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, firstly, you summed it up very well. And we get a sense of the way in which so much of the problem is the way in which the United States is conducting itself in this crisis. So we had a situation about two weeks ago where the United States and Iran appeared to agree on a ceasefire. The ceasefire clearly was supposed to extend to include Lebanon — stop fighting in Lebanon. The fighting in Lebanon continued. The Iranians said this is a breach of trust, and they tightened up their control of the Strait of Hormuz again. Then there was a ceasefire in Lebanon. The United States was supposed to loosen or end its sea blockade of Iran.

And in return, the Iranians were supposed to relax their control of the Strait of Hormuz. And I stress, relax control of the Strait of Hormuz — not give it up or anything of that kind. Well, the United States promptly went back on that. They said they would continue the sea blockade of Iran. The Iranians said this is unacceptable, that in light of that, there's really no point in even considering negotiations or talks with the United States because the United States is clearly not negotiating in good faith. Now, over the last few hours, the Pakistanis, who are acting as mediators, have apparently been telling the Americans, for heaven's sake, lift the sea blockade.

We can't move forward unless you do. The Americans, as we know, instead seized the ship after firing on it first, which is an unbelievably provocative thing to do in this kind of situation where we seem to be moving towards talks. The Iranians have made it absolutely clear they see no interest or value or purpose in talking to the Americans, while the Americans agree to one thing one moment and then try and go back on it the next. And until this changes, until the Americans stop behaving in this way, well, we're not going to see talks. And if we don't see talks, it is inevitable that we're going to get back into war.

#Danny

Yeah, and Alexander, why is the United States behaving in this way? Because all this is going to lead to is Iran essentially restarting what they were doing prior to the advent of the ceasefire, which ended up being quite catastrophic, especially on the economic front, but even on the military front for the United States — a lot of significant losses, in particular of weapon systems, radars, all kinds of air defenses, on and on and on — that Iran says could continue. They have the ability to make that happen, and I have no reason to doubt them. So why exactly would the United States be behaving like this at this time, when it seems like there's a lot of concern about the global economic consequences of this restarting?

#Alexander Mercouris

Because the United States has always behaved in this way in relation to Iran. I mean, I think that is the first thing to understand. The United States has not been negotiating with Iran in full good faith at any point in the various interactions that began with the Iranians, well, more than 20 years ago now, in the lead-up to the JCPOA. Even the JCPOA itself, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, whereby the Iranians agreed to caps on their uranium enrichment program, was never fully honored because the United States was supposed to lift sanctions. That's what the Iranians were led to think, and it never properly happened.

So, and I think this has become almost compulsive behavior. You try to tell the Iranians, you know, give us this, concede that, and in return we will do something that is a concession to you. The Iranians then make the concession, and the Americans pull back and don't do that which they promised. So I don't think this has ever changed. What has changed is that we are now in a far bigger crisis than the one we were in before. And going back exactly to the point that you made, the Iranians have now shown that they do actually have leverage over the United States. They have military power. They can attack American bases.

They can attack American radar stations. They can cause massive disruption to the global economy. The result is that the Americans find themselves trying to play the same game of getting the Iranians to make concessions in return for promises, which the Americans themselves don't keep, but finding that when they do, their margin of maneuver is diminishing because at that point, the Iranians immediately take action in ways that they never did previously. Until the Americans finally stop doing this, until they kick this compulsive habit, we're going to find ourselves continuously in this kind of crisis.

#Danny

Yeah, and it's such an interesting development, this choice by the Trump administration to maintain this blockade, because in many respects, it's almost like this in-between measure where the United States is not trying to restart full strikes on Iran. And even the blockade is operating outside the range of Iranian weapons systems, and this means that it's almost like the United States is trying to play both ends of the stick. They're trying to hit Iran as hard as they can without getting hit back, while posturing toward negotiations. I'm curious what you think about this and if there's any precedent for this, because it does seem to expose the U.S.'s actual position in this war, which doesn't feel like a good one at this point, especially with the Trump administration being so erratic seemingly every single day that this war goes on.

#Alexander Mercouris

You have made an absolutely excellent point, because what the Americans are doing by continuing with this practice of, as I said, never negotiating straightforwardly and in good faith, never fulfilling their own promises, is exposing even more sharply the underlying weakness of their own position. The Americans, as you rightly say, are trying to enforce the sea blockade from a distance. Their

ships can't go close to Iran. They're afraid to deploy their ships close to Iran. Now, it's been unreported in the West, but the Russian news agency TASS is saying that the blockade is full of holes, that 40 ships transited the Strait of Hormuz over the weekend, and the Americans were only able to stop one.

And that this is actually the largest number of ships that transited the Strait of Hormuz since the start of the conflict on the 28th of February. So the Americans are trying to give an impression of strength by sustaining a blockade which, according to the Russians, isn't even working. But of course, at the same time as they're doing that, they are wrecking negotiations. They are causing the Iranians to take an extremely hard line. And they are also exposing further their own weakness going forward. Now, why are they doing that? I think it's not actually difficult to understand if you stop leaving Iran, the area of diplomatic strategy, and go into the area of psychology.

For the Americans to start negotiating seriously on an equal basis with the Iranians would be an admission that America has failed and America has lost. It would mean that the attempt to pressure Iran, it would be admitting that the efforts to pressure Iran to give up its nuclear enrichment capability, to subordinate its foreign policy to the United States, to achieve even regime change in Iran, that that has all failed and that it is the United States which is in a position of weakness and not Iran. And that, psychologically, is unbelievably difficult for the Americans to do.

#Danny

Yeah, and I don't know if you saw, Alexander, that Donald Trump came out with, as he often does, a Truth Social post about the war. And he's been essentially posting every single day about this war in some respects. And some of the posts are absolutely—I don't know if they're damning or embarrassing or, I don't know what to call them. But this one had to do with Israel, saying that Israel never talked to me about the war with Iran. The results of October 7th added to my lifelong opinion that Iran can never have a nuclear weapon. That is what convinced him to go into war with Iran, and that, you know, fake news pundits and everyone—and then he's going for results like Venezuela and Iran's new leaders, regime change, are smart.

If they're smart, they will have a prosperous future. But this emphasis on "Israel never talked to me about this" is a very strange thing to say. So I'm curious about your thoughts on this, given that, of course, the U.S. and Israel were allies in this together, have been in this together. They literally, on the first day, were conducting airstrikes together. It was very notable to anyone, everyone observing it—mainstream media, alternative media. So your thoughts about this and what it says about this war, because the ceasefire ends Wednesday, Alexander, and Iran is saying that they're kind of waiting for a surprise attack by both of these countries.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, can I just say what Trump is saying is obviously wrong? It's nonsense. I mean, even his Secretary of State at the very start said that the United States attacked Iran because Israel was about to. Of course, he then walked it back. But that's been confirmed by other U.S. officials. Joe Kent has talked about it. So, I mean, it's nonsense. And we had that big, long article yesterday in the New York Times about how Benjamin Netanyahu came along and met Trump in the Oval Office on the 11th of February and went through everything and explained to Trump how it was a sure win. He attacked Iran when the Israelis wanted him to, alongside Israel. You're absolutely right to point out that the Israelis were absolutely involved in it from the first moment. And, well, there's never been any convincing denial or rebuttal of this report about that meeting on the 11th of February.

So Trump is, well, I guess I think he's lying. I mean, I don't know of a simpler, more straightforward word to use here. So he's lying about this. Why is he doing it? Well, I guess he doesn't want to seem like he's being manipulated and is being ordered around by Benjamin Netanyahu because, you know, Trump's vanity makes it unbearable to think that he's, you know, at the beck and call of some other leader like Netanyahu in this kind of way. The reality is that if we're talking about Iran acquiring a nuclear weapons capability, which is what Trump constantly harps on about, well, there were all sorts of diplomatic options whereby that could have been achieved. The Iranians themselves said they didn't want a nuclear weapons capability. So given that, and given the fact that we previously had the JCPOA, getting a diplomatic agreement on that should not have been difficult.

#Danny

Yeah, and this, you know, this war just gets—I feel like this war is getting stranger and stranger because of the nature of it. It has this element of the United States going into this war, kind of all guns a-blazing, attempting to pound Iran into submission. It didn't happen, and Iran hit back really hard. And now we're at this point where it almost seems like this war should be at least ending in terms of hostilities for a bit, because we know the United States and Israel are, as you said, this is how they've always treated Iran. And it's likely this is not going to stop completely. But it does feel like it's a very strange place in this war right now.

And this also goes for the fact that we're still seeing the consequences of what happened over those five or so weeks of hostilities. Iran's strikes and Iran's control of the Strait of Hormuz has forced, according to reports, Kuwait to call a force majeure. And maybe you can explain what this is—on all of its oil shipments—saying that they can't ship any oil because of the fact that Iran is not letting them, first of all, through the Strait of Hormuz. And of course, they've had much damage to their infrastructure. So what does this mean? And this is kind of a cascading effect, I feel like, across the region that I think we're going to feel the effects of for quite some time. Yeah.

#Alexander Mercouris

Force majeure is a legal concept. It means that you cannot fulfill your contractual commitment because of events that are completely outside your control. It's a well-known legal concept. If you don't invoke force majeure when you can't fulfill your contract, then you are in breach of contract and you can be sued. So, Kuwait does not want to be sued because it's not supplying oil anymore—oil that it has been contracted to supply. So, it says we have to do this. We're declaring force majeure because we're not able to fulfill our contracts anymore. It provides you with legal protection in those kinds of situations. This is an immense event. It means that Kuwait is going to not just stop oil supply; almost certainly it means it's going to stop oil production. It probably means its reserves are now filled. There's been much talk about this over the last few weeks since the start of the war.

If oil wells are not producing oil, if they're closed down, then they begin to deteriorate. Damage begins to accumulate. And it is not straightforward in that case to simply bring them back into production. It could take weeks. It could take months. It could take much longer. It prolongs and intensifies the crisis. Now, the other thing it does is that if Kuwait is declaring force majeure, then other Gulf producers, Gulf state producers who don't, are more exposed in case of legal action than they would be if, you know, Kuwait had not done this, because by not declaring force majeure, they're basically saying that despite what's happened to Kuwait, despite Kuwait's problems, they are giving assurances to their customers that they can still find some means to supply oil. And that can aggravate any compensation that they're ordered to pay if the oil is not actually supplied.

So the effect is that it's going to make more and more Gulf countries decide that they have no option but to declare force majeure as well. If we don't get back to negotiations on Tuesday, Wednesday, today, whenever, if we don't start to see the Strait of Hormuz loosen up, then we are going to see a cascade effect. All the producers are going to start declaring force majeure. Production is going to stop. And then all of this manipulation that we see in the markets, which has kept the price of oil—the futures, it's not the actual physical price of oil that is sold every day—that is already very high. But the price of oil that we see, you know, on Bloomberg or on oilprice.com, is the price the market is putting for oil in a month's time. That price is going to start shooting upwards.

And that's the price that the markets will track, and which starts to have an immediate effect on the way in which markets operate and on the larger economy in terms of determining interest rates and all of those things. So this step that Kuwait has taken is an enormously important one, and one that people should not underestimate. Now, as to the other points that you were making, you are absolutely correct. What this war has done is that it has exposed vividly the limits, the actual true limits, of American power. American military power turns out to be far less great than we had all been led to believe. The United States has not been able to bend Iran to its will.

It's not been able to win a clear-cut military victory over Iran. So the result is, you're talking about the strangeness of American behavior. This is the cause of that strangeness. The Americans have been shown up to be weaker than they wanted everybody to think they were. So they're coming up with all of these strange things—sea blockades, strange things, comments by Trump through social bragging, talk about things, you know, not being so bad or being better than they really are. That is

the cause of it. It's because they have been exposed. And because they've been exposed, they have to come up with all of these very strange things and maneuvers, which makes it all look as bizarre and as weird as you say it is.

#Danny

Yeah, in many ways, it does seem like an unprecedented moment in history where we have a president in the United States who is not known to really have a filter, and also one who's not really known to be a politician in the best of times. He literally came into power twice in the face of major crises. And now he's at the root of one of the biggest in history. People are saying, you know, major economists, mainstream media, they're all saying that this is the worst oil crisis maybe in the history of oil markets. And that is astounding, given the fact that these actions, Alexander—the continuation of this blockade, the inability and the rejection—you know, people say, oh, Iran's rejecting.

No, actually the U.S. is rejecting any kind of basis for negotiations by continuing the blockade and not negotiating in good faith around what Iran is saying it wants. How can this go on? The ceasefire is Wednesday. It ends. The U.S., the Trump administration, has already threatened obliterating everything again, which is another peculiar thing to do—to constantly threaten to obliterate everything in Iran: power plants, bridges—which is not only a war crime, but also belies reality, and it continues on this path of blowing smoke, not dealing with the crisis in front of you.

So that's the empire side of Iran. Iran just keeps doing what it's doing. It keeps saying, we're going to control the Strait of Hormuz. We're going to make real choices about who gets to go through, and we're going to tighten it. If you get more and more aggressive—and of course do more than that if you want us to, or if you force us to—so that's... what's your assessment of this? Because it really is, it seems like a very dicey situation for the U.S., and it has ramifications that go all across the geopolitical landscape.

#Alexander Mercouris

It is an enormously dicey situation for the United States and one that has every potential to get much dicier still. You mentioned how Donald Trump is, shall we say, an erratic personality—correct—who makes decisions very much on the fly without thinking about them carefully in advance, and who is not in control of what he writes on his Truth Social posts.

#Danny

Well, bear in mind.

#Alexander Mercouris

We have all sorts of potentials, all sorts of possibilities for this thing to escalate much, much more. To give just one example, a couple of days ago, the Chinese Defense Ministry said that China will not stand by and allow its trade with a friendly country, namely Iran, to be interfered with in this way, in the way that the U.S. blockade is doing. There have been all kinds of reports, rumors, theories, speculations that Chinese ships might start to come into the region in order to escort tankers bringing oil from Iran to China. We don't know whether that's going to happen, but let's theorize that it does happen. It's not impossible.

The Russians have been providing escorts for their tankers. Why shouldn't the Chinese do the same? Now, if that happens, we have China breaking a U.S. blockade, doing it absolutely openly. So that is a crisis that is no longer a crisis just between Iran and the United States. It is a crisis between China and the United States. Now, in that kind of situation, you need very cool heads. You need a president who's fully in control, somebody who knows how to make decisions, somebody who's realistic, who listens to advice, who's able to act in a way that brings this potential, even greater potential crisis, under control and things back on track.

That does not look to be Donald Trump at the present time. Bear in mind that, according to the Wall Street Journal, just a short time ago, during the operation to rescue that U.S. pilot who'd been shot down near Isfahan, the U.S. military decided to exclude Trump from the operations room because they were worried about the kind of orders and instructions he might give. So this is extremely concerning, very, very concerning indeed. Now, what is going to happen? I don't think there's going to be negotiations in Islamabad. There were some reports that the Pakistanis are urging the Americans to relax the blockade. There are some reports that the United States is considering doing it.

I think at this stage, it's going to be very difficult for Trump to order an end of the blockade because that would be another visible humiliation and retreat. Though it looks like everything is going to be at a standstill, we're probably going to see a renewal of the fighting because the United States is now in a position where it's making threats, it's trying to conceal its weakness by escalating its language, its rhetoric, and if it doesn't act on that rhetoric, it risks appearing even weaker than it already is. So, of course, that means that it's more likely than not, given the kind of people we're talking about, that they will launch these enormous attacks, the attacks on the infrastructure, destroying everything to oblivion, all of that kind of thing. That, of course, makes the situation worse, and even more humiliating in the end, and even more disastrous in the end. But I suspect we're still in that cycle at the moment.

#Danny

Yeah, and likely to lead to a very similar outcome to what we have now, which is eventually having to stop, eventually having to at least take a break, a pause, a breather. Is it accurate, Alexander, to say that perhaps one of the reasons why the United States finds itself in this situation is that it

probably should not have even begun this war at all at the time that it did? Now, I'm a believer that the U.S., as you said, has always treated Iran like this, so this was inevitable at some point anyway. It was inevitable that the U.S. and, of course, Israel with it, behind it, wherever you think Israel is in this, that they were going to attack Iran again, that they were going to try to escalate an even bigger war.

But the way that it happened, how it happened, when it happened, all of that — there is some, I guess you would say, agency, for lack of a better term, in this. And it makes me wonder, this is probably something, even from the perspective of this crass, realist perspective from the Empire, was this something they should have even done, given that now, as you just laid out, there really is no — there's no pulling back, because Trump and the U.S. have always done this. They've always made clear they can't capitulate. They can't make decisions based on any kind of mutuality or any kind of pulling back or making it look like they are not the strongest and most powerful empire that they have. They can beat anybody and are always going to win. There's no real scenario here where that is achievable, it seems.

#Alexander Mercouris

I completely agree. By the way, I should say that, of course, they shouldn't have attacked on the 28th of February. I mean, that was clearly wrong. It was clearly not thought through properly in advance. There were some warnings given from the intelligence community, though not anywhere near as strong or as clear as they should have been. There were some mumbled warnings received from General Kane, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but those also were nowhere near as clear as they should have been. But the U.S. walked blithely, frivolously into this war on a whole set of assumptions about how easy it would be to conduct, how quickly it could be resolved, about the extent to which the United States could control the outcome. And of course, because they didn't think about it properly, it's all gone wrong.

But, and this is an important thing to say, sooner or later, in some place or other, whether against Iran or against someone else, we would be in the same position because the United States has been living for a long time now under this illusion that it is more powerful than it really is. And sooner or later, that was bound to be challenged and tested in some place, be it Iran, be it in Eastern Europe against the Russians, be it in the Taiwan Strait, be it in some other place that we just can't think of. When you live in illusions, when you refuse to acknowledge realities, when you don't look at the actual capacity and potential of the other side, when you overestimate your own strength and fail to understand the other side's—well, which is what the United States has been doing for so long—sooner or later, you're bound to have a smash. It's just that we're at that smash now, and it's Iran that has produced it.

#Danny

Yeah, maybe we can now talk about the larger implications for what's happening in the world in relation to Iran. You know, one very interesting thing I've noticed—I'm in China right now—and with China, just like I'm sure it's very similar in Russia, unlike the United States, unlike the West, where there are a lot of words that often deviate from actions, oftentimes what China says is what happens, what China does. And here, what's been so interesting is how China has approached this. The Iran situation, the Iran war, is that even now, right, even President Xi Jinping will put out statements such as, China wants the Strait of Hormuz fully opened.

But China will never, and has never, condemned anything Iran has done up until this point, even with regard to the Strait of Hormuz. But it has condemned what the United States is doing with the blockade, actually directly. And in many respects, that was because the Trump administration, Scott Bessent, and others have pointed at China as the major target of this blockade—astoundingly so, actually. That actually surprised me a bit. So, Alexander, what do you make of this? What do you make of the global reaction to what's going on here around the Strait of Hormuz, where this war seems to have centered now, and how things are changing because of this war?

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, China and Russia, but China perhaps even in some ways more importantly, because China is the more powerful country at the end of the day. The thing that separates them, that makes them different from the United States, is that the Chinese do understand the limits of their own power. They understand that power, by definition, has limits. And for that reason, of course, they are much more careful about what they say, and they weigh what they say very carefully in advance. And they don't make threats which they feel they're not able to enforce in the future, or which it would be counterproductive for them to enforce. So it's a completely different approach, and that explains an awful lot. Now, there is a theory, and I think this is more than just a theory.

I think it is, to a certain extent, true that this whole war with Iran, this whole episode with Venezuela, all of these things ultimately happened with China at the back of the minds of American policymakers. In fact, I've said this many times, that when you look at American foreign policy—every step, every action that the United States takes in its foreign policy—there is always China there, working at the back of their minds. They're always thinking about how this is going to play out in this contest that they imagine themselves to be in against China. And I don't think the Chinese, by contrast, want to be in a contest like that with the United States. But since that contest is forced upon them, of course, they take countermeasures.

And the Chinese, in relation to this particular crisis, see perfectly well who started it. The fact that Iran was attacked in the middle of negotiations, which seemed to be making progress, that it was the United States that carried out these massive attacks on Iran, killed its leader, attacked its infrastructure, did all of these things. And the Iranians have gone out of their way to show to the Chinese that they take what the Chinese say seriously, and to act respectfully towards China, and to

try, to the extent that they can, to protect Chinese interests, that everything that the Iranians have done has been entirely by way of retaliation for this original strike that was carried out against them.

So this, of course, understandably informs Chinese diplomacy. They see what the Americans have done. They see why the Americans did it. They see what the Iranians are trying to do. And China responds. Now, at the moment, they're still weighing their decisions. But the further, the longer this continues, the more I suspect the Chinese will use the leverage that they have over both sides, which is increasing, both to bring this conflict to an end—an end that is beneficial to China, just to say—but also to secure longer-term Chinese interests with the United States.

#Danny

Yeah, and a lot of care taken by China and also Russia to not blame or even condemn or pressure Iran publicly or anything of the sort around what it's doing, which, of course, hasn't been the case for a lot of the region, which has been very inconsistent about this. A lot of countries, the Gulf countries in particular, have taken the position of even further hostility, despite how much this war has really damaged their short-, medium-, and long-term interests, and maybe even their very existence.

I'm thinking about the UAE, for example, which has continued to put out absolutely egregious statements talking about how Iran needs to be stripped of its control of the Strait of Hormuz and that it will do everything it can to stop Iran. It's... I don't know what to make of this, other than the fact that we are still seeing a lot of denial of reality on the ground, and it seems like that means there's a lot of room for more disaster coming from this war, despite all of what has been laid before us over these last six weeks.

#Alexander Mercouris

If we talk about the Persian Gulf states, I mean, they have, of course, for many decades now, placed their complete reliance on the United States. They have accepted this narrative of unlimited American power. And now that that has fallen short, that is making them extremely frightened and very nervous. And they are very, very worried that at the end of this crisis, Iran will emerge victorious and far more powerful than it was. And in relative terms, relative to the other Persian Gulf states, Iran is a colossus. It has a huge territory, enormous resources, a population of 93 million people.

It is a country with a very, very long history and that it might potentially emerge as the dominant power in the Persian Gulf. Now, various Persian Gulf states are trying to respond to this in different ways. Saudi Arabia, which is a much bigger country than the other ones, is trying to find some way back, one senses, with the Iranians. They had some kind of an agreement with the Iranians before.

The UAE, which has a territorial dispute with Iran over certain islands, is becoming extremely fearful and very, very nervous. Now, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, who is widely recognized to be the true ruler of the UAE, he, of course, was recently in China, where he met Xi Jinping.

And one can sense that what the Chinese were doing is they were telling him to cool down, that none of this, none of this anti-Iranian rhetoric that the UAE is engaging in is actually helpful. It's not helpful to the UAE itself. And this then brings us to what I think the Chinese long term are trying to do, which is that they're trying to bring all of these various different countries together — the Persian Gulf states, the Saudis, the Turks, the Pakistanis. China has very good relations with Pakistan and, of course, the Iranians — and are telling them, well, you don't really need the United States. You don't need U.S. security guarantees. You see that these security guarantees are completely worthless.

On the contrary, all they do is get you into trouble. Work out your own security system with each other. We are there to help you with that. We're not going to come in the way the Americans did and establish bases and act as overt policemen or protectors. That's not what we do. But we will help you set up this security structure, and we will do it in such a way that this fear you have that Iran is going to dominate and take over is not going to happen. That, I think, is what Chinese foreign policy is trying to do. And if you drill hard and look at the Chinese readouts, you can see it. And of course, the Russians are always much more explicit in this.

They are now openly talking about setting up a security architecture, a new security architecture in the Persian Gulf, which is, I've no doubt, the Chinese policy. And the Russians, by the way, also, as one expects, are being much more forthright than the Chinese as to who is responsible for the war. The Russians straightforwardly say this was an act of aggression — they use that word — by Israel and the United States against Iran. You often see this in this partnership between the Chinese and the Russians, that the Russians are given the role of talking much more bluntly than the Chinese so that the Chinese can come in as the conciliator, the moderator that will pick up the pieces.

#Danny

Yeah, and Alexander, you know, there's been a lot of, I think, concern and even some commentary that what the United States has actually accomplished, and maybe what isn't being acknowledged, is that over the course of the Trump administration's tenure, from, you know, continuing on what was happening in Gaza to the Venezuela kidnapping blockade, and now Iran — the very conservative, active, hostile, kinetic war against Iran — that all of this has led to a solidification of the U.S. as being some kind of pirate state that now has the capacity to essentially capture, manipulate, and dictate oil markets to a degree, gas, et cetera, and that this is actually a sign of power.

But there's also a lot of instability that has been produced by this, and it might overshadow, because there are some who are arguing that, well, this is weakening China, this is weakening Russia, this is weakening Iran by creating this kind of blitzkrieg on gas, on energy. But I think that this ignores

some other fundamentals that put Russia and China and also Iran in actually a pretty favorable position the longer that something like this goes on, especially since the energy markets are kind of a hallmark of U.S. hegemony and unipolarity and have been for quite some time. So what are your thoughts on this? There are some arguing that what the U.S. is doing around energy markets, its own energy markets, versus how it's trying to blockade, steal, and/or destroy the rest, that that makes it more powerful now than before.

#Alexander Mercouris

No, I don't think it makes it more powerful. I think your description of a pirate state, a pirate superpower, is beginning to gain traction. Because what the United States is doing is it is using this power that it does undoubtedly still have, in naked self-interest, in disregard of the interests of everyone else, which is what, of course, a pirate does. A pirate is not accountable, does not feel responsibility, does not consider others. A pirate is there purely to enrich himself. And that is what the United States is now doing. They want everybody to buy American oil. They want everybody to buy American gas, at whatever price the United States sets.

They want the United States to be paid for the benefit of controlling the world's oceans, which is something that Stephen Moran, one of the president's advisors, actually said in an astonishing comment that he made last year, which turns the entire U.S. Navy and trade system into a kind of protection racket for the United States. And of course, this isn't something that most countries around the world want to see, because it is dangerous, it is very unpredictable, it makes it impossible for them to plan or develop. They say to themselves, well, we are accepting, if we go along with this, the tutelage of a power that is completely indifferent to us, to our welfare.

And this simply cannot work in that way. So, of course, countries around the world are going to become increasingly nervous about it and increasingly frightened. And if there is another pole of power that offers a more orderly, a more balanced system, one in which the concerns of other countries are at least heeded and granted some measure of respect, then of course they're going to prefer that. Now, there is another factor here, which is, of course, the factor of power itself. Because, of course, if you're going to be a pirate state, if you're going to behave like that, you really do need to be far more powerful than every other state. And that means you have to have many more resources than other states do.

But as we discussed at the beginning of this program, the United States, it turns out, is not as powerful as it believes. If we look at the aggregate resources of China and Russia, they are much greater than those of the United States. China has a much bigger manufacturing capability. China has at least the equal of the United States in terms of a science and technology base. Russia has abundant natural resources—food, oil, gas—which it can develop. It can provide rare earths or develop rare earths alongside China. It can do all of these things. So you're up against, as a pirate state, a policeman, if you like, a potential policeman who has more resources than you. That cannot work in the end.

#Danny

Yeah, those are all great points. And it... You know, as we get into the last five or ten minutes or so here, I think one of the biggest lessons from this war is that actually we've often been told that the United States wages wars for oil, about oil. And in some respects, that has been true. But now I think what we're seeing is actually this is far more existential than simply oil, that there is a world order, a dynamic in the world, a shift in the world that is creating this impetus for the United States to try to slash and dash its way toward maintaining its hegemony. But then we get back to the oil question, the energy questions, gas question.

It seems like no matter what the United States does, even if it looks at Venezuela, this control it has around Venezuela's oil or some of the sabotage that seems to have been happening in the region of West Asia that could not be accounted for by Iranian retaliation—despite all of this, despite these obvious attempts to manipulate markets and maybe even seize control of a certain number of them—what does it even mean for the continuation of U.S. hegemony when the U.S. cannot simply survive on trying to pirate and steal oil resources? It actually won't accomplish even the endgame of destroying Russia, destroying China, or even Iran.

Iran has been under sanctions for many, many decades. It is not going to simply roll over because energy markets are that much more difficult to navigate outside of itself. China is here, and there's no concern about the energy markets because they're 80% self-sufficient in energy. The last 20% is spread across many diverse resources, and they have a partner in Russia, which is willing to make up for it. If they lost all 20% of their dependency, it would be made up with Russian energy. And no one can explain, when they make these arguments, why the U.S. can never seem to lower its oil prices, no matter how much abundance they force into the market.

Like in the past when they've told Saudi Arabia, hey, we want to destroy Venezuela, so can you pump all this oil into the market and destroy their oil market so we can gain more leverage over them? But yet U.S. prices continue to be really, really high. And that is a disadvantage because, well, how do you expand your oil market exports to countries that can look toward more reliable partners like Russia, for example? So it's not so clear how domination can really be maintained or even expanded just simply by terrorizing the oil market, seizing them, pirating them, what have you.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, it did, absolutely, because, of course, you're no longer in that case involved in energy policies or anything of that kind. It is not that the United States, in pursuing these policies, is trying to acquire oil, which it needs for itself, which is, you know, sort of imperialist, what the old 19th-century imperialists were trying to do. What it's actually trying to do is gain control of oil production so that it deprives others from having that oil. In other words, it's not about gaining control of oil; it's really about just projecting power and weakening your adversary.

Now, if you're into that kind of game, if you're doing exactly that thing, which is abusing, if you like, natural resource wealth in order to impoverish and weaken others so that you can remain the global hegemon, which is presumably the idea, then what you're actually trying to do is immiserate everybody else so that you yourself can remain the one party that is standing. All that is going to do is make you extremely unpopular, very, very disliked by every other country, every other nation, which says, well, we've got to have oil, we've got to have whatever, all of these resources. We need them so that we can develop. What the United States is trying to do is to stop us from developing.

You even had an admission from, I think it was Chris Murphy, the U.S. Treasury Secretary, who actually said that the United States is not going to make the same mistake with India that it supposedly made with China. In other words, it's not going to sit back and allow India to develop into an economic giant rivaling the United States. Because that would be a challenge to American power, which, of course, means that if you are in India and you want India to prosper and develop and to see living standards rise, that automatically puts you in conflict with the United States. Now, that is an unsustainable position. The United States is not independent, strong enough, not able enough to pursue this incredibly immoral, unethical policy. All it's going to do in the end, it's going to do exactly what you said.

It's going to isolate the United States. People are going to start putting barriers up, and they're going to say, keep the Americans as far away as possible. Let us all set up our own trading systems and police them together. Because if the Americans come in, all they're going to try to do is wreck them, wreck our systems, and ultimately push us down. And that's not what people want. So it's the opposite, by the way, of what the US did with Europe at the beginning of the Cold War. At that time, the Americans calculated that in order to bind the Europeans to the US, they needed to make the Europeans richer—thus the Marshall Plan. Now, on the contrary, they want to make everybody poorer. The first policy won the Americans friends in Europe. This policy is going to lose the Americans friends everywhere.

#Danny

Yeah, and it is, and it is. No matter how dependent Europe becomes on the United States in all spheres, even this has created major rifts, significant rifts, because it's existential, essentially, even for these weaker countries. Alexander, if you could bear with me for a minute as we go through some Super Chats. There are some questions, and you can answer them as quickly as you'd like. So I'll just say thank you. Claro, here is Sparky. I think Sparky is a regular viewer of both of our shows. Did the Iranian container ship sailing from China to Iran and recently taken by the U.S. contain drone or missile parts, or just consumer sundries, or did it even matter to the United States?

#Alexander Mercouris

No, it didn't matter to the United States. It was a demonstration of power. That is what it was. I mean, I had not heard, by the way, I've not seen any reports that prove that it was containing any

of those things. And the Chinese denied that it was. The Chinese, if they want to send that kind of material to Iran, there are plenty of ways to do it, by the way. It's not often overlooked that there's actually a railway that goes from China all the way to Iran. It passes through Pakistan. But there are those railway links. There are the road links. There are links by air. The Chinese would never do something like that.

#Danny

I love your show. Please post shorts too. Thank you. Now Trump is legalizing LSD. Will the American people, including Trump and Keg's Breath, become less warlike and give peace a chance for a change?

#Alexander Mercouris

I would like to think so. I don't think so.

#Danny

Thanks for becoming a new member, unknown. Trump doesn't need to be a genius. He just needs to appeal to enough stupid people that are okay with the file. Nice play on the PDF file. F this. OK, I don't know what that means, but thank you. And we have more from Sparky. Bezos tried to crash the world economy last year with a purpose-designed 2009 tariff plan to leave the US as the last country standing. But it was obsolete. Now he's trying the oil angle. Won't work, in my opinion.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, this is exactly the kind of language that he talks himself. And so why not assume that that is right? But you're absolutely right, it's not going to work.

#Danny

Right. Uh, thank you so much for the super sticker you sent us. And I think that's all. Uh, Claro, thank you so much. So, Alexander, first of all, thank you for saying yes. So, Alexander, any final words as we leave here? I have your YouTube channel, personally your YouTube channel, and The Duran in the video description, so people should check that out. Anything else you want to say before we leave here?

#Alexander Mercouris

I just want to come back to what that viewer said about Bezos, which is absolutely correct, because Bezos is still living in the world of the early 1990s when his friend George Soros crashed sterling, the British currency, and made a huge amount of money. And you could do that in those days because

the markets were controlled by a small group of players, and they were centered on the United States. That world is gone. Bezos doesn't understand that, even though he's a clever man. And so he's playing a game that is now at least 30 years out of date.

#Danny

Well, on that note, I think this is a great point to leave on. Everyone, hit the like button before you go. Thanks to all the Super Chats, members, etc., that contributed here today. All the viewers, of course, in general—whoever viewed this—this is great. It's all wonderful. Hit the like button. The video description is where you can find Alexander's work, as well as places to support this channel as well. Until next time, everyone, take care, and I'll see you again next time.