

# Trump Orders Strike, Iran's Retaliation FINISHES Gulf Oil | Henningsen

Patrick Henningsen discusses the imminent escalation in the Iran war ordered by Donald Trump and how Iran is responding to the military and diplomatic games being played by the US-Israeli regime. SUPPORT PATRICK'S WORK: [https://www.youtube.com/@UCY\\_sGiAswJNo8HQBOKme01g](https://www.youtube.com/@UCY_sGiAswJNo8HQBOKme01g) <https://patrickhenningsen.substack.com/> PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: [chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com](https://chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com) Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #trump #israel

## #Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. Everyone, hit the like button as you come on. As you see, I am joined by Patrick Henningsen of 21st Century Wire. Patrick, good to see you again. It's great to see you. Hope you're doing well, Danny. Thank you, thank you. It's great to be here with you. All right, everybody, we're just going to get started right away. So, Patrick, my first question to you is this: it appears that Trump has been briefed by CENTCOM on another round of short and powerful strikes, as it is being called by the Trump administration. The last time something like this happened, Patrick, it happened a couple of days before the February 28th strikes. And then, of course, we know what happened thereafter.

So Iran is very much aware of what's going on here, and they've promised actually that any short strikes, any kind of strikes at all on Iran, will lead to prolonged, painful blows. Iranian officials are saying that they have something up their sleeve, including the targeting of vessels given the blockade. So there's a direct threat from Iran against the U.S. Navy, which now has, I believe, two aircraft carriers in the region after the Gerald Ford was announced as leaving. So, Patrick, are we headed toward Trump ordering another round of strikes, or being ordered to accept another round of strikes, depending on how we look at this? And how do you see the war right now as it continues onward?

## #Patrick Henningsen

Yeah, thanks, Danny. I think there's, of course, two ways you can look at this. The first way is politically, that Trump is front-loading a lot of leverage or threats of force, if you will, against the Iranians in order to somehow use that to strike a deal with Iran and then declare victory, both empirically from a military standpoint, as he's been doing the whole time with Hegseth as well,

declaring their Pyrrhic victory over the last 60-odd days, as well as the political or the diplomatic victory. That would be important. Then Trump could walk away and say, look, it was because of overwhelming U.S. military might. We have the greatest military in the world. I rebuilt it, etc.

That would be quite a good campaign pitch. They would run with that soundbite over the course of the summer ahead of the midterms. So that's one way you could look at it, that what you're seeing is that. However, there's a problem—the cost involved. The cost and the risk involved to the United States military in terms of assets, and also just, you know, this whole operation is costing them financially. It's costing them in terms of military logistics as well, pulling resources, pulling missile stocks and so forth away from other theaters like the Pacific. You know, this is hugely risky for the U. S. in terms of maintaining its geostrategic positioning and so forth.

So looking at all of the assets that have been crowding into Ben-Gurion Airport in Israel, plus the carrier strike groups that have been deployed to the region—although interestingly, the USS Gerald Ford, which was positioned in the northern Red Sea just at the end of last week, has now been recalled to Norfolk, Virginia—so I, you know, initially we saw that and, obviously, not wanting to go down through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, but positioned just enough to—it looked to me, Danny—like that was providing protection for Yanbu and for the Saudi east-west petroline, a pipeline system that's bypassing the Persian Gulf at the moment, that that would become a target in the event of hostility.

So with that carrier strike group, you've got the destroyers that are flanking the carrier, the Gerald Ford, and on board all those destroyers are all of these advanced high-altitude missile interceptors, etc., and also shooting down drones. So it looked like it was positioned possibly for that reason, but also to defend Israel, Israeli airspace as well. Maybe that's just too much work for that carrier strike group, or I don't know. So you could read that as a potential climb down by the United States, because why would you push it into the northern Red Sea only to turn it around a few days later? So that's a big question mark there. But let's just assume that there's an attack going forward, Danny.

Second option is a short and powerful strike. This is what seems to be being telegraphed by Washington at the moment. But if you're looking at going by the various estimations in terms of what's left in terms of stock, we're looking at a two-week campaign. So if the Trump administration is to be believed, based on past statements, they believe they've degraded the air defense to such a degree that they would have freedom of flight over Iranian airspace. In other words, the first week would be probably depleting what they can afford to give. They can't afford to empty JASSM and cruise missile and interceptor stocks and so forth. They can't do that over a two- or three-week campaign.

What they could afford to do is maybe target what they believe are remaining Iranian air defense positions and other potential threats, and do that in the first week in a kind of massive barrage, shock and awe campaign. And then they would feel confident to have aircraft loiter closer. And then you have glide bombs and all these other sorts of munitions that would be delivered by aircraft or

overflights, direct overflights of B-1, B-2 bombers, and so forth. So if you were thinking from the Pete Hegseth sociopathic perspective, kind of, you know, war thinking, that would be your two-week campaign. And then I can see that being sold to people within Washington. There might be a level of delusionality in Washington, but I could see them—it's a big gamble, in other words, Danny, to go through with a campaign.

For the U.S., that's a lot to lose. Iran, on the other hand, they've already taken the most fierce blows dealt to it by both the U.S. and Israel. But the problem is that the messaging from the Israeli Defense Department, combined with what you just showed, Danny, and what you're alluding to there, which is the CENTCOM briefing, et cetera, combined with the recent communiqué between Netanyahu and Trump, all indications are that there's a joint U.S.-Israeli operation that is coming. And the other thing, Danny, is we're bamboozled in the public to think that this is a U.S. war in Iran, and then, like, another day it's an Israeli war against Iran, and they don't really want the public to put together the reality that the U.S. and Israel are absolutely coordinated—absolutely coordinated on every aspect of this.

So if that's the case, I would say the weakest link in all of this is the fact that the U.S. doesn't have any staging bases other than Ben Gurion Airport and a few other places in the region. I guess Djibouti, maybe Saudi Arabia, but that's opening up a world of hurt for Saudi if that's the case. And maybe the aircraft carriers themselves, the strike groups, which now are down to two, and they'll be doing relays between the two, refueling and all this. It's very complicated. But the U.S. Navy positions, I think, in this case, would be the most vulnerable. I mean, that's the Achilles' heel — the United States is now fully reliant on one particular arm or branch of their military, which is the U.S. Navy. Fully reliant on the U.S. Navy.

Whereas before, they had all of these other bases, which Iran has just laid waste to around the Persian Gulf. And that doesn't get talked about a lot in the U.S. media because it's embarrassing. I mean, on paper, this is just a catastrophic military defeat for the United States from an imperial standpoint, from a geopolitical standpoint. But they haven't really paid the price politically yet, in terms of the military defeat side, because the press have kind of closed ranks, aside from a few reports that came out recently, but very belated—two months after, they're saying, oh, by the way, all of these bases have been trashed, you know, in Qatar and Bahrain. They went down the list—Kuwait and the UAE, et cetera. So if those reports had come out, Danny, in the days after the opening salvos of this conflict, politically, that's a totally different environment that Trump is operating in, in America.

Because the press closed ranks for national security reasons. And that's how it's done in America. Then they wait, and now it comes out afterwards. So the political impact, the negative impact on Trump, has been mitigated just by the passage of time on this, and why the press has moved on to other stories. But that is a huge thing if you think about it. And I could go into what might be some of the threats that Iran could—and Iran has been—telegraphing. They have these new capabilities. And how much of that is just kind of bluffing? How much of that? Because we've heard that before.

The U.S. has also said they've taken out some of those capabilities. So we don't know 100% what the truth is. But I do have a kind of rough idea of what that might be. We could talk about that in a bit.

## **#Danny**

Oh, yeah. Yeah, well, surely it connects to what I was wanting to ask you after your outline there, which is we have a situation now where there is a steep increase in the price of oil. There are a lot of alarm bells being sent off about this development, that the impact of what was experienced during those five weeks of hostilities—Iran's retaliation, what it did to energy infrastructure in the Gulf already. So now the actual effects of the war are starting to come into play. Even slight decreases in the price of oil are usually met with increases.

And of course, Trump has promised the blockade is going to last basically in perpetuity, forever and ever and ever, as long as Iran refuses to capitulate. So if Iran is struck and they're saying they're going to strike energy infrastructure, Iran has promised that they will do the same to the Gulf. And so it sounds like we're heading toward an even worse situation than where we are now. How does that factor into things, given that, as you said, while we can't be so sure about Iran's capabilities, indeed they have them, and we can likely expect that they'll use them?

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

Well, it's a gamble. Who are you going to bet on? Who do you trust more? Do you trust the Trump administration, the U.S., or do you trust the threats coming from Washington, or do you trust what Tehran is warning here? And I have to say, there is a couple. I mean, we can talk about the straits and the blockade in a moment, Danny, and that's a whole other strategic conversation, economic conversation as well, which is quite profound considering the trajectory of the global economy at the moment. It's significant. In fact, that might very well be the thing that shapes everything ahead of us.

But one of the things that I had noted when I was in Tehran right before the war started, I was having a conversation with somebody who was a very good military person, with very good technical knowledge of Iran's missile program. And we were watching a computer simulation on satellite targeting. And this is like, you know, the idea that you cannot hit a moving naval vessel with a guided missile unless it's some kind of direct line of sight, or your typical anti-ship missiles that will be kind of at level. And these are the things that destroyers and U.S. naval vessels are equipped to defend against.

They have some of the most incredible firepower aboard U.S. Navy destroyers and even the complement for the carrier strike groups. They can take out a lot, if not pretty much everything, provided there's not too much of it. So if they're overwhelmed in terms of drone swarms—and that's a possibility—that would deplete the carrier strike group's ability to defend itself and open it up for a

missile attack of the Exocet-style anti-ship missile variety. But in terms of a higher trajectory missile hitting a target, you saw what Iran could do, basically slicing a U.S. AWACS plane in half on the tarmac at the Saudi Arabian base. I mean, that's impressive. That's a stationary target, okay?

Some would say it's a lucky hit. I wouldn't bet against Iran in that sense. And the thing is, the United States has this technology, which is they're using AI to blend the different types of data—that's AIS data. The U.S. is using these systems to track commercial vessels for pirating them, basically the U.S. military. So don't think Iran doesn't have this exact same capability. And if you consider, Danny, the recent diplomatic mission from the foreign minister, Araghchi, to St. Petersburg, meeting the Russian delegation and President Putin himself, talking about cooperation, that cooperation would be, you know, AIS data, GPS data, radar data, satellite imaging data.

The AI is a software question, and the AI already exists to have this kind of, you could call it, multi-object tracking. And that would be predicting heading, speed, ETA, and positions of a naval ship that's moving. This is all within the capabilities of all of these countries. The U.S., Iran, and Russia have this capability. And I remember this comment in Tehran where they said, we have those capabilities to hit moving targets with our hypersonic missiles, okay? Now, so you're betting on the fact that Iran is bluffing or they really can't do that, but those same systems have a 95% accuracy and probability tracking for objects, which is pretty good.

So if you're firing four or five missiles, you're probably going to get a hit on at least one of those, and that's all it would take. And so, high degree of accuracy—think Russian coordination with Iran in terms of satellite data. At that point, it's just a software question in terms of guidance. So, you know, the U.S. is using these systems themselves. This is how they're tracking the, quote, dark fleets. Even if the AIS transponder is off, these systems can still track with a high degree of accuracy. So are you going to bet against the Iranians that they wouldn't be able to deploy something like that? I think that's a huge risk for the U.S. Navy.

And I think going forward, this is one of the things that's going to make naval power more obsolete in these types of conflict situations. It's just a question of time. It's already becoming somewhat obsolete compared to how we used naval power in previous wars. So I think we're moving into the future here. Iran's in a defensive position. They have a lot more, even if they can take subsequent blows by the U.S. and Israel, they've proven their resilience. They've proven that they themselves have the advantage in a war of attrition, not the United States. The United States has to be in and out—wham, bam, thank you, ma'am. You know, one and done. That's all that's left. Trump keeps tweeting out, "We have all the cards."

We have all the cards. Last week, it's like there was, I don't know, a couple of tweets—"We have all the cards." If you have all the cards, why did you beg for a ceasefire on April 8th or whatever it was? Iran wasn't begging for a ceasefire. So you clearly don't have the cards. But this is kind of an adolescent way of referring to negotiations and warfare, like it's a game of poker. It kind of shows you intellectually where the White House is on all of this. I think in a certain way they're way out of

their depth. They're using the U.S. military as a kind of ad hoc, modular mercenary force that's really been commandeered by a foreign government, if you think about it.

We're talking about the state of Israel. That's how the U.S. military has allowed itself to be used under this president and this so-called secretary of war, who is absolutely an Israeli lobby pick for that cabinet position. And the Israeli lobby absolutely leaned on all U.S. senators to vote to confirm him, by the way. So if you think about that, it's not a good look right now for the U.S. And I think that's why they're in the strategic conundrum, or what Robert Pape and others would call an escalation trap that the United States currently finds itself in. And also, you cannot ignore some of the reports on Fox or Mark Levin tweeting out that Pakistan is providing all these logistical routes for the Iranians.

So you think of Mark Levin as a kind of Israeli asset in the media, and he's telegraphing out that, you know, we need to sort of target these supply routes coming from Pakistan because Pakistan's helping to supply Iran with—it could be anything, could be food, could be, you know, essential medical, you know, it could be materials for manufacturing. It could be just normal supplies for the economy, or it could be military supplies, whatever the case may be. Um, do you really want to get in a war with Pakistan, the United States and Israel, even indirectly? I don't think that's a very good idea. Pakistan is so very well organized militarily and so well mobilized as a country and its government, its military command structure. They're very well equipped, very efficient. They have excellent intelligence, and they're very close allies to China. So that's a bad combination, I think, for the U.S. and Israel in this case.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, great points, Patrick. I mean, we're talking about promises of long and painful blows. There was also a call, you know, those promises by Iran. But then there was a call that Vladimir Putin made after the visit, the Iranian visit, the visit by Arachi to Russia and Iran. I'm wondering what you thought was said, because there were reports that Iran was a big part of the conversation and that there might have been a warning slipped in there: don't do it, don't strike Iran. I'm curious about your thoughts on what might have been said there.

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

I have no idea. I have no idea. I mean, if you look at the Russian... And then, you know, the fact that—let's talk about the Russian-Iranian relationship. And then Putin and Trump have this one-hour-plus phone call. The reports are it was very cordial and so forth. And it's interesting because, in a certain way, this gives us a little hope, Danny, although there's not a lot of hope to be had in any of this, right? That the Russians have found a way to manage Trump, and they've been doing it handily for a while now. And the U.S. is pretty much out of the conversations at the moment in Ukraine,

although I'm sure our intelligence agencies are busy in the background providing ISR to Zelensky for drone attacks inside of Russia, although maybe the British are doing this using data from the United States.

Who knows? Politically, the U.S. has taken a step back. Russia has found a way to manage Trump's non-diplomacy. I'm sure they had an interesting conversation because these two master chess players are having a very high-level conversation, the Russians and the Iranians, and they're probably thinking the same thing. They're in similar positions. You know, the proxy war in Ukraine has bled out the European economy. It's bled out NATO to such a degree that it's going to take them a long time to recover, and maybe it's going to be at a cost that they can't even afford. Are they making promises and commitments of all these military buildups in Germany and so forth? But how much of that is actually feasible?

Iran similarly has bled out the U.S. economy, split out the GCC, it's bleeding out the global economy, and it's managed to internationalize the conflict in a way that Russia has managed to do through attrition in Ukraine. And the critics will—the American critics will—look at that, the British hawks, or, you know, they'll say, oh, Russia's a spent force. They can't even take all this territory. Look how slow they've gone after four years. Well, there's a reason why Russia has gone incrementally, because they're looking long-term, that they're going to govern those territories. So they can't afford to mount up high civilian casualties. And hence, the conflict in Ukraine has the lowest amount per capita, or that ratio, for a major conventional war in the modern era.

It's the lowest amount of civilian casualties, which is incredible if you think about it. And that's because that's how Russia prosecutes its war. It's not like how America or Israel prosecute wars. They do things very differently. So Iran's looking at this in a similar fashion. They've managed to—the Russians have managed to—play U.S. political cycles in the U.S. with the Trump administration. And Iran is in a very good position to do the same right now with Trump. Because Trump—there is no diplomacy from Washington. They're not—A, they're not serious about it; B, I personally don't think they have the capabilities. They don't have the people that are committed or that are given any kind of agency from the White House.

Marco Rubio himself, I don't think he's very smart personally. He's sort of clever in a sort of political soundbite sense. He's got all the soundbites, but he doesn't know the first thing about constructing a multi-phase government peace deal. And the timeline of that means you're going to have to have an effective ceasefire for at least a year to hammer that out. Otherwise, it's a non-starter. You can't hammer out a deal while you're bombing the other side. And so Trump doesn't want to lose that leverage of being able to attack. This reminds me of the Israeli—this is the Israeli mode of negotiations, which is, I'm going to punish you, I'm going to kill you, I'm going to threaten your leadership, I will take them out when it's convenient for me, and then we're expecting you to sort of come on board for our peace talks or a peace program.

I mean, it's not going to work. So Iran's pricing this in. They've already priced this in. And they're prepared for a long war. They're prepared. They're fully prepared for this. This is going to go for years. And they will mobilize their society, their military, their economy accordingly. And they will just deal with it. The U.S. can't, though. You know, Trump, this is his last roll of the dice politically. It's getting up to the eleventh hour here. So they can't keep doing this, and they physically can't support this war militarily, the U.S., for any period of time. So I think what's going to happen is, if the green light to attack—which could happen at any moment, could be within hours right now, or tomorrow, or Saturday, over the weekend most likely if it's going to happen—or it could be kicked down the road until next week, or who knows.

But it can't be a long campaign. It can't be more than two weeks. That's my feeling. So that's a hell of a constraint that the U.S. has put itself into. And they're not going to get the result at the end, except for a Pyrrhic victory and maybe some announcement of a glorious victory, you know, by Marcus Crassus in Washington. And that's it. And then move on, you know, to the next thing. But the region is going to be the same after that. So I don't know. This is everything, I think. A lot of questions will be answered over the next couple of weeks.

## **#Danny**

Yeah. Yeah, and the United States and Israel, but the United States at the kind of head of the snake in the PR, the war PR sense, is acting like it can do whatever it wants and that there's no—there's nothing on the other side, right? Iran just doesn't exist. Iran is just there to be slapped around when, of course, the United States was the one who had to come to terms with a ceasefire. But, you know, this is an interesting angle, Patrick. The breaking news is that Israeli media Channel 12 is saying that Israel is going to be the one to announce the failure of Iran negotiations and that the U. S. will give Israel immediate authorization to strike Iran's energy facilities.

So, you know, this feels almost like a 12-day war scenario here, but... Patrick, react to this because, again, now we have Israel back in the mix. And we also have the inevitability, in my view, that if this were to happen and they're just naming energy facilities before even doing it, it feels like Iran is probably preparing to do the same—to target energy facilities in the region—which will create an even bigger catastrophe than where the oil markets are now. So react to this and maybe answer the question too at the end here, at the end of this question of, like, why does the United States not really care about the oil markets over this push to war? Your thoughts on this?

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

Well, if we go by past patterns, Danny, this would be, if that report that you just showed is correct, that will be a potential repeat of the opening scenario on February 28th, which is Israel goes in, the United States piles in right behind them, our greatest friend and ally. We had to because Israel was going anyway, and we had to hit hard and strong to defend U.S. interests and allies in the region. So

that script's written if that's indeed what's happening. But then you have the inevitable retaliation by Iran to the remaining functioning oil and gas infrastructure and energy facilities in the region. So that's a whole different scenario. That's more economic deprivation down the road.

That is futures markets and global oil shortage and so forth. It's already rapidly pushing up the price of fuel, shortages, airline cancellations, inflation. It's already hit Southeast Asia in a massive way, and it will hit the rest of the world eventually. But that's a big possibility based on that report. That's a likely outcome. So I can't imagine, if there are Arab countries—particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, or Kuwait—that they're going to be on board with that kind of an outcome, because that's an existential threat to their existence as regimes in the region. So that's hard to swallow, that one, unless there's a master plan that doesn't involve the future of those GCC regimes.

And I wouldn't put that past, if Israel is leading the long-range planning in U.S. geopolitical circles with regard to West Asia—and I think it's fair to say that it is. If we look at Lebanon, and we look at the expropriation of land in Lebanon and Syria, very aggressively, I might add, by the Israelis, I think it's safe to say Israel's kind of steering the geopolitics of West Asia in terms of U.S. policy. That's pretty clear. Then the U.S. would follow Israel. So if that means a post-GCC monarch Persian Gulf, like some of these regimes would be swept aside and the U.S. and Israel would quickly take over through proxies, probably a military coup or something like that.

That's what they have in mind for the region. We're looking at big changes that are coming. And you have to remember, all of those regimes, those monarchies, those sheikdoms, they're all just artificial countries that were drawn, effectively, by the British and the French, but mainly the British Empire. And those families were put in power by the British as sort of custodians, if you will, of Anglo-American interests, or American-Israeli interests now, in the region. So that's a whole different ballgame we're talking about there. So I don't know. I can't—that's a hard one.

That's a difficult one to swallow. So if that's the case, yeah, that would be devastating for our U.S. economy, pretty clear. And, you know, going into the midterms, that's just—look at the polling right now. Trump is cratering faster than anybody could have imagined. He's making Joe Biden look like a rock star in terms of polling on all these different issues. He's even underperforming Jimmy Carter in terms of inflationary disasters and approval ratings during these same inflationary crises and so forth. So we're going to see that. That's going to happen if this war is allowed to continue in the way that it looks like the threats are being made by Israel and the U.S. That's the first thing.

Second thing is, if it goes ahead, is that going to give the United States any more chance of opening the Straits of Hormuz or controlling the Straits of Hormuz these two weeks? I mean, that's a hell of a gamble as well. It's not very clear that that's going to be the case. And if that's the outcome, which is that they're not going to get control, the U.S. will not control the Straits of Hormuz. Potential military losses, if they attempt to—massive potential losses on the U.S. side—which is, you know, compounding the previous military losses, which we mentioned before, plus the failed raid on Isfahan, which no one talks about.

Again, the media has closed ranks on that for national security reasons in the United States. Then we, you know, that's also gonna be a huge potential risk and a failure point for the U.S. and for Israel too. So, or what about just, you know, Iran manages to fight through the next couple of weeks, to withstand these attacks, emerges victorious, and then there's some kind of peace talks or something rather, a cessation of hostilities. Again, Danny, back to the point, I hate to bang on about this, but the U.S. is not capable of any kind of agreement at all that's going to be sustainable, any kind of diplomatic, political settlement, anything like that. They're just not capable.

They don't have the personnel necessary, they don't have the discipline, and they do not have the political will. And this president specifically—any kind of stable agreement is antithetical to Trump. And not only that, it's just impossible politically in the U.S. because Iran's going to want sanctions relief. That's a non-starter in the U.S. politically. That will then be translated in U.S. political language as, oh, we're giving billions of dollars to the mullahs, basically, to fund terrorism. I mean, that's how the Fox News crowd will translate that. That's how Rubio and the others will be translating that as well. But all the hawks and Republicans and Democrats, they're going to make sure that's not going to happen. So that's immediately going to cancel out.

And then the enriched uranium issue, that's a non-starter. It's not going to get zero enrichment. If there's anything, it'll be back to a JCPOA-type reset, and that's going to involve Russia. So then you're dealing with Russia at that point. So Russia's back into the sort of key position in West Asia once again. They're moving in as a power player and a dealmaker. And I don't think that's going to go over too well politically in the U.S. either, especially on the Democrat side. So what is that? It doesn't look very good any way you cut it. So it means that if the U.S. decides to attack, Danny, the only logical outcome is this kind of undeclared ceasefire, reserving the right to attack at any time against Iranian infrastructure or military targets in the future.

And this is an Israeli-style status quo situation that the U.S. will have and Israel will have with Iran. And that will just kind of keep this war going. It's like a simmering, like a cold war, but just constantly simmering and just on the verge of boiling. And I think that suits the U.S. military-industrial complex. If we look at where all the money is going right now in terms of drone technology and defense AI and all these advanced weapons, taking over the supply chains—once again, the United States has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Europeans regarding critical minerals.

And to get out of the Chinese dependency supply chain on that, which has been flagged up as a huge problem for the U.S. But it's just war, war, war. That's the U.S. economy. Everything on Wall Street is war, war, war. Every IPO, AI and otherwise. It's just defense, defense, defense. And I'm seeing the same in Britain. I'm seeing the same in Europe. So that to me is more likely, and I'm not happy, we're not happy to see that, but that's kind of a more likely outcome here potentially. I know that's not a sexy answer, a definitive answer, but, you know, that's what the signals are pointing to.

## **#Danny**

Yeah. Yeah. I think you're completely right about the military-industrial complex. It would indeed prefer maybe a, quote-unquote, lower-intensity conflict that will keep the contracts flowing and keep the just-in-time production model flowing and going as well. But again, it really depends on whether Iran is happy with fighting a low-intensity conflict for months and months and months. That is, again, as you called it, Patrick, a gamble. And I wanted to ask you now about what your view is on the propaganda war part of this. It feels like the narrative around the Trump administration and with this war is crumbling quite dramatically. And you had sent me this, and we can listen to it on higher speed. This is, you know, of course, the, I guess in large part, Trump administration mouthpiece of the corporate media. And this is—I don't know if he's former or he's a current Trump acolyte—it's Larry Kudlow.

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

He's a Fox Business Channel anchor, and he's absolutely a Trumpster.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, I think he's worked with Trump. I don't know if it was the first administration or what, but he definitely has. But this is the kind of worldview that is being promoted and pumped out by those who are trying to keep the Trump administration afloat politically during this war. But here's how they're framing what's going on, especially in lieu of this blockade and now reports that 80 percent of Iranian exported oil has been frozen by it. But here, here, let's listen to some of this.

## **#Fox News 1**

Some people want to see the quarantine cripple them over a period of time. Others see the need for a little bit more of a nudge. Where do you stand? I think it's going to be both.

## **#Fox News 2**

I mean, look, the Iranian economy is hanging by a thread. The blockade is working. The embargo is working. No oil, no money. No money, no payroll. No payroll, no retirement. The people inside Iran, they can barely get any bread, meat, food, medicine. This thing's drying up very, very rapidly now. Will there have to be additional—? I think military planners would like to take a look at Kharg Island, because that would end their whole economic situation. That would end any hope that they'd ever be able to sell oil again. That may be where we want them to be. Iran, look, this is the most gruesome lot of people running this country, probably since the Nazis in the 1930s and the 1940s.

What Trump has done is what no other president in modern times has done. OK, you know it and I know it. He is taking Iran out. He is taking their nuclear capability out. He's going to have their

enrichment moved from Iran to the United States. That's terribly important. He's taking their leadership out. You know, the CIA, working with the Israeli Mossad, is going to take this leadership out, just like it's taken the prior leaderships out, if they don't want to play ball, and it doesn't look like they will. So there's some more work to be done. One other point. We're all gasoline. I understand that.

But it is, Jesse, a small price to pay in order to extinguish this gruesome government, which is so threatening with nuclear power and terrorist power. It has to be done right now. And by the way, can I just insert something? We had big economic numbers today. Business investment is very strong. Consumers, retailers are spending. The economy is probably growing at 2.5%, maybe 3.5%. I don't like \$4 gasoline. I know the affordability argument. The Harris poll today that came out, guess what? 50-50 on the congressional race. If these Democrats were so smart, how come they're not ahead by 10 or 20 points?

## **#Danny**

But what's so funny about that, Patrick, is that it's literally just a lie on air. Two and a half, three percent? Actually, the number is two percent, well below the expectations that Wall Street had projected for the U.S. economy. And that only encapsulated, I believe, just a few weeks — a couple of the weeks after February 28th of the war. So not even past mid-March, you know, it's probably a lot worse now than it was then. But your reaction to this — this is kind of what we hear — is that everything is great, everything is working, what the United States is doing, but we need to do more. But we need to do it, you know, there's a lot. And it was kind of the Pete Hegseth, you know, congressional testimony — the same thing. Everything is going great, we won, everything is great, but we have all of this left to do. So your reactions to how the United States is really trying to sell this thing?

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

Yeah, I mean, the lying about the economy is just — this is just a staple of all the pro-Trump media. Breitbart News puts out daily news blasts on their email list just to convince people how great the economy is. They've been doing that almost every day for the last 12 months, and it's embarrassing. So they're all kind of — the pro-White House media — they're all kind of in on how great the economy is. The numbers, as you said, show something completely different. This quarter, you're probably going to see, by the time those data come out in a few months, that's going to be under 2% GDP. So getting towards European-level growth, zero-growth GDP. The expectation in Europe is zero growth, and it has been for a number of years.

So the U.S. is heading in that direction, plus the inflationary pressures are quite obvious to Americans. This administration will do a lot to suppress the inflation rate — every government does that, by the way. This is not just the U.S., but every government will always downplay inflation by tinkering with the price index, and they'll always exaggerate employment. And so employment and

inflation — two very key statistics for any government to maintain public support. But you look at the polling on Trump — he's getting blamed for the economy tanking, basically, and rightfully so in this case, because a lot of it is tied to this war. So that's the political side, but in terms of the propaganda side, what Larry Kudlow is saying there — it's just unbelievable. The gaslighting is incredible. They're calling Iran a terrorist state.

I don't think anybody can argue, looking at what Israel is doing right now in South Lebanon — another genocide, razing whole historic villages and Christian holy sites to the ground — and then gloating on social media with soldiers doing selfies about destroying all these ancient Lebanese civilizations in South Lebanon. That's terrorism. The United States taking out leaders — Kudlow's bragging that we're going to assassinate the leadership and the future leadership of Iran in the next wave of attacks if they don't comply with our demands. Is that not state terrorism? So between the U.S. and Israel, they are involved in incredible amounts of state terrorism, not to mention they're funding actual terrorist attacks.

The MEK, Jundallah, they tried it with the Iranian Kurdish uprising. That fell flat on its face. How much did that cost the U.S. government? That failed operation. Who knows? We'll never know. Billions of dollars in black funds. Who knows? But the U.S. is actively funding terror. Israel is supporting a terrorist regime in Damascus. The U.S. is supporting a terrorist regime in Damascus. So this idea that Iran is somehow the number one state sponsor of terror just doesn't comport with the facts at all. It's the opposite. So it's more gaslighting by the U.S. He's calling them Nazis. These are like Nazis. This is like I hear Mark Levin and others, especially on Fox, using this rotating talking point.

The Nazis... the modern-day equivalent of the Nazis, who basically laid waste to the League of Nations and international law as it was prior to 1945. Who's doing that right now? Who is launching undeclared wars of aggression that are undermining the international system, law, and so forth, using piracy globally in order to strong-arm countries — like seizing Russian and Venezuelan oil tankers, abducting heads of state — all these things that you might even accuse Germany of having done, although Germany didn't do half of that in the run-up to or even during World War II. That's what the U.S. is doing.

That's what Israel is doing. So they're a lot closer to, quote, Nazi behavior. And let's just not even mention the fact that Israel is running an apartheid state. They're forcibly starving Palestinians. They're forcibly displacing, ethnically cleansing South Lebanon now. It wasn't enough to run a genocide in Gaza and in the West Bank. They're doing it in South Lebanon too. So Israel's running a genocide on three fronts. That's even ambitious for the Nazis. Sorry to point out the obvious. The United States is in full partnership and backing of that. So that's just more of the gaslighting from people like Larry Kudlow and Fox.

The propaganda is designed to get the American public to think that this is a just war, that this is an enemy of the U.S., that they want to destroy the West, and that this is an evil regime, and so forth.

That's what this propaganda is for. But it's very important because it's a very thin veneer of support, especially in this war — a very unpopular, illegal war that's being waged by the United States and Israel — very, very unpopular, with catastrophic effects. And this guy will go there on national cable television and say, you know, tighten your belt, folks, don't complain about gas prices. This is Trump's attitude as well: it's going to be short-term pain for long-term gain.

What is the long-term gain, by the way? Oh, it's a nuclear-free Middle East. Well, no. Iran's not pursuing a nuclear weapon. That's a straw man, gaslighting propaganda argument that's been used on heavy rotation by Israel and the U.S. for years now. In fact, that's the reason that talking point was used for the U.S. to unilaterally withdraw from the JCPOA Iran nuclear deal that set the table for the war we're seeing now — it was a result of that talking point. When the reality is, and again, every accusation is a confession with these people, Israel is the biggest nuclear threat in West Asia because they're not even a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

They're allowed to have an undeclared secret nuclear arsenal, and nobody says a damn word about it in the U.S. or Europe. And so the whole nuclear talking point is a complete... And that's like every other fake WMD argument the United States uses to launch wars against Iraq or Syria or Libya. This is what we have here — another fake WMD. But it's not the centerpiece, though. It's so weak. They have to couch it with all these others. And then the other one is, oh, the Iranians are killing their own people, that these are tools of repression — their police force, the Basij. We hear General Keane saying this — the Basij and the IRGC repressing the people — and Lindsey Graham and everybody else, and that they've killed 40,000 of their own people.

That's a complete fabrication. That came out of CIA and State Department, National Endowment for Democracy-funded fake Iranian human rights NGOs, all based in New York City or Toronto or Washington, D.C., or like right down the road, one of them from Langley, Virginia. I mean, give us a break at this point. Completely fake, fabricated, categorically. I can say that with 100% confidence, having looked at the actual evidence of the so-called democratic protests, which were really U.S. and Israeli-directed riots with armed U.S.-trafficked weapons incidents. Trump admitted it when he was on one of his bragging sprees trying to big up his ego. He, for whatever reason, boasted about trafficking arms to the so-called peaceful protesters.

Trump said that a couple of weeks ago. So it's obvious what the real story is to anybody that's actually looking at the provenance of these claims. But they're so important, Danny, because those propaganda talking points, again, are used to sell to the American public that this is, even if they don't agree, it's still justified because it's an, quote, evil regime. The reality is the U.S. and Israel are the evil regimes in this story. That's obvious at this point to anybody that's honest, that's actually looking at the evidence, that's doing this objectively and empirically. It's beyond an argument at this point. It's so obvious. And so I think Europe's catching up a little bit on this curve, this reality curve, but not fast enough.

The Germans, Friedrich Merz, made some statements. And I'm laughing at the reaction from the U.S. because they don't know how to deal with Europe on this. Because, listen, Danny, without Germany, the U.S. wouldn't be able to prosecute this war against Iran. They simply couldn't without Italy, Germany, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Kosovo, which isn't really a country—that's another discussion. But without Germany specifically, that's it. That is their hub of global power projection for the Middle East. It's Germany. So this idea that, oh, you know, we're going to pull some troops out of Germany and we're going to teach those Germans that we're not paying for their defense anymore, has nothing to do with Germany's defense.

It has everything to do with U.S. global power projection. And so that's an interesting one, that development. But in a way, it's a type of sideshow, Danny, politically, because we know the geopolitical realities of U.S. positioning and what NATO really is. It's a protection racket for the U.S. and Europe. It's to project power against Russia, but it's also used to manage the Israeli military-industrial complex economies run out of Germany, and all the Iron Dome, everything, it's all coordinated — all the NSA coordinating with GCHQ in Cyprus, all the drones, right down to Djibouti, even Diego Garcia — that's all coordinated out of Germany, all of it.

So it's indispensable for the United States, Germany, for managing the Middle East. And that's all they have because they've given up all their bases in the Persian Gulf, where Iran has forced them out. They've been evicted by the Iranians. So all they've got left is Europe. So I'd back off a little on the cantankerous attacks. If I were J.D. Vance and Trump, it's a good soundbite — oh, we're not going to let these Europeans take us for a ride. But the reality is the Europeans are basically enabling U.S. hegemonic dominance around the world.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, isn't that the rub? That's been the Trump administration's identity, or at least its identity crisis in some ways. It's love to rah-rah-rah America — Europe is a bunch of sissies. But in truth, yeah, the United States really does need Europe for its geopolitical ambitions. If Europe were to ever get its head out of its behind and these countries were to pursue their own path, it would be a complete disaster. It would be a complete disaster for the United States' imperial ambitions and hegemony. Now, maybe as we get closer to the end, I wanted to ask you, Patrick — all of this propaganda is, of course, to sell the war to the American public.

What is so interesting about selling war now, though, is that this war is not popular with the American public, but yet it still goes on and on and on. I don't know if there's anyone in the audience who watches Game of Thrones, but there was a scene that I often think about where this character Littlefinger is talking to Cersei, and he says, "Knowledge is power," to her. And then she immediately starts dictating to her guards to essentially threaten his life. And afterwards, she goes, "No, power is power." And I feel like that also has a lot to do with this narrative of, yeah, we're selling the war, but we're not actually selling it to you.

We're just selling it. We're selling it in this way so we can have a written record. But in truth, we're just going to do it anyway. So we just need this. There's no attempt, really, to win over the hearts and minds of the American public. It almost feels like just an exercise in motion. It's just going through the motions. But what's so interesting is that a lot of what the US is doing just isn't working very well. There's a lot of data now talking about how there are cargo ships, tankers moving through the blockade. Here's one of these from Iranian sources — 11 ships being able to transit the Strait of Hormuz and reach global markets.

There's also the overland routes that are being pursued via Pakistan in order to transport Iranian oil. And here is another report from Middle East Monitor of 52 Iranian vessels crossing the blockade in the last three days. So even the, you know, it's getting really difficult, it seems, Patrick, with this propaganda, given that the results of the war, they don't conform anymore at all with it. There's a very big gap between truth and reality here, or message and reality. So your comments on this, especially given that the U.S. and Israel, of course, are signaling that this is going to be a long war for them, as much as Iran has said that they are prepared for that.

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

Yeah, your Game of Thrones metaphor is quite appropriate, actually. So the lesson from those stories and throughout history is that when power is allowed to over-accumulate into the hands of a few, and when a kind of, I would say, an autocracy or a kakistocracy or plutocracy happens, with the type of situation we're seeing not just in America, it's also in other parts of the world, but uh... the oligarchy is directing everything and power is not distributed, then all of a sudden power becomes power for power's sake, becomes the, uh... the *raison d'être*, or *raison d'état*, in the case of the United States and its government. So they're not concerned with intelligence. They're not concerned with real information.

They're not concerned with real trends, real data, where things are actually headed. The priority is basically achieving and maintaining power. So that's kind of where our political system is in the U.S., and I would say in Europe it's the same. Massive divergence from where the public is, I think, on all of these issues, including the war. So that's a ticking time bomb on a certain level as well. It's kind of a race right now for the state to fine-tune its instruments of censorship and to put down public protesting, to make protesting illegal, to put in technocratic and digital managed control grids—financially, communications-wise, everything—to sort of head off popular discontent, potential uprisings, especially in the so-called advanced West.

So that is a kind of running paradigm, a running trend. But just on the pure political level, if we step back and look at this war in Ukraine, and more broadly, let's say the first 14 months of the Trump administration, this conflict, to me, it's a catastrophic defeat for the U.S. on all, I'd say, four fronts—

maybe six fronts, actually, if you really want to break it down. But militarily, I think it's a catastrophic defeat. It's clearly shown the limits of U.S. military power—air power, naval power, power projection, the ability to maintain a massive military footprint in West Asia, as an example.

This is probably going to provide the Chinese, for instance, and their allies a different view of what the Pacific might look like in five or ten years. Not to mention the risks of war that are very real now. The U.S. is prepared to kind of go through with this type of suicide run in order to maintain their hegemonic position. Obviously, they've got Israel as their partner in this one. But who's the U.S. partner in crime in the Pacific? I mean, they're hoping it's going to be Japan, but I would not bank on that personally. I think there's more solidarity amongst Asian countries. Pitting them against each other—North and South Korea—that's not a fait accompli in my opinion, in my view. So it's a catastrophic defeat militarily.

It's a catastrophic defeat politically inside the United States for the Trump administration. It's a catastrophic defeat geopolitically, internationally, having sacrificed all of their military positions pretty much in the Persian Gulf and probably more broadly in the Middle East eventually because Israel—because Israel. So that's another front. Then there's the economic front. It's a catastrophic defeat for the U.S. domestically, their economy, in much the same way that the Ukraine, NATO's proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, was a catastrophic defeat for the European economy, and also the political problems that come with that and the instability that comes with that. And so domestically in the U. S., economically, it's a defeat.

Internationally, it's a defeat. But it's also diplomatically a defeat. So in that realm, in that sense, the U.S. has shown the world that it's unable to mediate, that it's unable to be a mitigating force, a bulwark against collapse. Instead, the U.S. is the initiator of the collapse. Because of their inability, because their agreement is incapable, they no longer have the trust of the international community that they once had. Even though everybody knew the United States was starting wars on false pretexts and so forth, they were still regarded as a stable broker in the international system. And I think that's just still trading off its Cold War bona fides in that sense, during the bipolar world order of the Cold War.

But now it's just completely shattered, this idea that the U.S. even needs to be at the table for any type of regional dispute anywhere in the world. It's almost like most countries are like, "We don't want the U.S. there. We're only going to get problems." They're using leverage, they're attacking us, the tariff wars the United States has unleashed on everybody. So on all of those different fronts, it's a massive failure. And then on the public relations, the imperial front, it's a total catastrophic failure because the image of the U.S. is now so—it's such a tar pit right now that the U.S. has created for itself that its public image probably is not going to be—it will never recover. You know, the only way it could recover is if there was internal opposition in the U.S. to what it's doing to trash itself internationally.

But that internal opposition is almost non-existent, aside from, you know, a few people in the podcast circuit. And I think quite a few people agree with that—the alternative commentators on how this is going and how badly it's going—but we're not seeing that rise to the level of the political class in the U.S. So because of that, the lack of opposition in the U.S., just like the lack of opposition in Europe to a massive suicidal run by the Europeans over Ukraine, it's delegitimizing the entire political structure as it did in Europe. This is going to happen in the United States. And regardless of what party—Democrat or Republican or whatever—that's just a reality. And so it's failing on so many different fronts. It's so obvious this is a failure on all, what I just mentioned, six fronts.

Those are six dimensions of this conflict, failing one after the other. So that's what anybody reasonably will conclude from this. The question is, if it was me and I was—let's say you were drafted in to advise the president right now—they've given up, they've thrown their hands up, what do we do? They're asking us, well, if you cut your losses right now, you're still not going to avoid all of the blowback from all of this. You might be able to mitigate the damage of it right now. If there was a peace deal and some miracle happened and, like, you know, Jesus Trump managed to put together a peace deal that stuck, it's not going to save the inevitable trajectory of all those things I've just mentioned, but it would be better than carrying on with this for, like, weeks or months or an indefinite period of time. So that's how people should be looking at this in the mainstream media, because they're going to get blamed.

The media, they're going down with this Trump Titanic. Once again, the mainstream media will be partly blamed for covering a lot of this up. Two big cover-ups. One was the fact that this special forces raid was a disaster—the media closed ranks and pretty much covered that up. That would have derailed the war, trust me, if there was enough pressure, and would have delegitimized Pete Hegseth more than he already is, which is hard to believe, but anyway. And then the other one is the complete trashing of the U.S. bases in the opening days and weeks of the conflict. If that had received sufficient media coverage early on—but again, they closed ranks and deferred to national security concerns.

So under pressure from the White House and the Pentagon, the mainstream media have a lot to answer for. Because, Danny, we were talking about that from the get-go, as was everybody else, because that's a significant thing. And also it's an inability for the U.S. to project military power in the region, which makes the whole idea of carrying on the war totally untenable from a tactical or even strategic point of view. So I don't know. The fourth estate is important if you have a functioning democracy, but if there's no fourth estate, you have the potential for major catastrophes like this. And I think we're, once again, faced with another one. So anyway.

## **#Danny**

No, I think that's a great summation and a great place to end here. We are truly in an era where I think we're learning that any empire, the U.S. empire in particular here, can't prosecute anything—

any empire—without literal human enforcement. And that's just not going to happen. So everything that's been done, everything that you just described here, and all of the consequences, militarily, economically, are only going to get worse the longer that the U.S. tries to hold on to this war effort. But without further ado, I want to make sure that everybody knows that your 21st Century Wire YouTube channel and your Substack are both in the video description, so people should check that out. Anything you want to add to that, Patrick?

## **#Patrick Henningsen**

No, just thanks, Danny. Important conversations. All will be revealed. I think a lot will be revealed in the next week or two. We'll see how this fleshes out. But yeah, we appreciate any support. We're trying to break through this censorship, algorithmic prison that we find ourselves in on YouTube. So any support—like and subscribe, visit our channel, anything you can do there—is greatly appreciated. And we thank you in advance for that.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, everybody, make sure you do that. So there are a few things you can do here. You can hit the like button so more people see this conversation. You can go to the video description and make sure that you subscribe to 21st Century Wire. Make sure that you are hitting the notifications bell or anything that you can do. Engage with the videos—anything you can do to make sure that they're coming up on your feed. And then all the places to support this channel are also in the video description. Tomorrow I'll be back with Pepe Escobar, 1 p.m. Eastern Time, to open up May. Without further ado, everybody, I will see you then. Everyone thank Patrick again by hitting the like button. Oh, I forgot to shout out—well, we had some members, we have some super chats, some super stickers—all that's appreciated here. Thanks to all of you. But I will see you all tomorrow, 1 p.m. Eastern Time, to open up the month of May, May 2026, as we continue following developments in this war and beyond. Bye-bye.