

Patrick Henningsen: Hezbollah JUST Fired Back at Israel

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Friday, April 24th, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Patrick Henningsen, is here with us. Welcome back, Patrick.

#Patrick

That's great to be with you, Nima.

#Nima

Patrick, let's start with the latest news about the Iranian foreign minister. He said, he posted on his X account that he's going to go. He has a tour going to Islamabad, then to Muscat in Oman, and later on he's going to be in Moscow. And he said, the last sentence in this post was that our neighbors are our priority. That's why he's doing this. And later on, we've learned from CNN, they're talking about Donald Trump preparing Steve Whitcomb and Jared Kushner to be sent to Islamabad.

The problem is that the Iranian team said it's not on their plan, and we even had some news in Iranian media, in Persian media, saying that there are no conditions, the situation is not there, they're not there to talk with the United States. And it's a visit on the part of the Iranian delegation, the Iranian foreign minister, to Islamabad. It's part of, as I said, the tour. But it seems that Donald Trump is insisting on sending Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff to Islamabad to talk with the Iranians. Your understanding of what's going on?

#Patrick

Well, I guess he's looking for things for Witkoff and Kushner to do so they can appear useful or something. They're not getting enough golf rounds in on the links in Long Island. But no, it's kind of a running joke at this point. What this is, is just basically another signal to the United States that the world isn't just going to drop what they're doing in order to accommodate whatever Washington's saying. So it's like, we're sending our envoys, our special envoys, to Islamabad. You know, whatever you've got organized, you can put that off to the side. You've got to see our guys. So they're wanting to be involved. The pattern here is unmistakable, Nima. Who called for the ceasefire?

It wasn't Iran. And who wants to extend the ceasefire? It's not Iran. And extend it again. It's not Iran. That's the United States. Normally, the party that's losing or the party that's at a disadvantage will beg for a ceasefire. And the United States begged for a ceasefire. If you believe the press conferences of Pete Hegseth and the confident statements of Donald Trump, you'd think that they've got it all under control and the Iranians are going to learn the lesson to bend to the will of American power or we're just going to destroy them. If that's the case, why did they ask for a ceasefire? So I think a couple of things are clear. Donald Trump has no suitable exit here. He's got no suitable exit.

If he withdraws now, the embarrassment, it's almost like admitting defeat. To accept Iranian terms, he can't. Politically, he can't. In his mind, I think he could. If he was smart, he would, and he would sell it and package it in such a way to make it seem like a victory. But they're so dug in with this American dominance narrative that they're afraid. And so he can't do that. He can't withdraw. He can't pull the other card, which is what the MAGA card, the original MAGA card, was: hey, it's not our war. We're not the world's policemen. We don't care what happens in the street. Remember that? We don't care about the Persian Gulf. We don't get any of our energy from there. Nothing to do with us.

The Europeans need to step up. And two weeks later, he's like, no, no, no, we've got to control that. So if we withdrew and said, we're not going to be the world's policeman in the Persian Gulf, well, you're basically leaving Israel pretty much on its own. And the lobby in America won't allow that. So that's off the table. So those are the two main positions that would make sense from a U.S. interest point of view, you could say. But they can't. Those are off-limits. Those are blocked for Trump. And the other one is to escalate. The other one is to cover up this catastrophe with another catastrophe, with another layer of crisis. And that's what all the signals, Nima, are very clear.

They're pointing to the inability to come to any agreement, the inability to conduct kind of mature actions, logical international relations. You know, just the bare basics, by the way. I mean, we're talking undergrad-level diplomacy and international relations. The Trump administration can't even manage that. They're really incompetent. Donald Trump is probably one of the worst dealmakers in history. You know, part of his book was *The Art of the Deal*. But building a casino in Atlantic City and trying to undo an undeclared illegal war of aggression, the level of the mess that's happened globally as a result of this war, trying to undo that with a deal—it's not the same thing.

It's not the same thing. And you can't be ignorant of history. You can't be ignorant of other countries' political interests and sensitivities. And just basically, you can't be ignorant of the security architecture of the region, a post-U.S. security architecture. Because isn't that what we're talking about? We're talking about a post-U.S. Persian Gulf. There's no place for the U.S. in there. Nobody has admitted this in the Trump administration. They're talking like things were a year ago. They're not. This is not the same Persian Gulf. This is not the same Middle East. It will never be the same.

So their inability to kind of confront and accept these realities, and their own sort of incompetence — their negotiators, their Secretary of State, who's basically AWOL. Marco Rubio is not even, like, nobody knows where he is or what he's doing. I guess he's planning the invasion of Cuba at the moment, another illegal war. They're planning to invade Cuba. So that's what Rubio is busy doing — stealing oil and imposing illegal blockades on U.S. neighbors. So he can't even be bothered to show up or even weigh in on this war. So it shows you this is a dysfunctional government. They have one choice, which is they have to double down. They can't admit they're wrong, and they have to double down.

And, you know, as far as Israel goes, Israel is not able to defend itself right now. That's pretty clear. If hostilities start, there's going to be big problems for Israel — physically, politically, militarily, economically. It's all going to continue to get worse. So this also opens the door, because there's a lot of talk about the deployment of nuclear weapons, and I find this to be very disconcerting and quite shocking and frightening that people are talking about this in such a casual way, as if that's some kind of justifiable solution to a war that the U.S. and Israel started. So it's lies upon lies you hear from the Western side now. Well, lies upon lies. They're piling it on now because they don't want people to look at the root causes of how this began.

And really, this began with the withdrawal from the JCPOA under Trump's first term. That was the timer that set in motion a course of events that led us to this war, that gave them the pretext to escalate under the fake claim — the completely fabricated claim — that Iran is developing a nuclear weapon. Completely fake. And they had to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, which was a perfectly acceptable international treaty. Iran wasn't developing one anyway, but the JCPOA under Obama just gave a double guarantee that they wouldn't be developing one. So, I mean, it's even the best of both worlds for everybody. But by withdrawing from that, it creates a narrative that, oh, look, there's no nuclear deal in place.

Iran's definitely not developing a nuclear weapon. Then Trump will turn around now, you know, so many years later — eight years, nine years later — and say the JCPOA put Iran on the path to a nuclear weapon? It's just unbelievable how they can sell this to an increasingly stupid U.S. public and an increasingly brain-dead Fox News and what's left of the MAGA base audience. Because that's what you're dealing with here. People in America who believe any of this, these half-baked talking points, they really need to get their heads checked. Not to mention, I think half of Trump's cabinet needs to be breathalyzed and drug tested immediately because the things that are coming out of the White House are quite insane at the moment.

#Nima

Patrick, the concept of a blockade is to put economic pressure on Iran. This is a country that, for many of us, I think... they were under the sanctions of the United States for such a long time — 46, more than 46 years. So they know how to deal with economic difficulties. And the United States does not. Yes, today I talked with Larry Johnson. He mentioned that, at best, they are able to control 10% of this traffic in and out of the Persian Gulf. And that's totally manageable for the Iranian people. But looking at the situation right now, do you think — it seems to me that Donald Trump is getting to the point of understanding that this blockade is not working?

Yesterday we learned, you know, for example, an IRGC Navy vessel escorting one of these tankers to the Persian Gulf, and nobody did anything. The U.S. Navy tried to seize that, but they couldn't because of the IRGC. It was some sort of confrontation showing force between the two sides. And it's going to get worse. It's not going to get better for the United States in that region. Iran is in its region. The United States is a guest in that region, or somehow it's a foreigner to that region. And what does that mean? Do you think it's going to bring new escalations, new cycles of war? And how far would that bring any sort of constructive outcome for the United States?

#Patrick

Well, first of all, a blockade, a military blockade of Iranian ports or Iranian shipping — that's an act of war. So first and foremost, that disqualifies any negotiations. It's not going to happen. There will be no peace settlement. So the idea that Iran must come to the table while you're imposing a blockade on them, while you're boasting — Pete Hegseth is on television, in front of the press conference, boasting that the United States is basically apprehending Iranian commercial ships, calling them black fleets and saying, we're going to pursue them all over the world with our Navy. Okay. I mean, and then accusing Iran of piracy, while the U.S. are the biggest pirates right now on the planet, using the U.S. Navy as basically a privateer naval force on behalf of the State of Israel, which is basically what they're doing.

So that, and ratcheting up sanctions at the same time by the United States — again, another act of war. So in terms of the Strait of Hormuz, again, what people need to understand is quite simple: from an international law point of view, the United States has not a leg to stand on. If you look at the International Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982, two countries did not ratify that international treaty. One of them was Iran. Iran did not ratify that convention, so they did not opt into that. And guess what the other country that did not ratify it was? That would have been like freedom of movement through all waterways, etc. Iran said no — they reserve the right to exercise control over their near abroad, the Strait of Hormuz.

The United States did not ratify that either. So legally, the United States doesn't have a leg to stand on in terms of maritime law, firstly. Secondly, both Iran and Oman extended their territorial waters

over the last 50 years to basically the point where they're both touching each other in the Strait of Hormuz. So there is no sort of daylight in terms of international waterways there. That's the second thing. Third, this is a war situation. Iran is at war. The U.S. and Israel declared war on Iran. Even if they didn't do an official declaration, they undertook an undeclared war of aggression against a sovereign state, a sovereign U.N. member state.

So because of that, and in the laws of war and precedent, Iran is well within its rights until this conflict is resolved to take control of the Strait of Hormuz until such a time where there is some kind of an interim accord and eventually a treaty. It's very simple. So back to the original point, Nima, the inability of the United States to be agreement-capable, especially this Trump administration. But Biden had this problem as well with regards to Russia — U.S. and Russia and all of their various agreements and anything in Ukraine. So Trump is even worse by, like, orders of magnitude. So that means that they cannot resolve the situation.

Now Trump, they will turn around and say, well, it's not our problem. We don't recognize international law. We're the USA. Well, actually, no. The United States, what they have opted into in terms of the Geneva Conventions and all of these other international treaties, and to do with, like, let's say, for instance, they're saying now they're giving the order that they're going to fire on Iranian boats and kill them all, basically. That's against U.S. law because the United States adopted all of these things after World War II that would constrain the U.S. military and constrain the U.S. from doing what everyone was doing during the time before that, which is committing heinous acts of war. That's why all these conventions were put into place and ratified by the U.S. Congress.

So that's the law of the land under the Supremacy Clause of United States law and the Constitution. So that's mandated. So to opt out of this, you have to undo all of that legislation in the U.S. So Trump is completely out of U.S. law, in violation of U.S. law. So it's illegal by the American people's legal standard, and it's illegal internationally, what they're doing. And they have no claim whatsoever in terms of telling Iran what to do with the Strait of Hormuz. And Iran has every right to do what it's doing internationally. So all indications, Nima, are the failure of negotiations, the inability of the U.S. to act as a normative power in the international system, and then the threats by this administration and also the movement of U.S. military assets and another carrier strike group coming around the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, heading towards the Indian Ocean.

I believe that's the USS George H.W. Bush and that strike group joining two other strike groups, one of which is already in the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea in that area, and the other coming from Greece in the northern Red Sea, the USS Gerald Ford, which, funny enough, I don't know if it's going to go any further south through the Bab el-Mandeb Straits. That's also a problem. But more likely it's going to provide potential assistance for Israel in defending Israel, but also to defend the port of Yanbu, Saudi Arabia's petroline, the east-west pipeline. This is used to bypass the Straits of Hormuz, which will be a target when hostilities resume by Iranian missiles.

So it looks like that carrier strike group includes not just the aircraft carriers, but the destroyers that are escorting it with missile interceptor capabilities. So it looks like they're preparing for war, Nima. And that's the inevitable conclusion that we can come to here. And if they avoid war, if we avoid war in this case, it will be because they're extending to try to find something to do, some other way to kind of... Trump is all about micromanagement. He likes to micromanage and, you know, repaint the lines on the pitch as the game proceeds, change the touchline on the field basically during the game. That's how Donald Trump rolls when he does things. And he thinks that somehow he'll find the magic formula there to get the deal he wants.

But this is not building an apartment complex in Manhattan. This is totally different. So Donald Trump is totally out of his depth. As an individual, he's well past his level of competence right now as President of the United States. And everybody in America knows this. He's the laughingstock of the world. He will go down in history as probably easily the worst U.S. President in the history of the country, and that will ever be in the future as well. He has already etched—that's his legacy. He thinks that he's going to get an aircraft carrier named after him and a big statue of him in Washington. It's not going to happen. And it's for all those reasons that we have just outlined.

#Nima

I think the problem that he's facing is that his enemy has to help him to get out of it. This is the problem. We had the ceasefire, then he unilaterally extended the ceasefire. Iran somehow perceived what is going on with this game because they don't want to be in the game to help Donald Trump save face with what he's confronting right now. And then you see right now, you know, there is no way for Donald Trump unless Iran decides to help him. It's impossible. It's, you know, considering what is going on in Iran, you know, the nature and the way that they're talking about the conflict, there is no way for Donald Trump to save face.

And he's going to have a lot of difficulty. I think all the signs, as you've mentioned, show we are heading towards some sort of escalation, a new cycle of war, because Iran would prefer to have a war, to put a lot of pressure, even making the case worse for Donald Trump, just not going in a direction to help him. This is the reality that he's facing. I don't know if he perceives that or if he's trying desperately to do something else, because it doesn't seem that Iran is willing to play the way he wants Iran to play to help him.

#Patrick

I think probably on a subconscious level he realizes he's been outmaneuvered. He's put himself into pretty much an unwinnable position. But like you said, he's trying to get Iran to help bail him out a little bit. They come to the negotiation table, but then maybe this has something... I mean, I'm not a psychologist here, but a sociopath will convince himself that there's a solution when subconsciously he's preparing to sabotage. Once they get the other person to the table to make a compromise, then

he'll attack again. That's the basic mind of a malignant narcissist or a psychopath or a serial killer or something like that.

So that's kind of how Donald Trump's brain is wired — he will convince himself that he sincerely wants a solution, but then when he gets them to the table, he will attack. And that's just in his nature. He doesn't have the temperament or, I think, the intellectual depth or ability to do this job that he is in, sadly, that he was elected to do. And he's way out of his depth. He's put himself in a position where he's out of his depth. If he avoided war in the first place — the reason people elected this guy, this clown, this embarrassment, this train wreck of a man — the reason he was elected is because people believed that he promised he wouldn't get the United States into any more stupid wars, especially in the Middle East.

He actually was elected on that basis. But we all knew as Americans, or at least those of us who were, you know, paying attention, knew that if he kept to those promises, he'd probably be okay focusing on the domestic political situation and, you know, just maintaining good relations with other countries and improving trade and so forth. But we got the opposite in the last year and a half. We've got literally the diametric opposite of all of those things. So he's not capable of getting himself out of this situation. Other forces have taken over his administration domestically now, and also the Israelis are really, I think, in total control of the White House right now.

And they're even telling the U.S.—Israel Katz, the defense minister—is basically saying, we're going to be attacking Iranians, we're going to be killing Iranians, and the United States is almost sending a signal to the U.S. that you're going to have to back us up because we're going to attack again. So that's what the defense minister is saying there. Meanwhile, Trump's just vacillating—he can't decide what his own narrative is, whether it's, oh, we've got to stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons, oh, they're killing their own people, oh, they're about to hang these eight women, and I just intervened to stop it.

You know, something was going to take place. And then he's saying that, you know, now he's saying, well, you know, higher gas prices, economic depression, that's a price you're going to have to pay because I just saved you from Iran getting a nuclear weapon. So he's saying, do you want to have a nuclear-armed Iran or high gas prices, basically? You have to choose. So you're going to take high gas prices and we'll take care of Iran's nukes. So he's creating a straw man argument. This is like a level of propaganda nobody has ever seen before in America. And let me tell you, America, this is one of the most propagandized societies in the history of the human race.

We have a propaganda machine in America that is the most awe-inspiring, powerful, you know, massive manufacturing-of-consent disinformation machine that the world has ever known. I mean, it is really immense. And what they're pushing out now is something that nobody that I've spoken to has ever seen in their lifetime. I mean, Pete Hegseth, this news presenter that's been put in charge of the Pentagon, he basically comes out in a press conference today and says—or yesterday, yesterday afternoon, I think—but he says, you know who deserves the Nobel Peace Prize? The U.S.

military deserves the Nobel Peace Prize because we're keeping the world safe. The world just doesn't appreciate us.

We should get it every single year. The U.S. military should get the Nobel Peace Prize. So you can't underestimate the level of delusionality here and just pure sociopathy by these people who are mediocre in terms of their ability to perform the jobs in which they've been installed. And you're seeing the results now. It is just a train wreck, the likes of which nobody's ever seen before. And we're all just praying that these people don't blow up the world. We're just praying at this point that Donald Trump or the Israelis don't pull the nuclear card in order to rescue themselves, to get themselves out of the mess they created.

And the global economy, I mean, I don't even want to go there, Nima, because... you know, right now, the global economy is already hitting the wall. You're already seeing Southeast Asia, fuel shortages, business shutdowns. You're going to start seeing bankruptcies, liquidations. There are whole manufacturing sectors that are shut down. It's like COVID-level, system-level perturbations. That's already happening. That will eventually come west now because the paper market of futures trading and derivatives and all this stuff is now converging with the material reality on the ground, because all of the reserves are expended in terms of oil, floating gas reserves, and so forth.

So pretty much the real price is going to emerge, and the market will do its corrections. And right now, jet fuel shortages globally. I mean, this is going to be everything from transportation, delivery, employment. So we're looking at a global recession right now, as of this week. And if this continues, if they keep messing around with this unwinnable war, this disaster, then we're looking at a global depression, which will begin well and truly, probably a lot quicker than people think, but it will start hitting hard in June. Maybe they have the month of May to sort of stay in la-la land. Everybody in America can go to their barbecues and pretend that nothing's happening because the U.S. is energy independent.

But that's not going to save all the supply chains that are right now being absolutely obliterated by what the United States and Israel have done to the world, which is to start this war that they thought was going to be over in a week. And here we are, and all Trump says is, "Oh, it's only been four weeks." No, no, Donald, stop. In four weeks, stop. In six weeks... we're already into month number three as of this next week, okay? So he's even trying to underestimate again. It's just typical of this president trying to downplay his own catastrophic errors and try to sell this as some kind of a win. This is really going to blow up in his face and in the face of the U.S. government, and it's going to create a political crisis going up into the midterms. I think it's just really a catastrophe that's gaining steam right now.

#Nima

He keeps comparing the war with Iran in the Middle East to what happened in Vietnam. Why is he doing this? Because in his mind, the duration of that war is comparable to what's going on in the

Middle East. So they were fighting for years, and I'm just four weeks, six weeks into this war against Iran, so I have a lot of time, I have no pressure on me. But it's totally the opposite, because the Vietnam War, we know it was a tragedy, but after all, it didn't hit the global economy the way the case of Iran is hitting the global economy. And it's totally different—two different scenarios—and they're not even comparable on any scale. But he keeps bringing that up.

#Patrick

Trump is so funny once he gets a sound bite in his head. He's not very, like, his intellectual capacity—he's got ADHD or something. He just can't grab on to, like, he's not interested in actually knowing what he's saying. He just says, "That sounds good." He says, "How long have we been in there?" confidently, as a U.S. president. This is a guy that dodged the Vietnam draft, okay? He went out—I don't know how many medical dispensations he got for his bone spurs or whatever—but he actively, and he's probably quite proud of the fact that he's a draft dodger. But he's saying that we were in the Vietnam War for 18 years. We were in the Vietnam War for 18 years.

Where does he get this number, 18 years? Because the U.S. did not engage in combat operations in Vietnam until after the Gulf of Tonkin incident. And if I have my math correct, I believe the Gulf of Tonkin incident was 1964. I'm not looking it up right now, but let's say it's 1964. And then the official end of combat operations would have been, I believe, the Paris Accords. I believe that was in 1972 or 1973—1973, I'm just guessing. Again, that's eight years and six months or something like that. That's how long combat operations were for Vietnam, not 18 years. It should matter to a U.S. president, just out of respect for all of the hundreds of thousands.

And by the way, the U.S. did not lose only 56,000 soldiers in Vietnam. Many, many more died after they came home. There were a lot of excess deaths, plus Agent Orange, all of that. Not to mention, forget about the 2 million Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian civilians that died. They don't count, obviously, from a U.S. point of view. Any Arabs or anybody in Southeast Asia is sub-Africa, sub-human. They don't count. All that counts is dead U.S. soldiers in U.S. wars of conquest. So he's lying. It's just disrespectful to the history, to all the people that gave their lives for another stupid war by Uncle Sam. Nothing to be proud of, the Vietnam War. Nothing to be proud of as an American.

And Donald Trump just can't even get—he's not even in the neighborhood. So where he got that number, 18 years, is Stephen Miller, one of the sort of geniuses that works for him, went to Wikipedia. And it said this was the duration of the Vietnam conflict from, you know, as a post-colonial French insurgency and then U.S. advisers coming in. This isn't advisers coming in. This is the U.S. deploying the full force of their Air Force and Navy against the Islamic Republic of Iran, and threatening them with civilizational annihilation and expending munitions at a rate never seen before in the modern era. This is not sending military advisers to help fight the Viet Cong.

If he can't get that right, in terms of U.S. basic history, then I have no confidence that this person can process what's actually happening today in any meaningful sense. You know, he's just kind of an

ignoramus. You could pick somebody off the street that's probably got a better grasp of these issues than Donald Trump does. But he's just play-acting like a president, because for him it's just another kind of extension of a reality TV show. He just goes from one press opportunity to the next, and he's got the sound bites. And he says, well, in the Korean War, how long was that? How long was that? This is nothing. So because this isn't like dragging on for years—shut up, stop criticizing us.

This is an unprecedented military victory. It's not. It's an illegal war. This is not going to go down as a victory, Donald Trump and Pete Hegseth and everybody else in the Trump administration. It can't be a victory in the history books. It's an illegal war. It's a war crime. You're guilty of war crimes. Every single U.S. serviceman and officer that's executing illegal orders is also historically and legally guilty of war crimes. Every single minute you continue this war, it's illegal. It's not going to be a victory. Just like, unless, you know... unless you're like Philip K. Dick imagining what happened if, in **The Man in the High Castle**, the Nazis won the Second World War. That's kind of a glorious victor writing history there—the Japanese and the Nazis, like the Philip K. Dick novel.

So that's fantasy land. But that's where the Trump administration is. They're envisioning, like the Reich, that they're going to rule the world and be the greatest thing on the planet, and this is just one big conquest. It's not going to end like that. It's not even going in that direction right now. So it's really hard to take seriously anything that these people are saying in Washington right now. I think they don't have a grip on it. The only chance would be some kind of dramatic removal of this president, either resigning for health reasons or a military coup, perhaps that might work. I can't believe we're even saying this. I would never have imagined this in my lifetime, but it's kind of reached that sort of period where that's what would have to happen.

And the Straits of Hormuz are not closed. They go on TV saying Iran has closed the Straits. They're not. They're closed for some people, but they're open for others. So that's a fundamental lie that the U.S. government and the media are telling their own people. They're making the U.S. blockade, which is an act of war, which is illegal. They're making this blockade seem like it's reciprocal and somehow justified. So, like, on every level, it's a lie. Everything that Trump is saying about the Iranians—that they've been killing Americans for 47 years—that's a lie. The U.S. has been killing Iranians. The Iranians have not been killing Americans. They say, oh, they killed our soldiers in Iraq with IED roadside bombs and slaughtered our men in Iraq.

Hold on for a minute. That was Iraqi resistance. Wait a minute. Didn't you invade and occupy Iraq under false pretenses? Fake weapons of mass destruction claims, like the fake Iran nuclear weapons claims that you're trying to pull right now. Same exact thing. So you're occupying Iraq, and there's an Iraqi resistance that are pushing back against U.S. soldiers who are legitimate targets in that sense. And you're blaming that on Iran, claiming Iran's been killing Americans. So they're just using these lies to motivate the American people to back this illegal war. That's all they're doing. No apology or anything spoken about the United States shooting down Iranian passenger airliners and killing everybody on board. That doesn't come into the conversation.

If you did that to America, you'd have American people out in the street saying "Death to Iran" if Iran did that to American passenger airliners. But America does it, and the president at the time, George H.W. Bush, who they named that aircraft carrier after that's pulling up right now past Madagascar, he said he refused to apologize. "I don't apologize for the actions of the United States of America," said George H.W. Bush at the time in the 1980s. And the lies just continue that the JCPOA was a bad deal. No, it wasn't a bad deal. It was a good deal. And now he'd kill for that deal right now, Donald Trump. He'd kill for it. But he is killing, but he's not going to get that deal. So that window is closed.

It's not going to happen. He had that deal. He had a better deal, in fact, during the last round of negotiations with the Omanis. You couldn't get a better deal than that. But the thing is, the U.S. is not capable. And Iran now knows that even if they sign a deal with this president or the U.S., they can come back and attack them periodically at any point in the future. So they go build their infrastructure. They rebuild their petrochemical production and distribution. The U.S. and Israel, or they'll rebuild their civilian nuclear power plants. And Israel and the U.S. reserve the right, because it's an undeclared war of aggression, to come periodically and destroy Iranian infrastructure.

Well, that's not going to fly. It's not going to work. Not to mention the fact that Iran reserves the right to retaliate in kind. And then the West and Israel say, this is unacceptable. They're terrorizing us. Four Israelis have to run to the bomb shelters in Tel Aviv. They're traumatized. We can't allow this to happen. And so, you know, they're kind of opening up a narrative that the only way to stop Iran, because Iran won't surrender, it's the same type of narrative that the United States deployed to justify dropping two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which is that the Japanese are fierce fighters, they're not going to surrender.

So we must use nuclear weapons to bring this awful war to a close and to, quote, save lives, and to stop the economic catastrophe that's resulted from this war and the disruptions in trade and supply routes. The same type of justifications was made at the end of the Second World War. They would deploy similar talking points here to justify using weapons of mass destruction against a country that doesn't have them. So that's my worry, that if the U.S. and Israel continue to paint themselves into a worse and worse position, then it's almost like they're—the only way for them to come out, because they won't admit defeat.

They won't admit they're wrong. They won't cop to it and be accountable. Their only way out is to double down because that's the Israeli mentality. And Donald Trump might as well be flying an Israeli flag over the White House at this point because his words and actions are indistinguishable from Benjamin Netanyahu's. So to me, it's a foreign government. There's a foreign occupation in Washington. I don't recognize this. It's not an American presidency. It's not an American administration. It's unrecognizable at the moment. But if you put an Israeli flag over the White House right now, it's perfectly familiar, and I understand completely.

#Nima

Patrick, part of this war is what's going on between Israel and Lebanon. And we know that Donald Trump today announced that the ceasefire is going to be extended. They're going to have three weeks of extension. And then here comes the question: what is this ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel? It seems that it is between the government in Lebanon and the Israeli government, while they're attacking Lebanon in the southern part of the country. So what does that mean? And we've seen how Hezbollah is capable of firing back at them.

And at this time, I think they understand the problem — the shortage on the part of the Israelis when it comes to the interceptors — and they cannot hit each and every rocket going to Israel because of the shortage they're facing in interceptors. And this is a huge problem, not only on the part of Israel, but also, as it was reported in the New York Times, Washington Post, and on CNN, that the United States is running short of ammunition, running short of interceptors and cruise missiles. Your understanding of that?

#Patrick

Well, again, we'll go back to the whole point of the United States' military orientation in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. While it was originally there to—it's always been there to protect Israel—but it's also to provide at least the veneer of defense for the Gulf GCC countries, the Arab states. And that was always in the U.S. interest because, effectively, the United States is protecting their petrodollar. And not only that, they're making huge amounts of money by selling weapons to the Gulf Arabs. And so it's kind of a protection racket on one hand, and it's a huge moneymaker for the military-industrial complex and also Aramco, that whole concern in Saudi Arabia, the consortium of U. S. companies, which used to be a U.S. consortium.

It's not now, but it was before. So the Gulf has changed. So really what's left for the U.S. is to provide a giant Iron Dome for Israel. That's the main function of the U.S., from Djibouti to Diego Garcia to the Persian Gulf to every other U.S. facility in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, of course, all these other ones, although a lot of Bahrain is offline, so is Kuwait for the most part. But Iraq, previously the U.S. had a position in Iraq. Northeastern Syria, Incirlik Air Force Base in Turkey, plus whatever they have going in Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan and in Israel as well. So that was all to protect Israel, all of it.

And we've seen that. This has been proven now. True promise, one, two, three, four. We see the U. S. naval assets positioned to do that. Their first priority: interceptors. Defend Israel from Iranian missiles—number one priority—and Iranian drones—number one priority. Gulf Arabs second. Gulf Arabs second. And herein lies the problem. So not only are they not protecting the Gulf Arab countries, they're also drawing fire to the Gulf Arab countries because the Gulf Arab countries have become accessories to these war crimes by the United States and Israel. So now we're in a totally different region now, in a totally different situation.

Add to that the depletion, as you mentioned, of U.S. munitions, interceptors, and just the general redundancy and fatigue of U.S. naval assets that Donald Trump thinks he can move around like a game of Battleship on the board, and Pete Hegseth, while he's up all night doing whatever he does late at night with a bottle of whatever on the table, planning out the operation like the one snatching the enriched uranium from Isfahan, that great special forces operation planned by Pete Hegseth and Delta Force—a total failure. So they're not done with their failures, these guys. So that's going to be the main problem.

And so I don't—it's very hard to see how that's sustainable going forward. I don't think that the Gulf Arabs—the UAE and Saudi Arabia specifically, the main ones—that they can rely on their relationship with the United States to really protect them going forward. So there's all sorts of big, big red flags for the U.S. I really don't know what they're expecting to achieve here in the next couple of weeks. I really don't know. Sure, they can unload what they have left, which is not much. But forget about jets coming in at close range and doing gravity glide bombs. That's not going to work, as we saw with the various shoot-downs of U.S. aircraft.

The U.S. public doesn't have the stomach for any F-35s dropping from the sky, nor do they have the stomach for one U.S. naval destroyer sinking to the bottom of the Gulf of Oman, which is very likely to happen if hostilities resume. That's the one thing that will be the image attached to Donald Trump. Not only that, imagine a U.S. B-1 or B-2 bomber shot down—okay, it has happened before over Yugoslavia. So if that happens, that's the game changer, because that means that air power and total air supremacy are not guaranteed. Then this story is over at that point. It's really over, unless the U.S. wants to further escalate, as we said, with unconventional weapons.

And then that's another story we're into, unfortunately, there. So it's really hard, Nima, to see where the potential benefits are, even pursuing this militarily. And then they're saying, well, we've got all the time in the world. That's what Donald Trump says. He doesn't have all the time in the world. Politically, he doesn't. He's on a short leash, and then economically, he's on an even shorter leash. Militarily, he's really running on fumes, the U.S. If they attempt a ground invasion of any description whatsoever, this could only be viewed as a huge act of desperation and a huge act of vanity.

And you can't underestimate, Nima, in these situations historically, the arrogance that comes along with a megalomaniac or a dictator. There are storied tales throughout history of dictators and autocrats that have just lost their minds and are literally throwing men at the front line in the hopes that somehow they're going to teach their opponent a lesson. And I think that level of arrogance could seep in where there are people like Donald Trump. He does not care about U.S. soldiers. He himself is a draft dodger. He's the last person you want to be giving orders for ground invasions. He doesn't care.

At some point, he might decide that U.S. manpower is expendable, because the way that he speaks about the Korean War and the Vietnam War, that's no big deal. It's okay. We're doing our war differently. That was a bad war. I forgot, it was J.D. Vance saying past U.S. presidents weren't as

smart as Donald Trump, he said this week. That's why we don't have to be worried with Trump, because all the past presidents that presided over all those other wars, they were stupid. Not Trump. He's different. Trump's a cut above the rest. He's a stable genius. But by saying that, J.D. Vance, the 41-year-old neophyte, is disrespecting all of the U.S. veterans that died in massive numbers in those various conflicts.

So that means that they probably don't really respect the lives of U.S. servicemen, that they're basically forcing into an illegal war, propagandizing the hell out of them to get them to think that somehow what they're doing is justified or legal. And then basically these people will not—Trump and Vance and all these crazed maniacs that are occupying the White House now, these glorified Israeli surrogates—they have no problem throwing U.S. servicemen into the fray as cannon fodder. In their minds, they think that this is a holy war at this point. They're saying this is the crusade to defeat Iran from the Christian Zionist point of view, of which Hegseth himself is an adherent. He's actually a member of that cult.

He's a Third Temple cultist, the self-styled Secretary of War. So if it's a holy war, then you don't have any problem committing a few thousand or maybe even 100,000 U.S. soldiers in service of a greater cause, a holy cause. And he's not alone, by the way. And Trump's surrounded by all these religious fanatics putting their hands on him in these embarrassing scenes of praying on the president. So they accuse Iran of being a theocracy. They accuse the Islamic Republic of Iran of being a religious extremist regime. I don't think so. No, it's not extreme at all. It's very rational, level-headed if you compare it to the Americans right now and a president that's tweeting out that he's the second coming of Jesus Christ. He's done that. He's the Messiah.

So who are the religious fanatics from the global perspective? You know, the world's looking at America and this president, and they're laughing at the country. They're laughing at this president—what a clown and a joke he's become, to himself, past the point of shame. And they have the temerity to point the finger around and call other countries religious extremists or theocrats. Are you kidding me? You know, it's like, I mean, we're at a really difficult, really dangerous point. Because the public in America are very disengaged from this, Nima. I'm in America right now. I go out in the street—nobody cares about this war.

They don't. They care a little bit more in Europe because they're getting hit a lot harder economically, and they're more in proximity. They're closer to the conflict, of course, and they might very well receive the brunt of massive waves of refugees if the conflict does escalate and become worse. Europe will bear the brunt of that. But Americans don't care. Generally, they don't. You travel around—I've been traveling around this country—people don't, they really don't care. A very small number of people do. And there are a lot of people that are pushing back and are vocal against this illegal war, against this regime in Washington.

But on the whole, it's not really an issue that Americans are taking seriously. Hence, they're not really interrogating any of the claims or statements being made by Washington or through their

media mouthpieces. They won't really start taking it seriously, Nima, until the economy hits the wall, and it's going to happen. And even if Trump walked away and did a fake peace agreement, like he signs some paper himself and pretends that some Iranian signed it or somebody, he'll probably get like Steve Witkoff's buddy who's got a pawn shop in New Jersey or something, an Iranian guy, and he'll have him sign it. They'll say, this is the new president. It'll be like Juan Guaidó.

They'll find some Iranian somewhere to be like the next president, and they'll just go with that for a while until the next wave of this crisis comes. I don't know where they're going to go on this. It has to be a removal of Donald Trump from office. That's the only off-ramp. Or... I've ruled out an epiphany. I don't think it's possible with this president. He's just too ignorant and stupid. And he's doubling down. He's employed the methods of his mentor, the mob lawyer Roy Cohn, which is never admit you're wrong and double down. And that's the Israeli negotiations and diplomacy tactic. So I don't know. I don't know. It's very difficult to see daylight here.

#Nima

Patrick, Donald Trump tweeted today that actually on his Truth Social, he posted that he talked with the prime minister of Armenia. And he said that the guy totally understands the situation, you know, how fragile, how weak Iran is, and he's ready to give us his, you know, the bases and, you know, airfields in his country for us to use against Iran. And later on, he removed that post. I don't know why he removed it, whether it was something from his administration or Armenia contacted him.

But after all, Armenia—how can someone believe that Armenia could bring something new, or some sort of game-changing factor, to the conflict? This guy is going to get destroyed. It's a little country. The population is not even considerable. It's small. And they're going to be destroyed like the other GCC countries. Do you think that Donald Trump—was it something made up? Because he said, if you don't negotiate with us in good faith, if you don't have some sort of agreement with us, we're going to use Armenia against you. What does that mean? I don't see Armenia being that stupid. I don't know.

#Patrick

No, they're not. But you have a puppet, Pashinyan, and the people that have been backed by U.S. interests and vassalized for this very reason. But actually pulling that off is another thing altogether. And that brings us back to the Lebanon question, which you asked before, Nima, which I didn't answer, but I will. The problem with the Lebanese government is it's basically a U.S.-Israeli puppet regime. The president and the prime minister in Lebanon, Michel Aoun and Nawaf Salam, I mean, they've sold out their country. They have sold them out in the worst possible way. So it's a facade of negotiations between Israel and Lebanon.

By the way, it's illegal for their leaders to be negotiating with the Israelis because I believe that's against the law in Lebanon. So they're in violation of their own laws. So Israel is carpet bombing

Lebanon, killing civilians, massacring Lebanese, bombing Beirut indiscriminately at will, not apologizing for it, and putting boots on the ground, occupying South Lebanon with the intent of keeping it, annexing it, as they're annexing the Golan Heights right now. Settlers are now, as we speak, moving into the Golan Heights in Syria with the full approval of the United States, of Israel, of course, but also of the al-Qaeda caliph, if you will, the self-styled president in Damascus, Mohammed al-Jolani, a.k.a. al-Sharar.

That's what's going to happen in South Lebanon. Settlers are going to want to make claims. And Ben-Gvir will be right up there in the front cheering them on with Bezalel Smotrich and everybody else. And so they're razing whole Lebanese villages that have been there for thousands of years and razing them to the ground. And Israel is destroying Christian holy sites. And they're getting away with it. But if Israel occupies South Lebanon militarily, Iran can, with missile accuracy, destroy all of the Israeli encampments and bases. That's what's going to happen. That's why there's a ceasefire. That's why Lebanon is part of the negotiations.

But Israel already broke the ceasefire. Israel is destroying infrastructure and buildings and homes, schools, churches. They're wiring them with explosives, and then they're turning to the international community and saying, hey, this isn't a violation of the ceasefire because we're not firing anything, we're just blowing it up. And we're targeting journalists, and those are targeted strikes, so those aren't a violation of the ceasefire because we're targeting journalists and not soldiers. So therefore, it's not a violation of the ceasefire. This is the really twisted, depraved mentality of the Israelis at the moment. They're killing with impunity.

So the ceasefire is a facade with Lebanon. And Israel is just waiting for time to regroup and maximize its gains and consolidate its positions because it needs that fresh water supply from the Litani River. They see it as an existential issue for the state of Israel. They want to expand their borders. They're very open about that. And everyone's still in denial, saying, oh, there's no such thing as the Greater Israel Project. It's a conspiracy theory. It's anti-Semitic to even suggest such a thing, even though Benjamin Netanyahu himself publicly stated that is their ambition this past fall. He publicly stated that this is the Greater Israel Project. You're watching it unfold. And it's not going to stop in South Lebanon or Syria.

It also includes Jordan and parts of Saudi Arabia and Egypt as well. Forget about the West Bank and Gaza — it's gone as far as their plans are concerned. But the government in Lebanon has really — the United States has spent decades buying off sections of Lebanese society, particularly the Christian community, in order to make it pro-U.S., to make it loyal to the United States. They're sort of like Zionists in a way, because part of the payoff for this elite class in Lebanon was that the United States would give U.S. passports to basically everybody in all of their families, without even having, in some cases, ever gone to America — much less being born there or having established any residence. So that's just part of the payoff.

And they've done this strategically, and also with USAID contracts, giving money to certain families — influential Lebanese families — for, quote, “projects” over the years. And then just cash payoffs, of course. The CIA are probably very involved in that. And they have allowed Israeli intelligence and Israeli activity and Israeli companies into Lebanon as well. So it's been a slow process of degrading what used to be an independent state, Lebanon, in order to isolate Hezbollah. And now the special envoy, Tom Barak, is openly touting for a civil war, openly setting Lebanese against each other, religious factions against each other, to say, well, you need to help disarm Hezbollah — and then Israel saying the same thing.

So everybody, that's the chorus from the U.S. and Israel: we must disarm Hezbollah. And the bought-off class in Lebanon is going along with it. And while the Lebanese are watching their own people be slaughtered by the Israelis, they have nothing to say against the Israelis about it. They just sit back and, you know, hum, twiddle their fingers, and hope that it's going to stop, hope that it's going to go away. The only people defending Lebanon are Hezbollah. And they're not terrorists. You know, the Americans will say it's a terrorist organization.

Well, under international law, it's defined as an armed liberation struggle against an illegal occupation, because Israel never stopped occupying parts of Lebanese territory even before this wave of the crisis began. They still had stolen Lebanese land and were threatening Lebanon. That's why Hezbollah existed in the first place. It wouldn't have existed without Israel having illegally occupied and brutalized the people in South Lebanon for decades. And the United States was fine with that. They did nothing to restrain Israel in any meaningful way. And it's even worse now — the U.S. is encouraging a civil war and encouraging Israel to come in, kill, and occupy. So this is the worst possible situation for a country like Lebanon.

And so that's why this is part — this is why Iran made this part of the negotiations. Because it's about the threat that Israel poses to the region. And it's because Israel can use Lebanon against Iran. The Iranians know this. Israel uses Lebanon and threats of aggression or promises to withdraw or ceasefire — they're using that as leverage against Tehran via the United States. So this is all part of the same equation. You can't separate these issues. And so Iran is looking at this holistically and treating it as one theater. And because it is one theater, you can't separate it. And Israel and the U. S. have proven that their aggression will not be confined to Gaza or to this part or that part.

They will attack and declare war against anyone in the region, and they already have — against Yemen, against the Palestinians, against the Lebanese, against Syria, against Iraq, and against Iran. So it's very clear for people who live in the region where the main threat of violence and aggression comes from, and where security comes from. And it's very clear — it is Israel and the United States. Those are the two number one threats to security, peace, and prosperity in West Asia. There is no question about it. Everyone who lives in the region knows that. But we have this narrative that's

being imposed from the outside for a Western audience, for an Israeli audience, and for a Gulf audience. But that's not reality. Everyone in West Asia understands this. They fully understand it now. So we'll see.

#Nima

Yeah, exactly. Thank you so much, Patrick, for being with us today. Please go to 21st Century Wire to support Patrick — patrickhenningsen.substack.com — and your YouTube channel as well, Patrick. I'm going to put all the links in the description of this video. People can go there and find all the links. You can support Patrick and his work.

#Patrick

Thank you so much. I appreciate that. Yeah, thank you.

#Nima

See you soon. Okay.