

Iran ATTACKS Ships in Hormuz, FORCES Trump to Cave on Ceasefire as Blockade COLLAPSES

US president Donald Trump has called for an indefinite ceasefire amid Iran's major moves to break the US Navy blockade and embarrass the US side in negotiations. Danny Haiphong is joined by a special guest to break it all down. Follow Carlos Martinez's work: <https://socialistchina.org/> <https://www.youtube.com/@UCA7XeSxjdJF1OWtnRtBcDmA> https://www.youtube.com/@UCg830gPCU4oA9N_D25bFD4Q LIKE the video and Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis! Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> #iran #trump #israel Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong> Telegram: <https://t.me/DannyHaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritho> #iran #trump

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. Hit that like button as you come on. As you can see, I am here in Changsha, China, in the hotel room with friend and fellow traveler Carlos Martinez, author and analyst. He has his own blog, **Invent the Future**. There are so many other things as well, which we'll get into later. Carlos, good to see you.

#Carlos Martinez

Great to be with you, Danny.

#Danny

Yeah, well, everybody, be sure to hit the like button as you come on. If you hear any audio issues or anything, I'll be checking the chat to see if we need to adjust things. But nevertheless, let's get started, Carlos, with this. I wanted to first begin with what's going on with Iran. We have now the Iranian Navy saying that it had to seize—first it attacked and then seized—two ships that were part of the Mediterranean Shipping Company, the **Francesca** and the—I can't even pronounce this—the **Empinades**. And Iran says they were Israeli-linked, of course. They were trying to bypass the Strait of Hormuz, outside of Iran's jurisdiction and rules and the toll. Then they fired on a third ship.

Now that the mainstream media is reporting this, as well as the situation where this blockade seems to be collapsing—34 Iranian carriers have actually bypassed the blockade and are heading to the global markets with Iranian oil. So, Carlos, Donald Trump has extended the ceasefire too. There's a flurry of developments. It seems like right now what's happening is that Donald Trump and the United States are in this holding pattern of not wanting to restart military hostilities, wanting to continue the blockade, and yet Iran appears to be in a very assertive position. But how have you seen this from your perspective? I mean, we're in China, there's a lot to take in. What are your thoughts?

#Carlos Martinez

Yeah, I mean, well, the first thing to point out in relation to this latest development and the attack on these two vessels in the Strait of Hormuz is that Iran is acting completely within its rights under international law and under the terms of the ceasefire, right? So Iran is, I would say, playing a very sophisticated and very restrained game. Like, they're just responding. Whatever the U.S. does, they respond. They don't go further. In this instance, the U.S. has violated the terms of the ceasefire by imposing this so-called blockade in the Strait of Hormuz.

And then, in addition to that, they've attacked Iranian commercial vessels in the Strait. So Iran hasn't responded in a crazy or unpredictable way to that. It's not lashing out. It's simply responding with an eye-for-an-eye type of approach. So, okay, if you're going to do that, we're going to keep the Strait of Hormuz closed. And if you've got vessels that are trying to break our blockade and operate without adhering to our rules and without adhering to the normal rules and the law of the sea, then we're going to attack them. They haven't blasted these vessels out of the water.

They've simply disabled them so that they can't do what they're doing. So I think the Iranians are just making a statement that you can't, you know, you can't just do whatever you want. You want to come back to the negotiating table. We're very willing to come back to the negotiating table. We want an end to this war, but that's only going to be on the basis of respect for our dignity, respect for our sovereignty, respect for the basic principles of international law and of sovereign equality. We're willing to negotiate, but you have to adhere to the terms of the ceasefire and you have to respect our basic rights.

#Danny

Yeah. And people have to remember, too, that it was the United States that started this blockade. You know, they said it was in response to Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. But Iran actually wasn't blocking the Strait of Hormuz. Technically, it was saying that it was going to regulate the flow of traffic based on a new set of rules that were established because of the war. It was just, and Iran, for all intents and purposes, had a good reason to do this because they did lay sea mines. They did fortify their own territorial waters because the United States and Israel were actively striking

them, and because the U.S. had moved massive amounts of naval assets to the region for the purpose of striking Iran.

So it makes a lot of sense that Iran would, uh, seize control over the Strait of Hormuz for security purposes. Literally, they have to escort ships through the Strait of Hormuz or those ships could go boom. That's a real problem. Now, though, they've had to close it because of the U.S. blockade. The U.S. has been boarding ships first, and now Iran has seized two of them and attacked another in response to this. But I think what's so shocking for a lot of people—they may not be able to comprehend why—and maybe you can give your thoughts on this—is the ceasefire has expired, right? The initial ceasefire had expired. Now Donald Trump is talking about an indefinite ceasefire initially, then he says three to five days, waiting for an Iranian proposal. He's saying Iran is divided.

That's why Iran didn't come to Islamabad. But there are jokes going all across social media of J.D. Vance and Donald Trump's team—Kushner, Wyckoff—just waiting in Islamabad for the Iranian delegation, while Iran, it seemed like every 10 minutes, was saying to their own media that they have no plans to attend any talks with the U.S. unless the blockade is lifted. Very clear language. What's your reaction to this? I mean, we have two sides in this war, unsurprisingly saying completely different things and acting in completely different ways. But I think the ways in which, especially the U.S. side, is behaving might be surprising to some, given that the U.S. is known to talk tough and like to bully and push around. But things seem a little different right now.

#Carlos Martinez

Yeah, well, apart from anything else, it's very interesting, isn't it, that the Strait of Hormuz has become the number one issue. It's the number one bargaining chip for Iran, and it's the number one thing that Donald Trump is concerned about, that the U.S. ruling class is concerned about, that the Western ruling classes in general are concerned about. The Republic of Iran has existed for 47 years. There's never been a problem with navigating the Strait of Hormuz. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been very much observing the UN rules and the law of the sea. So the Strait of Hormuz has never been blocked. It was never blocked until the 28th of February, 2026, when the United States and Israel launched this criminal war against it.

So if you're looking for that single crucial variable that's going to get the Strait open—and we all want the Strait open, I want to see the Strait open—the Strait of Hormuz being closed and 20 to 25 percent of the world's energy flows being cut off, and the impact that it has on food systems, on energy systems, on manufacturing, on pharmaceuticals, etc., etc., that's bad for everyone, right? That's bad for China, that's bad for Africa, that's bad for Latin America, that's bad for West Asia. So I think any reasonable person would want to see the Strait of Hormuz open again. But there's really only one key to getting it open, and that's to end this criminal, illegal, and completely unprompted aggression against Iran, and to provide Iran with clear security guarantees that it's not going to face this type of attack again.

As for the supposed division in Iran, I think anyone can see with their own eyes. You know, the people of Iran have been out on the streets of not just Tehran, but every single major Iranian city every night for 50 nights, or however long it is since the 28th of February. Right. They've shown complete unity. The Iranian people are more united than they've ever been. So there's no problem of unity there. There was an attempt by Israel, there was an attempt by the United States to break the Iranian regime. They thought that they would bring about regime change, first with their coup attempt in January, second with their assassination of the martyr Sayyid Ali Khamenei. That completely failed.

But now the Iranian political leadership, military leadership, and people are completely united in defending their country, defending their sovereignty, defending their independence, and defending their dignity. The division is not there, but it's in the West. Like, no one supports this war. Everyone recognizes that it's a complete disaster. Okay, maybe if it had been successful within one to three days, maybe if the so-called decapitation strike had worked and they'd been able to bring about regime change and install some kind of client regime in Iran, things would be different, and the Democrats would come on board, and the Europeans would come on board, and Canada would come on board, and Australia would come on board.

But, you know, just as success has many parents, failure is an orphan, right? And this happens. This aggression is a total failure. The Iranians have played a brilliant strategic game. They've won, you know, round one of the military operation. If there is a round two, they'll win that as well. They're winning diplomatically, they're winning economically, they're winning strategically, they're winning tactically. So no one wants to own this. So there's total disunity. And all Donald Trump and his friends are trying to do is find some kind of off-ramp that doesn't make it look like it's the disaster that it is.

And that's the whole dynamic here — all this pantomime and theater that we're seeing. With J.D. Vance, is he going to Islamabad? Is he not going to Islamabad? If he goes, is he going to be there by himself? Araghchi and the others aren't going to turn up. J.D. Vance will just have to have some pilau rice and some karahi chicken by himself on the streets of Islamabad, which I'm sure is extremely nice. But that's where the disunity is. The disunity is on the Western side. It's on the U.S. side. It's on the Israeli side. The Iranian people are completely united.

#Danny

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, there was this in the lead-up to the ceasefire expiring and all this talk about Islamabad happening. Iran supposedly was going to send a delegation according to the United States. And then Iran did not do that. And they said, we're not going to talk until the blockade is over. What the... You know, what the United States did was, especially with J.D. Vance and these guys, they created this whole theater around the negotiations where you had announcements of, oh,

well, they're on their way, they're going to Islamabad. And then as time started passing, media reports were being, you know, there was information being leaked that, no, no, the plane has turned around.

Now they're going to Washington. Now there's an emergency meeting. It's obvious that there was complete disarray and a lot of, perhaps, dissatisfaction with what was actually going on, while Iran's moves all the way up until this point, especially during the war but even during the ceasefire period, have been very direct. They have stayed true to the ceasefire terms while responding to the ongoing aggression of this blockade in a really hard, you know, I think a really direct and really powerful way, now asserting even more control of the Strait of Hormuz because the United States is obsessed with this blockade.

Maybe talk about this idea of a blockade, because according to reports, there are 30-plus vessels that have left in less than 24 hours into global markets from Iran carrying their oil. This has been a pattern that we've been hearing about throughout this blockade — that some ships have been interdicted and turned around, while a lot of others have actually been able to make it through. But this is not a new thing for the United States. They love blockades. They love sanctions, of course. But now the Trump administration is really leaning heavily on this. Why? Why do you think the Trump administration is leaning heavily on it with Iran now? And why use this method of war when, especially now, it doesn't seem very effective?

#Carlos Martinez

Yeah, I guess there's a couple of factors. Firstly, and this is probably the primary factor, is that for Trump, it feels like he's doing something. You know, it's classic Trump. It's not 4D chess, is it? Maybe it's 4D checkers or 4D poker. But he's like, okay, you're going to blockade me, well, I'll blockade you. You know, he's giving himself some agency, expanding his locus of control if you want, making it look like he's in charge of the situation, when in reality, it's Iran that's in charge of the situation. You know, he's making it look like he holds the cards, to use an unfortunate metaphor that he himself introduced in conversation with Volodymyr Zelensky, when in fact, it's very clearly Iran that holds the cards.

The other thing is the status quo from the 28th of February until the 10th or 12th of April, which is when the U.S. imposed their so-called blockade. The situation was that there was freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, but it was limited to those countries that weren't attacking Iran, or that weren't supporting the attack on Iran. So that means that U.S. ships couldn't pass through completely legitimately. You're talking about a country, or a set of countries if you include Israel, that engaged in unbelievably despicable aggression — attacking, taking down civilian infrastructure, bombing schools, bombing hospitals, bombing energy infrastructure, bombing bridges, bombing apartment buildings.

They've killed over 3,000 people. The real number may be significantly higher than that. And 3,000 people itself is a fair number, right? In the course of 40 days, we're talking about a number of—well, it's actually the number of people that died on 9/11, for example. So, you know, people in the U.S. can ask themselves if they think that's a significant number of people to die in a conflict. You know, you've had 168 schoolchildren in Minab who were killed on the first or second day of the war. So Iran is absolutely within its rights at a legal level and at a moral, basic, ethical level to attack U.S. and Israeli interests any way that it sees fit.

But Chinese ships had freedom of navigation. Indian ships had freedom of navigation. South African ships had freedom of navigation. So, inasmuch as there's any kind of logic to this blockade from the U.S., it's saying, well, if we don't have freedom of navigation in this region, then we're going to prevent the Chinese and the Indians and Africans and Latin Americans from having freedom of navigation there as well. But it doesn't actually solve the problem. It doesn't, you know, the very serious problem economically, globally, that has been introduced by Iran's action in the Strait of Hormuz is that oil prices have gone up beyond a hundred dollars a barrel, and we're already starting to see the impact of that. But we've only seen the tip of the iceberg. It's going to get a lot worse. Inevitably, the Strait could be reopened tomorrow.

We would still be seeing the aftershocks of this for months and months and months in terms of the global economy. At some point, the price of oil goes up so high that the cost of doing business, the cost of manufacturing oil, the cost of manufacturing chemicals, the cost of keeping industry going, the cost of keeping services going, simply becomes too high. The AI bubble could well burst, right? What is the AI bubble if these data centers can't afford the absolutely enormous volumes of energy they use? So that problem continues to be there, continues to deteriorate, continues to get worse. So Trump might think that he looks very clever playing this game, which is actually worsening the economic crisis that's already here, and that's going to get worse. But in fact, it's completely unsustainable, and he's going to have no choice but to come back, tail between his legs, to the negotiating table.

#Danny

Yeah, and that appears to be what is actually happening. So Axios is reporting, actually, that despite the—and this is Axios, so of course we have to take it with a grain of salt because it's kind of like an intelligence conduit at this point—but it is where they speak from. And when it is right, it is right. And right now what they're saying is that the United States, Donald Trump, despite changing this ceasefire from indefinite to three to five days, giving Iran until this period to submit a new peace proposal, and even saying that, oh, well, peace talks could begin as soon as the next day or so, and within 72 hours, 36 to 72, we could have a deal—despite all of this, and despite the threat that the U.S. has made, oh, if this doesn't happen, we'll bomb again—they're saying that actually the United States wants no part in a resumption of military hostilities.

And there's been a major report about why this might be, and I'll just spill some of these facts about why this might be. Just in those days that you mentioned, from February 28th, and over those five or so weeks of hostilities, you have the United States military, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the U.S. Defense Department-funded think tank using Pentagon data, saying that the U.S. has used up 45 percent of its precision strike missiles, 50 percent of its THAAD interceptors, 50 percent of its Patriot air defense missiles, 30 percent at least of its Tomahawk stockpile, and at least 20 percent of its JASSM and other standoff munitions. Now, that might actually be a conservative estimate because they never really want to tell you how much the U.S. actually has.

But that's significant. I mean, that's only—we're talking about five, six weeks of active hostilities on Iran alone. Who knows how long if the U.S. restarts it? It seems like it's a pretty big gamble, and it seems like the United States doesn't want to take it right now, which says a lot about where we are, I think, in the world and the geopolitical situation, global situation, U.S.'s position. So what's your thoughts about this? It seems like a big shift. And we've been talking about this shift for a long time.

#Carlos Martinez

Yeah, I think what those numbers that you listed tell us is that the U.S. is not in a good position to restart this war. They've got very, very few options for escalation if they've essentially used up 50 percent of their interceptors. And they were able to go 40 days, that means potentially they could go another 40 days. There's no indication that Iran would need to stop after another 40 days. Iran has obviously been using these last two weeks to re-up its defense infrastructure. And Iranian drones and missiles are very cheap and very quick and very easy to produce.

The United States would take literally years to build back up its stock of interceptors, to build up its THAAD defenses again, to have used up 50% of its THAAD defense systems, which is allegedly the most sophisticated anti-missile defense in the world, which was developed actually for the campaign of containment and encirclement of China. And the THAAD has been stored in South Korea, in Japan, and Guam. You know, it's very clearly about the first and second island chain strategies and preparing the United States for a potential hot war in the coming years against China.

If they've basically run through their entire capacity of THAAD, that means they've lost their capacity for power projection in East Asia, which is the whole foundation of their global strategy for the next 10 or 20 years at least. So that's a major, major setback. So potentially they could keep the war going for another 40 days. Iran could keep going an awful lot longer than that. Meanwhile, Iran has got options for escalation that it hasn't used. There are lots of weapon systems that Iran hasn't used yet. There's the remaining energy infrastructure in the Persian Gulf that Iran could very easily attack and will attack if its energy systems come under further attack, if its oil fields and its gas fields come under further attack.

And furthermore, Iran, in coordination with Yemen, could shut down access to the Red Sea as well, which would go well beyond 20% to 25% of energy flows. You're talking more about 40% of energy flows. And you're talking about completely cutting off Saudi Arabia, completely cutting off the UAE, completely cutting off Bahrain from any kind of economic activity whatsoever. So what it looks like is the countries of the Persian Gulf having their economies shut down, the US's military infrastructure in the Persian Gulf being totally and permanently dismantled, and the US's ability for power projection across the world, and particularly in East Asia, being dismantled.

So that's not a great outcome. And their only remaining option at that point becomes a land invasion. And I think every vaguely sensible person with half a brain in their head knows perfectly well that that's an absolute debacle. And in a population of 93 million Iranians, you've got 93 million people that are ready to defend their country with guns against any invading force. There's absolutely no way whatsoever that that will work out well for the United States. They will suffer greatly. They've already suffered their biggest defeat since Vietnam. What they would suffer if they went for a land invasion against Iran would be a bigger defeat than Vietnam.

#Danny

Yeah, maybe the biggest defeat. I mean, the United States sent what, 5,000 here, 10,000 there, accumulated up to 50,000. Now they're sending the George W. Bush aircraft carrier. But none of that can build up to a level of confronting those numbers — 93 million. The United States just doesn't have it, and it's not built to do this. I've talked about this, Carlos, on the show. The U.S. military is built to be an empire that dominates America's assumed weaker countries. The perception is that everybody, anywhere they go, anywhere they intervene, anywhere they wage wars of aggression, it's assumed that these countries, these people are too weak. They don't have the military power.

They don't have the economic resilience. They don't have the leadership, the political leadership, the support — none of that. Unfortunately for the United States, Iran has all of these things. And during the 12-day war in June of 2025, the U.S. used 20% of THAAD interceptors just on Israel, just in that Israel-Iran exchange. So it makes a lot of sense that after four or five weeks of hostilities, now we're talking about 50-plus percent being completely gone. And this is even counting the fact that Iran has also hit Patriot missile systems during the period of hostilities. And they knocked out nearly every single damn radar that they had in places like Jordan, Kuwait, and elsewhere.

So these systems are not even as effective, or effective at all, even if they had them. And now we're talking about losing them altogether in Iraq. The real theater of war the U.S. wants to get to is China, and the U.S. now has to pull everything into the Middle East to try to make Iran happen, to try to push over that domino. But it's not bending. It's not falling. So this is where we are. I'm

curious, though, what are some of the larger implications you find of these developments? Because you have Trump appearing to not want to go back into military hostilities, yet having to act as if he always has the option and will do so. Then you have Iran.

You said they hold so many cards. They just said that they will cut every single underwater facility cable that is used by these vessels and is used by these countries that border the Strait of Hormuz, like the UAE. They'll just cut it all out, and they'll have no access to any kind of navigation systems at all, essentially shutting down traffic — even worse, maybe shutting down even the possibility of using the strait by these countries at all. So that's a big card as well. So your thoughts on the larger implications of this as Iran prepares to retaliate even harder if the United States wants to try to lull Iran to sleep through this back and forth about a ceasefire?

#Carlos Martinez

Look, I mean, I don't have to tell you it's a very complicated and very fragile situation. I think ultimately what it comes down to is that the Iranians will not and cannot settle for anything less than victory. Which is not to say that they don't want peace. Of course they want peace. Of course they want a lasting ceasefire. Of course they want settlement. Of course they want the opportunity to be able to rebuild their country. They've taken a major economic hit from this. Tons of infrastructure have been destroyed. Apartment blocks have been destroyed. Schools have been destroyed. I'm sure, you know, hundreds of thousands, if not more than that, you know, if not more than a million jobs have been impacted by this.

People, schoolchildren, and university students are still having to do their schooling and their university education online. So there's a massive disruption to the ordinary function of life. And there's the loss of life. And people want to return to normality. They want to feel safe. They want to get back to rebuilding their country. But they're not willing to compromise their dignity. They're not willing to compromise their sovereign right to exist as a state, their independence. And therefore, they can't reasonably be expected to settle for anything less than what is a victory, because they can't have a fragile ceasefire.

They can't have a situation where they negotiate and end this current conflict, but then after another six or eight months, the U.S. is back again and Israel is back again. They're not going to keep building and rebuilding, having their infrastructure destroyed and then building it back again. That's not an acceptable situation. So I think in terms of their red lines, they need to have clear security guarantees that they can't and won't be attacked like this again. That means that the U.S. cannot maintain its military infrastructure in the Persian Gulf. It can't maintain its bases and its weapons systems in Bahrain, in Saudi Arabia, in the UAE, in Jordan, in Qatar, etc., etc. That simply can't happen.

And there needs to be some level of international guarantee there, be it via the UN, be it via the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, or be it in collaboration with Russia or China or whatever. There

needs to be some kind of clear security guarantee that they're not going to be attacked again. They need to be paid reparations, that's obvious. And they need to know that they can maintain control of the Strait of Hormuz. And they need to have guarantees related to Lebanon. And they need to have guarantees related to the Palestinian people. I don't think there can be meaningful compromise on any of that. And the Iranians, as we've said, they hold the cards. They're in a position where they can dictate the terms of what a lasting ceasefire looks like.

So the whole game at this point is, how can Trump, how can J.D. Vance, how can Witkoff, how can Kushner make that—what I've just described—look like a victory for the United States? If they can find some way of presenting that to the most gullible and credulous people as a victory, then great, I'm all for it. If it means that the war ends and Iran protects its independence and can get on with rebuilding, then, uh, with reparations, and there's a path to peace in Lebanon and there's a path to peace in Gaza and the West Bank, then that's fantastic. But that's really on the United States. You know, I don't think the Iranian position is movable.

#Danny

Yeah, and I think all those terms, if all those terms were actually met, I do believe it would need a treaty, an actual deal that is internationally recognized. I think Iran would actually be okay with maybe not letting go of its ability to control the Strait of Hormuz. It would maintain the infrastructure to be able to start again. But I think it would actually say, okay, well, we can open this up and we don't actually have to be escorting anymore, whatever. I think that might happen. But I think also Iran is very well aware that the United States likely won't meet all, or maybe not even any, of these. So by maintaining this firm control of the Strait of Hormuz, which is territorial waters, no matter how much people might want to say it's also international, it doesn't even matter if you want to have this debate.

The fact is that it does lie off of Iran's borders, and it can and will assert control over it as a constant pressure point to be able to enact a huge level of pain economically, no matter what happens. So Iran can just do this and make the cost of not meeting its demands really high, and really high over a long period of time. And I think that's a huge shift in the status quo, because even if Iran wanted to go back to the status quo, to what it was before the war, if all these demands were met, I don't think Iran would want to give up that ability—the ability to say, all right, snap, now we're back blocking ships and escorting ships and choosing who gets to go through because the United States is acting up again. To me, that seems like there's a whole new order of things in this region and, of course, the world now.

#Carlos Martinez

I mean, I think the longer it goes on and the more belligerent the United States is, and the more it tries to impose unilateral conditions that are unacceptable to Iran, the worse the deal is going to be for the United States. What do you think is realistically on the table right now? What I think is

realistically on the table is something along the lines of the JCPOA, where Iran agrees to restrict its uranium enrichment and agrees to have that monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and agrees to only enrich to a certain percentage and to a certain volume, with some kind of time limitation on that.

I think Iran would be willing to go back to some kind of reasonable arrangement such as that. But I think the terms will be more in Iran's favor with any kind of nuclear energy deal. And furthermore, they would have to be combined with the type of security guarantees we've been talking about. So any kind of deal that is possible right now is already worse for the US than the JCPOA was, which Trump, of course, pulled out of in 2018 during his first presidency. The longer this goes on, the harder those terms are going to get, and the less willing the Iranians are going to be to compromise. And as Clausewitz famously said, you can't win on the negotiating table what you haven't already won on the battlefield.

And Iran has done the bulk of the winning so far on the battlefield. And for reasons we've talked about, that's only going to become more the case as time goes on, as the US runs out of its interceptor systems, as it runs out of its advanced missiles, as the Persian Gulf's energy infrastructure disappears and gets hit, as more and more military targets in Israel come under attack. So if the US is smart, it will go for a deal here and now, and it will adhere to whatever Iran is asking for. And you could say that it's a kind of parallel situation with Russia and Ukraine, right? Everyone knows the situation on the ground.

Everyone knows that the Russians have been creating facts on the ground in Ukraine for the last four years. And the Ukrainians may not be willing to negotiate a deal, and the US and Europeans may not be willing to negotiate a deal. But every day they don't negotiate a deal, the worse the ultimate terms of any deal are going to be for them. So they're just prolonging the inevitable. They make the inevitable worse. And I think that's very much the case with Iran and the Persian Gulf now. So any smart, any vaguely sane mind in Washington right now is going to be going for a deal basically along the lines of the 10-point plan that Iran put forward in the first place.

#Danny

Yeah. Yeah. And there's a lot of talk about, okay, well, the U.S. sending George W. Bush, you know, an aircraft carrier alongside the other two, the Ford, which is actually completely out of service, and the Abraham Lincoln, which hasn't been doing much service despite being in service, that that is some kind of checkmate, that there will be more opportunities for aggression. But it doesn't look good when you have to throw every single gun, everything you have at Iran only to be in this situation. Any aggression will have consequences, which the U.S. does not like to face at all when it comes to war.

It wants to be able to bomb and destroy and overthrow without any externalities, or at least with as few consequences as possible. And of course, they're more than willing for Americans to die if they

do. It's whatever to them. It's a ruling class. But economic consequences, military consequences, the loss of huge numbers of resources — that's unacceptable. And of course, the attack on U.S. imperialism's image as this dominant force, that is probably the most important thing for the U.S. to preserve. But we're in China right now, Carlos. Could you talk about... what have you — you've been to China many times.

In terms of where this war fits in the larger global picture, maybe you can talk about China, because China has come under attack in this blockade. It's been said that this blockade is about China by many U.S. officials, including Janet Yellen, the Secretary of the Treasury. China has condemned this blockade, hasn't condemned what Iran is doing in the Strait of Hormuz, but has said it wants the Strait open. So talk about, given your experience in China, talking about it, writing about it, what exactly should we know about China in relation to this war, and also just how this is all fitting in — this war and this current world situation, with the role of China and the role of these larger powers building a multipolar world.

#Carlos Martinez

Yeah, I mean, I think you kind of got to the core of what this war is all about, in the sense that this war that's being waged by the Trump regime, or better said, as the Iranians call it, the Epstein class, it's not only being waged against Iran, right? If it was only a matter of taking out a government that they happen to not like, they could have tried that at any time in the last 47 years. Any time before now would have been better. They would have had better circumstances. The Iranians would have been less well-prepared than they are. But they haven't done that. So it fits into a much wider and global dynamic.

Regionally, I think it fits into the Palestine dynamic, because let's not forget, and as you've talked about on your show and your guests have talked about many times, Iran has for 47 years been the number one state supporter of Palestinian independence and Palestinian sovereignty and Palestinian resistance. And that support has been very tangible. It goes well beyond diplomacy. It goes into the provision of weapons and logistical support and training and money, right? So Iran has been a very big part of keeping the Palestinian struggle for independence and against apartheid and occupation and genocide for nearly half a century now. And so that's a big part of the motivation. But another very important part of the motivation is the global war against multipolarity, and particularly against China — to weaken China, to encircle China, to contain China, to suppress its rise.

Iran, of course, has extremely good diplomatic and economic relations with China. Iran is a major player in the Belt and Road Initiative. Iran and China have a very important bilateral deal of, I think it's maybe \$250 billion, based predominantly around energy supplies. Iran is an important supplier of oil and gas to China. And this fits in with what the Trump regime has been doing in Venezuela — obviously kidnapping Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores on the 3rd of January this year, and, you know,

taking control of Venezuela's oil systems. Now, they've said that, well, we're not going to stop the flow of Venezuelan oil to China. But what's important is that if they control it, then they give themselves the possibility of turning that tap off if they need to.

If they control the flow of oil through the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz, then they give themselves the opportunity of turning off that tap. So they're trying to take control of these global energy choke points, which would allow them to impose a blockade, an energy blockade on China in the case of a hot war against China, which, generally speaking, people who follow intelligence and military matters expect is going to happen in the next few years. After a few years, it's not going to be feasible anymore. The Chinese are also pursuing their military modernization project. It's not going to be possible to take China on militarily. Actually, personally, I don't think it's possible now. I think that ship has sailed. But that's the thinking. They may be crazy in the Pentagon. They may be crazy in the White House.

They may be crazy in the State Department. But as Shakespeare said, whom the gods seek to destroy, first they make mad. And that is essentially the plan. So taking Iran out and replacing the Iranian government, which is a profoundly sovereign and profoundly anti-imperialist government, deeply aligned with the multipolar process, a member of BRICS as of the last couple of years, a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as of the last couple of years, very close links with Russia, very close links with China, longstanding supporter of Palestine, very close links with Venezuela, with Cuba, with Nicaragua, all the resistant states that you can name, Iran has very close ties with.

So removing Iran from the so-called global chessboard is obviously very important. But yeah, as I said, not only in terms of Iran itself, but in terms of the West Asian region and in terms of Eurasia and this overall attack on China. The big irony is, you know, what they're achieving is the exact opposite of what they're hoping to achieve. They're hoping to improve their military position, but actually they've massively weakened their position. And that's only going to get worse as time goes on. They're hoping to improve their economic position. They've only worsened their economic position. And diplomatically, I mean, apart from anything else, you know, Iran was basically, by liberal Westerners at least, kind of hated a couple of months ago.

It was, you know, the media had done a quite good job of painting it as this terrible thing, a repressive regime that was putting down peaceful protests, etc., etc. Now everyone, apart from the most hardened neoliberal and imperialist, says, you know, God bless Iran for fighting on behalf of the entire world against the Epstein class, right? You know, that's the prevailing sentiment if you speak to ordinary people, if you get away from the mainstream media and if you get away from mainstream politics. That's what people think, even in New York City, right? That's what people think. People are standing with Iran. And furthermore, they're standing with Palestine.

Furthermore, they're standing with China. China gets to look very good at the moment. It's playing a cautious but very careful, calculated, and sensible diplomatic game where it's de facto supporting

Iran. It's standing up for Iran's sovereignty. It's making very clear calls for the immediate cessation of hostilities, very clear and direct criticism of Israel, very clear and direct criticism of the United States. And if, as we talked about at the beginning of the show, the US is running down its missiles and it's running down its air defenses, then that's a far better situation, relatively speaking, for China, militarily and geostrategically.

So, yeah, and obviously China's been very active diplomatically. It's put forward its four-point peace proposal. It's been working very closely with Pakistan toward a ceasefire, toward some kind of diplomatically negotiated outcome of all of this. So in terms of, you know, how the world perceives China and a kind of political or diplomatic China-maxing, you know, that's very much a thing now. Whereas with the U.S., the mask is fully off. Everyone hates the U.S. So the whole thing has been designed to slow down, to decelerate the multipolar trajectory. But I think ultimately history is going to show that it's massively accelerated it.

#Danny

Yeah, well, I think everything you've said is 100% true. And here in China, I mean, I have not noticed—there's been a lot made about the potential impact of this war on China and whether or not the U.S. is succeeding in knocking down Iran and getting close to it, or even just being able to put together an infrastructure to blockade Iran, like they are to weaken China. I don't get any sense of any concern here about this war at all, actually. Of course, we've been in conversations, we've gone to events where people are talking about the problems of this war, but in no way are they saying, well, this is going to necessarily weaken us. Quite the contrary. Zhang Weiwei told me that he was very clear—he knows the data about China's energy profile.

No matter what happens in this war, it's likely not going to devastate China. But nonetheless, there's this, I think, assumption that China is in a very vulnerable position. But what I've seen also is, I was in a cab and the cab driver, you know, asked me, am I American? You know, and then he asked, why does the Trump administration, why does Trump provoke wars? And why is he doing this to Iran now? I think there's a lot of obvious sentiment, not just in China but in the world, that places the U.S. in its rightful position as this warmonger. And the crises that the U.S. seems to be proliferating out of this only cement the U.S.'s own demise toward a pariah state, and a state that, you know, it's in a much more fragile position than I think a lot of people assume. I think a lot of people assume that the U.S. is in a very strong position, big military.

It's still a relatively big economy despite the character of it and what direction it's going and all of this, and the realities underneath it. But nonetheless, it seems like the world has changed quite a bit, and China doesn't really seem too worried about this. And they also have, I think, a lot of advantages in terms of they know what kind of support they can give and they want to give, and how effective that support is. And in many cases, it's worked. It's worked. There's been a lot of development going on, and Iran has benefited mightily from being able to call China its number one economic friend. They're rebuilding things quite fast. They're almost rebuilding things after this war,

or after hostilities, almost kind of in a China-like fashion. They've rebuilt railways. They've rebuilt damaged infrastructure in days' time. I think China's support has a lot to do with that.

#Carlos Martinez

Yeah, and another interesting factor that I haven't heard many people talking about is, well, we were talking about this actually at a conference a few days ago in Hangzhou, and we mentioned what the Chinese have theorized as the intermediate zone. And this theory has been around since the 1950s and was kind of given shape by Mao Zedong in particular. But, you know, he was talking about countries like the European countries, countries like Canada, countries like Australia, that they're capitalist countries, they're wealthy countries, they're even, you know, minor imperialist countries. But the U.S. still aims to bully them, still aims to dominate them.

And, you know, with the Cold War from 1945 onwards, up until especially the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, these countries all pretty much universally fell under a U.S. military, political, economic, diplomatic, and security umbrella, right? And they accepted U.S. leadership. They accepted U.S. hegemony. They accepted a so-called rules-based international order, right? Which was more or less a U.S.-led imperialist system where countries like Britain, France, Germany, Canada, and Australia could get a few crumbs from the table and could get a few benefits here and there.

And obviously, the material basis for that, to some degree, has disappeared with the collapse of the Soviet Union. And we've seen some small examples of Europe in particular trying to assert some strategic autonomy. We saw that in 2003 when France and Germany refused to participate in the war in Iraq. But really, I think that's becoming much clearer now. Just the fact that no country is actually falling in line with the U.S. and Israel over this Iran war. Even complete spivs like Starmer and Macron, you know, the worst flunkies who go along with absolutely everything Trump has done. With Iran, all of a sudden, they found themselves able to stand up to Trump to some degree and say, we don't want to be implicated in this.

One, they don't want to be implicated because they know it's going to lose, and who wants to be on the losing side? But two, they don't want to be implicated because they know it's a very clear and flagrant violation of international law, which has no popular support whatsoever. And these people are already incredibly unpopular. Keir Starmer's popularity rating is phenomenal — like, hey, it's 11%, maybe it's 12%, but we're talking about a very small number, especially given the fact that we're currently in China, a country where the government has a popularity rating of around 93%, 94%.

So... these countries, these leaderships, these ruling classes don't want to become any more unpopular than they already are. They don't want to be associated with the complete breakdown of international order. They don't want to be associated with a situation where U.S. imperialism has completely taken the mask off. And, you know, U.S. imperialism has always gone to war, but at least

in the past, it went to war in the name of human rights, or in the name of the battle against communism, or in the name of democracy or freedom of speech or something. Whereas Trump is pretty clear, you know, he might say something about nuclear weapons — no one believes that rubbish, right?

Yeah, when you're talking about a country that's had a literal fatwa, a religious edict against the development of nuclear weapons, in place for more than 30 years, and then comes under attack, you know, ostensibly for its development of nuclear weapons by two nuclear powers, no one believes that rubbish. So the mask is off. People know what this war is about. It's about energy. It's about oil. It's about gas. It's about hegemony. It's about domination. And people don't want to be associated with that.

Meanwhile, China is here playing by the rules — playing by the rules of the United Nations, adhering to the United Nations Charter, adhering to the principles of peaceful coexistence, adhering to the principles of sovereign equality, adhering to the rules of the World Trade Organization, trading very fairly with the countries of the world, being economically, politically, diplomatically, militarily a very stable power that's attractive for countries that need to rebuild their economy, that need to re-industrialize, that need to create products, that need to take advantage of a huge market.

You know, China is a country with a middle-income population of around 500 million, which potentially, if things go according to plan within the next 10 years, will be a middle-income population of 800 million. You know, this is an absolutely enormous population of people who are ready and willing to consume. You know, Britain could be benefiting from that. France could be benefiting from that. Canada could be benefiting from that. So if you see Pedro Sánchez, the prime minister of Spain, turning up in Beijing for the fourth time in four years, if you see British Prime Minister Keir Starmer turning up in Beijing, the first British prime minister to come to China for eight years.

If you see Macron over here, if you see Merz over here, if you see Mark Carney of Canada over here, if you see Anthony Albanese over here, there's a very good reason for that. They can see which way the wind is blowing. So the intermediate zone is being shifted, more or less against its will, in a direction of just having to accept the reality of the multipolar trajectory. They might not like it. It might not be what they choose. It might not be what they feel comfortable with at an ideological or even moral level, but it's a reality, and they're having to just accept being dragged kicking and screaming towards it. And so that's a really interesting shift that we're seeing. And the U.S. and Israel are going to find themselves, at the end of all of this, totally isolated.

And then the question is going to be for the U.S., can the U.S.? Is there anyone with enough sense and enough imagination and enough vision and enough forethought to try and find a strategy that adapts the United States towards a multipolar reality, that tries to reach an accommodation with China, an accommodation with Russia, an accommodation with Africa, an accommodation with Latin America, an accommodation with West Asia? Essentially, if you listen to what Jeffrey Sachs says

about what the U.S. should do strategically, that's what the U.S. should do. But is there anyone in the Republican Party or the Democratic Party that can even take the first step along that road? I have my doubts, but there you go.

#Danny

Yeah, now I have my doubts, and somehow, until the U.S. political situation changes—maybe fundamentally—we're relying on these two parties completely paid for and controlled by the very forces within the U.S. and Israel: these oligarchs, these capitalists, monopolists, military industrialists, bankers, etc. Until that is changed, it's likely we'll still see, no matter the limitations, no matter the weaknesses, still a push toward this. And so I think that's something definitely we all can think about. Well, Carlos, maybe a quick minute—talk about what you're working on, where people can find you. I'll make sure all that stuff is in the video description below right after we exit here. Back to you.

#Carlos Martinez

That's awesome. Thank you, Danny. Well, it's been great talking. The Chinese translation of my book, **The East is Still Red: Chinese Socialism in the 21st Century**, is going to be published in the next month or two. And we've got Spanish and Portuguese translations coming later this year. Keith Bennett and I—Keith is my fellow co-editor on Friends of Socialist China—are working on a co-edited book about China's foreign policy. You've contributed a chapter to that book. Andrew Murray, Ken Hammond, Radhika Desai, Jenny Clegg, Torkel Lawson, Mick Dunford, and a number of other people have contributed chapters to that book. So that will be out within the next, hopefully, three or four months. Continuing to work on the Friends of Socialist China website. I recently launched my own YouTube channel, **Invent the Future**, where I'm trying to get into the habit of uploading analysis of, particularly, China, but geopolitics in general. So, yeah, a few plates spinning.

#Danny

Yeah, well, I just put those things in the video description so people can find it now that the show is heading to a close. Everybody hit the like button before you go, because that helps keep the stream going in YouTube's algorithm. So you can find Carlos's resources, places to follow him and support his work in the video description, as well as all the places to support this channel—Patreon, Substack, and much more. Well, that concludes it here, Carlos. It was a great hour. We actually have some stuff to do before we prepare for another day tomorrow. I will be interviewing, I think, Victor Gao soon, in a couple of days. I haven't been able to do as much walking around here.

Actually, we're in Changsha right now, and it's... the weather has not been the greatest, but hopefully we get a chance to do that soon before we depart. But nonetheless, I'll have other kinds of media I can share with you guys from the trip if that works. Should see how things develop. But I'll be back tomorrow again, everybody. Hit the like button before you go. See you again then. And

everybody, make sure that you are supporting Carlos and this show, especially by hitting the like button so more people can hear him and more people can hear our conversation and also support him. So, all right. Take good care, everyone. See you again on the next show. Bye-bye.