

Trump RUSHES Arms to Israel for Imminent Strike, Iran Drops HAMMER | KJ Noh

Geopolitical analyst KJ Noh discusses reports of an imminent strike as Trump reviews Iran's peace proposal. We talk about how Iran has dropped a hammer on the US Navy as well as the crucial role of China in bringing the empire to the brink of its biggest defeat yet. LIKE the video and Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong> Telegram: <https://t.me/DannyHaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritho> #trump #iran #china

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. As you can see, I am joined by KJ Noh, geopolitical analyst, commentator, independent journalist. KJ, good to have you back on the program.

#KJ Noh

Thank you. Pleasure to be with you, Danny.

#Danny

Yes. Well, let's get right to it then. I want to begin with your reactions to where we are with regard to what is really a global war centered on Iran. And first, I just want to pull up some of the latest updates. Here we have, in the last 24 hours or so, a massive buildup. According to Israeli Channel 12, there are U.S. ammo shipments that are coming to Israel — about 6,500 tons in the last day — and there's a lot of speculation about the resumption of the war. There's U.S. military aircraft activity surging toward the Middle East, and an \$8.9 billion war expenditure that the Trump administration approved.

But there's also Iran setting a kind of ultimatum. They're breaking the blockade pretty significantly. Dozens and dozens of tankers in the last 24 hours have actually made it through the blockade with absolutely no capacity for the U.S. to stop them. And they just submitted a proposal to the United States, which essentially gave the U.S. 30 days to agree to the mechanisms through which Iran wants to end this war. So, KJ, where are we in this war? What has been its impact? Because there is

a massive impact being had here all across the world. But first, your reactions to where we are in the war and then its impact.

#KJ Noh

Well, I think it certainly looks like there is going to be an escalation, re-escalation, recommencement of kinetic war. You see that kind of logistical movement. I don't think it's, you know, purely bluff. Remember, the U.S. has essentially three options: it has blockade, it has bombing, it has boots on the ground. And it's actually fallen short on all three of these strategies. But it looks like it wants to resume the bombing. We'll see if this works. I mean, certainly if you look at the way that Iran is maneuvering and reacting, it seems ready for the war to recommence. If we look at the previous strategy, a 38-day war.

And we can see that Iran had strategic overmatch. It had escalation dominance. It had, certainly, strategic advantage in terms of geography, terrain, topography, magazine depth, et cetera. So all of these things are factors that have not changed. It's pretty clear that the U.S. is starting to rob Peter to pay Paul. It is, you know, pulling munitions from other theaters in order to resume fighting in Iran. But I don't think it changes the basic equation, which is that Iran still has strategic overmatch and escalation dominance. It's not clear what the U.S. is thinking here, other than that it's continuing to double down on a losing bet.

#Danny

Yeah, well, our friend Pepe Escobar, our friend of the show, reported that there's been around 81 Iranian tankers and counting that have actually made it through this blockade. And there are also reports that Iran may have seized another ship in the Strait of Hormuz. You know, Iran is putting out the olive branch to the United States, saying we can discuss a 30-day kind of timeline for ending the war, but they are being very clear that nuclear talks are not going to be had. And then, of course, this is a sticking point for the U.S.'s war narrative. Talk about the impact of this war, given what is obvious at this point — both sides are not budging, and there's no reason to believe that Iran will budge at all in the coming days and weeks.

#KJ Noh

Well, I mean, I think Iran has made it very, very clear. When it goes into negotiation, it has the upper hand. It holds the stronger cards. It is not going to concede anything at the negotiating table that the U.S. has not been able to win in kinetic war on the battlefield. And so I think Iran sees itself as definitely having the stronger hand, the upper hand. It essentially has proposed a three-phase process of negotiation: let's figure out what are the conditions that we need in order to stop the war, which entail essentially security for Iran, non-aggression towards Iran, and also in Lebanon.

And then the second phase of this would be a discussion around the Strait of Hormuz. And then the third part, which is the most involved and complex, would be regarding nuclear capacity, nuclear enrichment, et cetera. So it's put out a very, very rational and logical approach to de-escalation. I believe that it's negotiating or offering the olive branch in good faith. And, of course, as far as we can see, the U.S. is not agreement-capable. It will pretend to negotiate, then it will bomb the negotiators. It will call all kinds of subterfuge. If you look at the history of U.S. negotiation, it really isn't a good precedent.

I mean, for example, think of North Korea, think of Libya, think of Syria, think of the 380 treaties the Indigenous nations signed with the United States. It just simply isn't precedent—agreement-capable, as Sergei Lavrov put it. And so I think the Iranians are putting forth their best foot. They're putting forth their good offices. They want to negotiate and de-escalate, but they're not afraid of kinetic war. They've shown, certainly, that they have greater resolve. They have the faster learning curve, and they have all the logistical, material, and geographic advantages that fighting a defensive war entails.

What are the impacts? Well, the impacts are global, and they are slow to hit. But right now, at the current moment, we think there is a deficit of about 700 million barrels of oil in the global market, and then all the other petrochemical-related, hydrocarbon-related chemicals that are tied to this, including natural gas, urea, ammonia, as well as metals. And so these are catastrophic effects that we still haven't felt yet. It's like you take some medicine or drug — those effects don't hit you right away, but they will. There's a kind of delay involved. And I think that the U.S. is thinking that these things are not going to happen, but they will.

They're just building momentum. And as I said, we're already looking at a 700 million barrel oil deficit, soon to hit a trillion barrels of oil. And there is an easy off-ramp, which is to make peace with Iran, offer security guarantees, stop trying to destroy the country. And if Iran wants a transit fee, it's within its rights. For 47 years, they have given free transit, but if they want to impose a small transit fee, \$1 per barrel, that works out to between two to five cents per gallon at the gas station. I think people would be perfectly fine with this, except that it has become a matter of U.S. domination.

The U.S. can only see the world in terms of master and slave, dominated, dominated. It wants to subjugate, and therefore it is not looking for a reasonable accommodation with what are clearly reasonable demands. And so I think the key risk here is that the U.S. could re-escalate. It could re-escalate to even more severe kinetic measures. It could escalate towards nuclear war. It could unleash Israel in ways that it hasn't done before. And I think these are all catastrophic consequences that we have to be very, very aware of. And I think on the domestic level, we have to struggle and put pressure to make sure that this doesn't happen.

#Danny

Yeah, great. Very well said. And, you know, I'll just pull up what Donald Trump has said about this, KJ, this plan. He said he's going to review it, Iran's plan, but can imagine it won't be acceptable and that they have not paid, in your comments on this, a big enough price for what they have done to humanity and the world for the last 47 years. Very interesting words, KJ. Iran, of course, is not backing down at all. Today, there are reports of another cargo ship that was attacked and possibly even seized.

It's hard to know what exactly has happened because it's very... breaking news. But at the end of the day, this blockade, KJ, appears to be almost the permanent war that the United States wants to wage on Iran. But not just Iran. This feels like a strategy that is being used, if we can call it that, all across the world. But it looks like it's having very difficult effects, very negative effects on the United States itself. What do you make of this? And what do you make of Trump's comments that Iran has not paid enough for what it has done to humanity?

#KJ Noh

Well, I think there's a certain amount of projection going on. I mean, what has Iran done? I mean, Iran has not invaded another country in, what, 200, 250 years, if even that. Iran has not been, you know, the bad actor in the Middle East. The bad actor in the Middle East is most certainly Israel. And the U.S. and the U.S.'s quislings, these are the ones that have really been a blight on the human conscience and on humanity. They've been the serial violators of international law. And this current war on Iran is also a violation of international law. It is, you know, the crime of crimes, the crime of aggression. And so if there's some notion that Iran has not paid enough, I just find those terms, you know, absurd.

And what would that mean? What would that look like? You know, put a price on it. I mean, you know, isn't thousands of dead civilians enough? Isn't— you know, I just kind of stagger at that kind of framing. But, you know, what the U.S. does do, and it's done it for a very, very long time, is it uses sanctions and blockades and embargoes as a form of warfare. It's simply a continuum: economic warfare, trade warfare, financial warfare, along with lawfare, and then kinetic warfare and subversion and dirty wars and all of that. It's all part of the toolkit. It's all part of a continuum. It's a kind of multi-dimensional approach to waging war against its enemies in order to maintain permanent hegemony over the planet.

And certainly on that level, you know, we know that these are not new. Iran has been suffering some of the most stringent sanctions since 1979 and certainly over the past decades. Sanctions, we have to remember, kill more than kinetic war on any given day, on any given year. More people die from sanctions, far more people die from sanctions than they do from kinetic war. And certainly, the U.S. has this notion that it will blockade and strangle and choke and weaken and enfeeble Iran and other enemies until they are willing to submit, at which point, usually, the strategy is to sanction a

country so much that it's on the verge of collapse, at which point the U.S. goes in with kinetic action and then proclaims itself the military victor and trumpets its military prowess. That's usually how the scenario goes.

It's not working this way because Iran has planned for decades, because it knew the U.S. had it in its crosshairs at least since, certainly since the early 2000s, and it has prepared severely and with tremendous discipline, and now it's showing its mettle. On the other hand, the U.S. really hasn't developed its strategies since the early 2000s, essentially trying to use the same playbook, which Iran was prepared for. And so, you know, the U.S. has this doctrine of war called Air-Sea Battle, derived from Air-Land Battle, which is derived from Israeli war doctrine from the Yom Kippur War. Air-Sea Battle and Air-Land Battle are about decapitation, strikes in the rear, and decapitating your enemy. This strategy didn't work for the very simple reason that Iran had a starfish strategy. You cannot decapitate a starfish.

The Mosaic strategy involves 31 independent or semi-independent commands that are holographic and fractal, and that can simply split off and become their own independent agents of kinetic response, which they did with extraordinary skill, extraordinary intelligence. And within the first hours and days of the war, they knocked out the U.S.'s key strategic capacities, in particular its radar capacities, and they also struck the AWACS. This is like sacking the quarterback. You cannot wage coordinated war once you're blind and once your quarterbacks have been taken out. And so Iran has shown that it is learning, that it has a much faster learning curve. And the U.S. has a learning curve which is flat. So in war, war is essentially a contest of learning curves. Iran's is exponential and the U.S.'s flat. And this is yet another reason why Iran looks to be having the upper hand going into any sort of negotiation.

#Danny

Yeah, and what we're hearing now is that Trump is giving another deadline Tuesday. He said 8 p.m. Eastern time for Iran to completely capitulate. This is what Iran is putting out there, though, just in terms of the details. The IRGC-linked Tasnim news agency has said it reported its response as a 14-point proposal that includes demands for guarantees against future military aggression, which includes withdrawal of U.S. forces from the areas surrounding Iran, lifting the naval blockade, unfreezing Iranian assets, compensation payments, sanctions relief, and the ending of war across all fronts, including Lebanon, and outlining a new mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz. So in that, there is no sign of capitulation there. And as you said, KJ, we've seen the consequences of this war now just starting to hit, especially in terms of gas prices.

Any attack by the United States and Israel will likely make that worse. So that begs the question then, KJ, how has this changed the world, not just in terms of energy? Because there are some who are talking about this war solely in terms of how U.S. LNG corporations are running away with profits. There's definitely no question about that, as gas prices and oil prices absolutely peak. But there is, it seems like, an overheating of the overall world economy. And given the lay of the balance

of forces here, that is not going to be relieved, it seems, unless the United States picks one of a myriad of bad options. Even Iran is saying, you have essentially a couple of bad options here: you either stop what you're doing or you escalate. Either way, Iran isn't going to budge, and the consequences are going to be felt mainly for the United States. What do you make of this?

#KJ Noh

Well, I think that's a very correct analysis. Essentially, the U.S. is in chess—it's what's called a zugzwang. Any move you make simply worsens your position. You have to make a move, but any move you make makes things worse for you. We know certainly for Trump, in terms of what he's facing—essentially the markets, the munitions situation, and the midterms—anything he does is just going to make things worse. If he backs off, he's going to be in a bad position. If he accelerates, either in blockade, bombing, or boots on the ground, all of those are going to be bad options. There are no good options for the United States. And in terms of the economy, let's remember that this is the key asymmetrical advantage that Iran has: it controls the carotid artery of the global economy—one-fifth of the global oil supply.

Now, if the U.S. wants to blockade the blockade, this is an act of madness. It's like you decide that you're going to add pressure to a tourniquet that is going to cut your leg off. Well, I mean, if you want to do that, you can do that, but it's an act of foolishness. Of course, in the short term, you know, oil prices have gone up. There is a temporary, you know, profit-taking off of this. I mean, capitalist firms always thrive off of crises. You know, like your blood pressure goes up if you apply a tourniquet. But the problem is that you are going to lose money, you're going to lose vital capacity. And I think that we know that the global capitalist system is reliant on petrochemicals and hydrocarbons.

You cannot run a capitalist economy, certainly the U.S. capitalist economy, without an adequate flow of hydrocarbons globally. It's a global market. It's not a local market. It's not a restricted market. And because of that, essentially what you're setting yourself up for is cardiac arrest. So I think it's a very, very foolish idea. But who knows? I mean, the thing that we're always struck by, at least I'm struck by, is President Trump's very, very unusual way of creating outcomes that are detrimental to the United States itself. Here in this situation, he's actually pushing the world towards decarbonization, which is something that the world actually needs to do. Certainly on the level of energy generation, decarbonization is going to become much, much more intense.

China's already made these preparations in sustainables. Twenty-five to thirty percent of its energy is through sustainables or non-hydrocarbon sources. That's simply going to accelerate. Certainly, its transportation infrastructure and its EV industry are all non-hydrocarbon-based. That is going to accelerate. BYD had its best month ever. It sold, what, half a million vehicles in the last month alone. And so all these things that Trump is doing to, you know, accelerate or intensify the use of

hydrocarbons, U.S. hydrocarbons, are actually pushing the world towards decarbonization, and it's actually building up Chinese industry. In other words, that old trope or joke or meme that Trump is making China great again seems to be operative here as well.

#Danny

Yeah, well, what's so interesting is, I mean, KJ, we've both been around for a while, and just a couple of decades ago, when Iran, as they cite, the war against it really started, or really started to escalate, at least in its modern iteration after 9/11, everyone was talking about wars for oil, right? The United States waging wars for oil against Iraq, and then on and on and on throughout the Middle East and West Asia. Now, though, what the United States seems to have done with its targeting of Iran is open up a kind of Pandora's box, where these wars for oil simply are literally just about oil. And it's a very, almost archaic, way of trying to dictate terms in the world, because we are really going toward the lowest, the lowest level of the value chain when it comes to this.

And that has done what it's done, which is drive costs way up in terms of oil. And that leads to countries not saying, yes, please, please, please, let's bankrupt ourselves with U.S. LNG. It appears that what it's really going to do is move countries toward finding cheaper options and better options, not just for their energy needs, but also for their production needs. And China is really attractive at the moment because of all of this. So it's a very curious way of going about attempting to reassert global domination, given that oil is really just one part of a massive global value supply chain, which the United States really isn't a part of after the fact of trying to blockade oil. So it's almost like the U. S. is trying to starve the world because it can't offer anything else. That doesn't feel like a winning formula to me. But what's your reaction?

#KJ Noh

Well, it's a very short-sighted formula because it's not going to work over the long term or even the midterm. It may have a kind of, you know, theatrical effect in the short term, but it's not going to work. Essentially, what this does, as I said, it accelerates the process of decarbonization, which Trump considers global warming to be a Chinese hoax, but actually what he's doing is driving more industry and more energy production towards sustainables and towards Chinese production of sustainables. So it is this lack of dialectical thinking in the U.S. leadership which is, I think, ultimately going to be their downfall.

But in the meantime, I'm seeing gas prices at \$6.50 in the U.S. All over the world, including many, many U.S. allies, we see massive disruptions to their industry, to their petrochemical industries, to their agricultural industries, et cetera. It's a kind of global delegitimization of U.S. interests, U.S. influence, U.S. power. It certainly turns the entire planet off of U.S. quote-unquote leadership. So I think that it's, as you put it, a Pandora's box. It has vast unintended consequences from the standpoint of the U.S. It will ultimately undermine U.S. power, and yet it is, from the kind of short-term perspective, it looks like an effective strategy in the short term.

You're going to turn the world, you're going to choke everybody out, including your own population. Well, maybe that makes you feel powerful, but it's a little bit like choking yourself and feeling yourself pumped up. I think it's a very, very foolish thing to do. And as I said, it speaks to the kind of short-term thinking, the short-term lack of dialectical capacity in the U.S. leadership. And I think that it won't last very long. Certainly, it cannot last until the midterms, because already at this point, you know, not just the Global South, but even the U.S. population is feeling the hurt. And I think that they will make their voices heard.

#Danny

Well, there's just been, I guess we could call this breaking news, although I think we should have expected it. According to RT, Iran's offer that we just reviewed is not acceptable to him, he tells Israel. Of course, it feels like the United States is often just consulting with Israel. Iran has a different view on this. They're saying that they're reviewing the U.S.'s reply as we speak. But nonetheless, we don't expect anything huge to change out of all of this. One thing that did happen, KJ, that I think is very significant, and many people are talking about it, is that according to Dropside News, China has invoked a blocking statute for the first time.

Its Ministry of Commerce has activated blocking rules for all firms and individuals, so they are mandated not to comply with U.S. sanctions regulations targeting their independent refineries accused of purchasing Iranian crude. And of course, China—even CNN has noted that China has played a big role when it comes to this war on Iran, especially in maintaining robust trade relations and even possibly providing satellite technology, which could be used as of now.

I think a lot of people were enamored by the satellite technology being used in Iran's missile strikes, but it could very well be used right now to evade the U.S. blockade, because as Ghalibaf, the head of the negotiations and the head of parliament in Iran, said, the border of Iran is massive. It's a thousand or more miles longer than the farthest points of the United States from coast to coast, meaning it's really hard to blockade that. And if Iran has satellite technology, they can certainly locate the ships where they are and just move around them. But your thoughts on this—China's moves here and how China and the rest of the multipolar world have navigated this current stage of the war?

#KJ Noh

Well, they're moving very gingerly because, you know, an empire in decline is probably the most dangerous entity around. But what we see here is China meeting the United States tit for tat. You know, the U.S. is threatening or has threatened China's refiners, and now China is coming back and applying its anti-foreign sanctions law. These were laws passed in 2021 that essentially allow for blacklisting, asset freezes, visa bans, and prohibitions on compliance. These also relate to the recent State Council decrees released, I think earlier this month or last month, 834 and 835, which have to

do with supply chain security regulations and also the counter-extraterritoriality regulations. Essentially, they're saying that extraterritorial measures applied to Chinese firms are to be resisted.

Essentially, they're saying that you don't get to have long-arm jurisdiction over our own corporations willy-nilly. The world is not your legal oyster. And what it does is it prohibits implementation and compliance with what are essentially illegal U.S. measures that are being applied extraterritorially to Chinese suppliers and their secondary suppliers, et cetera, including financial institutions. So China is pushing back hard. It's putting its foot down. It's saying that you don't get to have your way with the entire global economy. Certainly, you don't get to apply your laws to our companies in violation of international law. And it's doing two things. One is it's asserting its sovereign rights. And two, it's upholding international law.

What does this mean in terms of China's measures in general? I think it shows that China is pushing back on a more active level. It is meeting the United States tit for tat. It's interesting because this takes place just weeks before the meeting between President Xi and President Biden. And so I think they're situating themselves to say, look, you know, the fact that we're going to meet, we're going to, you know, send the signal ahead of time that we mean business. You know, it's no longer a matter of our accommodating you and playing nice. We're going to, you know, meet you, you know, and encounter you.

Whatever you do, certainly they did the same thing for the tariffs from the U.S.-imposed tariffs. China, you know, responded with counter-tariffs as well as a rare earth element ban. Certainly, that is still in place and still poses a tremendous risk to the United States because it essentially makes its military-industrial supply chain extraordinarily enfeebled. And so I think there are things that are being done tit for tat. I think that the selling of a Chinese satellite to Iran was, as others have pointed out, a game changer. It allows tremendous resolution. It gives Iran a near comparable capacity to see the battlefield.

The U.S. has always relied on having this kind of transparent battlefield, this battlefield panopticon where it can see everything and the counterparty is essentially blind. And it has gotten used to that kind of warfare. But now Iran, being only the 16th military power, was able to best the U.S., the top military power on the battlefield. I think that signals that the situation has shifted in tectonic ways, and satellite technology and the kind of data gathering that Chinese systems have enabled really have changed the global battlefield. And I think, you know, at the end of the day, it signals that the U.S. is not the military power that it has, you know, proposed or, you know, promoted itself as being. That sends a global message to the rest of the world. You know, a security alliance with the United States is actually a liability, not a strength. And this is something that you can already see, the fractures in the GCC countries and all that.

#Danny

Yeah, and I think one thing that some may be underestimating here is that you talk about the fractures in the GCC. I think that there are fractures across even the elite, those who truly do run U.S. foreign policy, those who run U.S. economic policy and its trajectory of development. And I think we're seeing that all over. I mean, this was just published today in the New York Times. It is an opinion piece, but generally the New York Times does not publish opinions that do not reflect the whims of its editorial board. America is officially an empire in decline. And this piece actually cites directly that the war on Iran has overextended the empire dangerously.

And, KJ, you are probably aware that Donald Trump is still going to go ahead, according to him and his administration, with a visit to China. He's going to do that in the middle of May. And according to The Hill and many other publications, they are saying that the United States is going in there with no cards at all. So maybe you can speak to, KJ, what these observers in the elite might be worrying about, given that there are all kinds of, of course, I think, correct assertions that the war in Iran definitely does have a particular purpose for the U.S. empire, not just against Iran, but for its own global hegemony. But it seems like this contradiction, in terms of its own position, is getting harder and harder to ignore.

#KJ Noh

I think definitely the empire is in decline. It has been in decline for a very, very long time, certainly in terms of the internal contradictions. All you have to do is look inside these United States to see the vast suffering of the vast majority of its working classes. Sixty percent of families do not have \$1,000 to their name. Families do not have \$1,000 to their name. Forty percent do not have \$400 to their name. We see mass immiseration. We see the conditions of life getting worse and worse. We see the life expectancy reducing. That's unheard of in a developed state, that the life expectancy actually starts to move in the wrong direction. But these are all signs of an empire in terminal decline, in a kind of necrotic state. And these have to do—I mean, the New York Times will not say this—but, you know, if you look at the larger picture, these have to do with the contradictions of capitalism itself.

These are the contradictions of monopoly capital as it reaches a kind of necrotic stage. It financializes, it deindustrializes, it immiserates even more, and it also tends towards violent means of trying to reclaim its power—in particular, reversion to primitive accumulation, war, piracy, slavery, etc. All of these things have to do with the terminal decline of the U.S. imperium. Iran is accelerating this, and I believe President Trump is also accelerating this in this sense. You know, his agenda is making the Global South great again. He's accelerating the rise of the Global South, even as he takes desperate and dangerous measures to prevent the rise of the Global South and the BRICS and the Belt and Road, etc. Originally, the plan was a three-stage plan.

If you look at the national security strategy documents, you know, there was what they called the two plus three formulation. There were the two great enemies. There were China and Russia. And

then there were the lesser enemies. These were North Korea, Iran, and non-state actors. And this was the two plus three formulation. The U.S. saw itself as the global hegemon after the fall of the Soviet Union, and it was simply looking for a way to knock out the two quote-unquote revisionist challengers and then polish off the small annoyances like North Korea, Iran, and non-state actors. All of that went south in dramatic ways, partly because the U.S. has this kind of terminal political Dunning-Kruger syndrome.

It's what I refer to as the grizzly bear fallacy. It thinks that it's much, much more powerful than it actually is. Grizzly bear fallacy meaning that 6% of sentient adult humans in the United States think that they can fight a grizzly bear and beat it with their bare hands. The U.S. has the same syndrome regarding geopolitical strategy and kinetic war in general. It has gotten spoiled over decades of what they refer to as counterinsurgency warfare, essentially using, you know, 20th-century, 21st-century electronic panopticon to rain down unlimited fire on, you know, sheep herders and goat herders with trucks. You do that a lot, and you have an inflated sense of your own military capacity.

It hadn't fought a peer competitor really since World War II. And so when it started the war with Iran, and even before that, the war with Russia through proxies—but still, you know, a war with Russia—it underestimated. And it considered that it would simply polish off Russia as an appetizer on the way to the main dish, which was China, and then it would polish off Iran as a dessert. China was clearly the main dish. It's what Air-Sea Battle and the pivot to Asia, all of that was preparing for, and Russia was just a gas station with pretensions, which it would knock out using a cheap proxy. And that didn't work out well.

So the sequencing already—the appetizer got stuck in its craw, and it started to choke on it. And then it mis-sequenced the process by going for Iran because, again, it thought that after Venezuela, Iran would be another easy one. Because it was getting bogged down in Ukraine, it thought that Iran would be another simple and easy demonstration of its power, despite decades of warning, both from Iran and from its own internal think tanks, that the first thing that would happen would be a closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Iran has these inexorable asymmetric advantages, one of which is its control of the Strait of Hormuz.

I mean, as Trump calls it, the Strait of Iran. I mean, it is, you know, at least half of it is within Iran's territorial waters. These are not high seas. These are not international waters. They are Iran's territorial waters. And because of that, you have the global economy being held in this precarious way, subject to Iran's control. Now, of course, the notion was, you know, with Israel as its proxy, the US would simply take back Iran, essentially fulfilling what Winston Churchill started in the early 20th century, that they understood the flow of oil and the control of the Strait of Hormuz was critical for global domination.

That has worked out in exactly the opposite way. Trump has demonstrated both U.S. lack of capacity and U.S. impotence. He's decarbonizing, he's pushing the world towards decarbonization, and he's showing that the U.S. vaunted air-sea battle is actually a paper tiger—that the U.S. cannot

have its way either in blockade, bombing, or boots on the ground. All of those have failed to date. And so to double down on that is simply making a bad situation worse. But once again, it's the sunk cost fallacy—the gambler who wants to bet even bigger because of so much that he has already invested.

#Danny

And uh, there was an ominous sign. I think it's being actually understated—the closure of Spirit Airlines. And I've taken Spirit just once. I took it actually from Cuba back to the United States more than 10 years ago now, actually, and I can tell you I did not have a great time on that. I mean, it was cheap, but it was not a good time. It was very small. You know, they don't give you anything. You know, when they say budget airline—yeah, there were a lot of problems with it. But its closure, I think, marks the beginning of what actually I think is a fatal contradiction for this war and also for, as you said, capitalism and imperialism that lie at the heart of it, which is, yeah, you can run away with LNG profits. You can make all this money off the higher gas and oil prices.

But as it gets worse and worse and worse, well, then you see the signs of depression and recession oncoming. These businesses—there's going to be more and more of this going on. There's going to be massive closures, massive economic shock because of all this. And it's going to get worse. And that, while on the one hand, there's always banks and financiers and all of that that will profit off of this chaos and catastrophe, it will also create very desperate conditions as a whole for the population, not just in the United States but in the world. Usually, the imperialists, the capitalists, they don't love that. They really do like to operate within conditions where they are operating in relative obscurity.

That will not be the case. And that already isn't the case, but it won't be the case. And I think there's another point here, KJ, I'd like you to comment on, especially—I know you wanted to comment some on what's going on in the periphery around China. But finally here, just to go back to this article on the US being an empire in decline. You know, this article talks about how this attack on Iran was different, that the United States is an energy so-called independent country. It was not in its vital interest to attack Iran at this time. And it wasn't even on the radar screen just a couple of months ago, and that it lacks the military means to impose its will on Iran itself in a long conflict.

So with all these admissions, it really does, I think, expose that if the United States can't impose its will militarily in a short or a long conflict with Iran, that really is all it has. It's not as if the U.S. has this massive tool belt that it can employ which has shown deep results. The sanctions have killed a lot of people. Even elite observers say that it has not led to the massive amounts of political change that they desire. And after that, it's what? What economically is the U.S. really offering other than sanctions? What politically and diplomatically can the United States offer as opposed to, let's say, a China or a Russia, or now Russia as the fourth global power, Iran? Not much. So your comments on this and anything you want to talk about in terms of what's happening in China's periphery.

#KJ Noh

Well, if the U.S.—if the only thing that the U.S. can offer the world is, you know, something negative, that is, we won't hurt you—that's not going to be sustainable. You know, countries will pivot, and they will, you know, join up, and they'll resist U.S. pressure, which is what we're already starting to see. We're seeing defection from the U.S. security umbrella. We're seeing a kind of balancing. We're seeing even some bandwagoning from other countries. And so I don't think that this is the... I certainly don't think this is sustainable. And I also point out, once again, this lack of dialectical thinking. You know, you think that by putting pressure on Iran through blockades or through decapitation that you're weakening it. No, actually, you're strengthening it.

It's like, you know, tempering iron. The more you beat it, the stronger it gets. Certainly, in terms of its goals, there's that Clausewitzian formula: war is a way of imposing your will on the counterparty. If you can't impose your will, then you've lost the war. Certainly, you have to set out goals and say what you're trying to do, but the mere fact that you can destroy things or threaten doesn't amount to a military win. And once again, it underlines and heightens American weakness and impotence. Once the bully loses its aura of being able to bully at will, then it's just a matter of time before it gets undermined by its own sidekicks. We're already seeing some of that. And also, as you point out, the internal contradictions.

As we're saying, the markets and the midterms loom large, and the vast immiseration of the population inside the United States cannot tolerate these kinds of extraordinary measures for much longer. You talked about, you know, the failure of airlines—Spirit Airlines—you know, I've ridden in them too. I mean, I was just astonished. You pay for everything; they don't even have seatback pockets, so if you're carrying anything, you have to hold it in your hand the whole time. And I think that has to be some kind of security, you know, safety failure, because those things are going to fall out of your hands if the plane shifts suddenly. So anyway, I'm not mourning the death of Spirit Airlines, but it does signal how bad the economic situation has gotten today.

It's just the canary in the coal mine. We see other airlines struggling. Jet fuel has gone up—it has doubled in the last few months. Airlines are cutting back on the number of flights they have. People are being crushed into flights. And I think that's just a signal that we can see tangibly of the kind of global economic pressure that is happening around the world. We still haven't seen it yet in the United States in food, but we will. These supply chains are global. The U.S. cannot simply think that it is isolated from the rest of the world, that it can kind of blockade a part of the world and not have it affect itself. If you look at a single car, a car has 30,000 components—the supply chains, most of which come from other countries, a significant amount of which come from China.

If you're thinking purely in terms of the military-industrial complex, you know, a jet fighter has, what, a quarter of a million individual components. Again, once again, the vast majority of which come from other countries, the vast majority of which will come from, you know, industrialized countries like China. And so it is shooting itself in the foot. It is tourniqueting its own limbs. And then

it expects somehow to come out of this, you know, with some measure of strength. This is not going to happen. The U.S. is simply digging itself deeper and deeper into the hole. And yet it looks like, if you look at certain sectors of the ruling imperial elite, they are taking all the wrong lessons from the Iraq war.

It's that eternal question, you know, are our people learning? Are our generals learning? They're not. They're taking all the wrong lessons. So, for example, if you look at Foreign Affairs, which is the official journal of the Council on Foreign Relations, you know, they recently published an article by a professor at the Army War College. He says that Iran shows that we had—essentially that we had gotten a tactical win. It's a nonsense statement. I mean, he kind of brackets it by calling it tactical because to call it a strategic win, he knows that he would be laughed out of the house. But he says, you know, we had a tactical win in Iran. And what this means is that it shows that we can prevail in a war, a kinetic war against China.

We have to recalibrate, recalculate everything, essentially saying that we are greenlighting—Iran should greenlight us—for war against China, in particular over Iran. So this is the kind of absolute nonsense that the ruling imperial elite, or at least sectors of it, are telling themselves. They want to double down on militarism. They want to double down on kinetic war. Having lost to the 16th power on the planet on the battlefield, they think that they can go and challenge a peer competitor—not a near-peer competitor—a peer competitor who has all the asymmetric advantages that Iran had, plus industrial strength, plus an endless arsenal of standoff weaponry, plus decades of preparation.

So I think there's a kind of psychotic and extraordinary miscalculation that is happening among the imperial ruling elite. But as I said, there is a kind of madness to empire. I mean, there's a way in which capitalism is mad from beginning to end. Its violence, its cruelty, its brutality is all a kind of madness, but they see themselves as no longer in touch with reality. It's that quote from the neocons: you can study reality, we make reality. We make our own reality. And by doing that, what they've really pointed out is that this is not, you know, an east-west or north-south conflict. It's the neocons, the ruling imperial elite, who are doing battle with reality itself—financial reality, physical reality, geographic reality, material reality—with reality itself. And if you fight reality, you're going to lose.

#Danny

KJ, maybe you can help us now in the last five or ten minutes or so. Talk about how this is impacting East Asia—Korea, Japan, of course, the periphery of China—which has been loaded up by the United States militarily for what used to be at least the principal focus of U.S. foreign policy, or at least the principal focus of U.S. military buildup, which is the war on China. Now, of course, all of these resources have been stripped for this long war on Iran. But nonetheless, the impact on the region, the impact on Asia, is quite dramatic. We always talk about West Asia. We always talk about the

United States and even Europe when it comes to the impact of all of this. But what is the state of Asia now, given this massive shift by the United States, the economic fallout, and of course, the political winds that have been blowing hard in Asia for quite some time?

#KJ Noh

Well, you know, it's just in Korea. Korea is struggling with the shortage of hydrocarbons. You know, gasoline prices are through the roof. You know, plastics are starting to become unavailable. You're feeling it in the pocketbook. So these are big pressures, tectonic pressures that are already happening. It's just a matter of time before it erupts. But we have to understand that, you know, the neocons since the 1990s have essentially envisaged war on China in 2000 and earlier. In the early 2000s, there was a faction that actually wanted to take the war to China, and then they got derailed in West Asia, primarily Iran and Iraq and Afghanistan, and now subsequently Iran. But the plan for war with China accelerated in 2008 when the global financial system collapsed. You have to understand U.S. policy towards China in terms of phases.

During the early 20th century, it was essentially one of colonization. China was colonized by the imperial powers. And then from 1949 until the early to mid-70s, it was essentially war and dirty war, primarily using Taiwan and Myanmar as proxies, and also the Vietnam War was a proxy war against China. So you had this phase of outright colonization which shifted into war. And then from 1979 to the early 2000s, there was this kind of quasi-détente, which was also a form of, there was a kind of gray zone warfare that was happening, but also an attempt to absorb China into the global capitalist economic system as a subaltern, if you will, a kind of tenant farmer on the global capitalist plantation, with the U.S. being the apex predator, the plantation holder, if you will.

And this was undergirded by Clinton's ushering in of China into the global economic system, accession to the WTO, et cetera. And the premise behind that was China would either collapse from its own internal contradictions, allowing the United States to swoop in and sweep up all of its assets like it did with the USSR, or it would, of its own accord, subjugate itself and become a Western vassal, a subcontractor to U.S. capital. It did neither of those things. It developed on its own terms. It developed in a form that was, A, non-Western, B, non-capitalist, or at least certainly non-neoliberal capitalist, and also it showed more recently that you can develop without becoming more carbon intensive.

So these are three kind of extraordinary developments that showed that development does not entail becoming more Western, more capitalist, or more carbon intensive, or that there's a way out of that carbon trap. And when the global economy collapsed, the global financial system collapsed in 2008, China was the only country that was robust and standing. And that's when the neocons got the idea that, okay, China is not going to fall of its own accord. It is not going to naturally be absorbed as a subaltern into the global capitalist system. It needs a good shove down the stairs.

And that's when they specifically, concretely prepared for war against China. This was templated in what is called Air-Sea Battle, which is a formal doctrine of war against China that also included Iran. Air-Sea Battle was designed for both China and Iran. They tried it out, it didn't work, but they want to continue and apply it anyway to China. So they drew up a formal doctrine of war called Air-Sea Battle, and then they began a vast project of hybrid warfare, which was held under this political framework that they called the Pivot to Asia—so encirclement, legal warfare, information warfare, economic warfare, trade warfare, tech warfare, all of these things. You see successive administrations since the Obama administration simply escalating further and further, taking it even further.

And so ultimately, we know what the end goal is. It is to wage war and take down China. And of course, China is not going to allow that to happen. They've worked too hard, they've suffered too long, and they simply will not tolerate being pushed back into a second century of humiliation. And so under these circumstances, the key players that the U.S. has tried to enlist, just as it enlisted Ukraine and other Eastern European states against Russia, is to try to integrate and to corral its East Asian vassals and quislings into war with China. So key among them are Japan and Korea. I'm from Korea, so I know this. The Korean military is an extension of the U.S. military. It's technically under U.S. wartime op-con, which is to say it's under U.S. military control. Korea holds one of the largest militaries on the planet.

500,000 troops at arms, and 3.1 million reservists. That's 3.6 million troops, one of the largest military manpower capacities on the planet. And these fall under the eminent domain, under the immediate control of the United States, the moment the U.S. snaps its fingers and says two magic words: DEFCON 3. And so this kind of extraordinary movement of cannon fodder creates this, again, tremendous moral hazard because it gives the U.S. unlimited capacity to wage war against China using proxy foreign, or in this case, Korean troops. The other key force multiplier for the United States is Japan. And again, Japan is a core vassal state for the United States, essentially the Israel, if you will, of the Far East, and it again has this extraordinarily violent history of domination and colonial atrocity.

Japan's current political class, the LDP, was put into place by the CIA through CIA funding in 1955. They've held one-party control since then, and they're essentially an agglomeration of war criminals, military profiteers, military-industrial profiteers, and organized crime. These three were brought together, you know, Nobusuke Kishi, Kodama, et cetera. All these people came together. They created the LDP. They've held one-party control, and they are in the process of rapid re-militarization in the current moment. So the current president, Sanae Takaichi, was mentored by Shinzo Abe, who was the grandson of Nobusuke Kishi, probably one of the worst war criminals of the 20th century.

Essentially, Sanae Takaichi has said that anything that happens in Taiwan is our business. If there's a Taiwan contingency, it's Japan's business. We will essentially go to war if China decides that its

own sovereign territory is its own business. We're saying that our security perimeter extends to Taiwan. And so you see this rapid militarization. Japan is remilitarizing by leaps and bounds, doubling its military budget. It has decided that it's going to export lethal weapons to other countries, which then creates this, you know, cycle of military-industrial acceleration. It's decided that it's going to, you know, involve itself in war against China using Taiwan as a pretext.

And it's demonstrating in some of the most blatant and offensive ways that it does not care about global opinion. For example, Sanae Takaichi just recently sent flowers to Yasukuni Shrine. Its lawmakers are visiting Yasukuni Shrine. Yasukuni Shrine is where Japanese militarism and Japanese criminality are venerated and consecrated in defiance of global conscience. And so all of these things signal that there's a massive acceleration of Japan to become one of the key proxies in East Asia. They just recently joined the Balikatan Exercises in the Philippines. The Philippines will be the other proxy. And of course, the South China Sea, where they do the Balikatan exercise, is one of the global choke points.

And by joining Balikatan this time, for the first time in history using combat troops, they're signaling their intent to rehearse their interoperability for joint arms maneuvers in preparation for war against China. And then there's a whole bunch of other things that Korea has also been doing as well, despite the fact that it's had its THAAD missile batteries and Patriots taken away. It's robbing Peter to pay Paul. But even so, South Korea is so deeply under U.S. control that the current president, who is a progressive and wants to wrest back sovereignty, has been told that any attempt to put a timeline on the wresting back of OPCON of its own military will not happen.

The USFK, CFC, UNC commander, Javier Brunson, has said—he's essentially the big dog, the person who controls the Korean military and the U.S. military—has said, you know, no OPCON return on a timeline, you can go jump in a lake. And he has also said that what we're doing right now is we're creating a kill web using Korea and Japan in order to essentially wage war against China. So we can see the acceleration happening. We can see the unrepentant militarism. We can see that the U.S. is doubling down. It's going to use its proxies in a war against China, even as it flounders and flails in West Asia.

#Danny

Yeah, well, I think that's a great summary of what's going on. And it really does spell a very chaotic future for the world, and, you know, a worsening of the crisis and myriad crises that the empire is imposing upon us. But also, hopefully, opening up opportunities for the development of a new world arrangement, a multipolar world. And of course, one that's not just multipolar, but also more just and better than the world that was inherited before it. KJ, this is a great show. I want to make sure everyone knows that if they want more people to hear KJ and what we've talked about today, you should hit the like button because that will keep the show going in YouTube's algorithm. So

everyone who's watching now, just do that before you head out of here. All the places to support this channel are in the video description below—Patreon, Substack, and much more. KJ, any parting words before we head out of here?

#KJ Noh

This is a critical moment in history. I think everybody has a part to play. The part that we have to play is to keep our imperial elite from doubling down on insanity and unleashing havoc, as President Trump would say, like the world has never seen before. We really are facing that possibility. I believe we all have a part to play. That means hitting the streets, hitting the phone banks, hitting your keyboard, doing whatever you can, but more than anything else, building solidarity in resistance against this imperial war that seems never-ending. We have to stop the machine here and now. Otherwise, things are just going to get worse and worse.

#Danny

You heard KJ, everybody. All right, that's the end of the show today. Hit the like button before you go, check out the video description, and then, of course, ponder on KJ's call here as we head out. I'll be back tomorrow, Monday, 2 p.m. Eastern Time, with Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson and Larry Johnson, so be sure to catch me then. And until next time, everyone, I will see you all on the next show. Bye-bye.