

# Iran DOWNS KC-135 Squadron, Forces Trump to CANCEL 'Project Freedom' | Elijah Magnier

War correspondent Elijah Magnier joins to discuss Trump backing off of "Project Freedom" to reopen the Strait of Hormuz as KC-135 tankers fall from the sky and Iran's retaliation to what is says are ceasefire breaches intensify. Follow Elijah: <https://ejmagnier.com/> FOLLOW ME ON RUMBLE: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> FOLLOW ME ON TELEGRAM: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> SUPPORT THE CHANNEL ON PATREON: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> 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 #iranwar

## #Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. As you can see, I am joined by veteran war correspondent, independent journalist, Elijah Magnier. Elijah, good to see you again.

## #Elijah Magnier

It's my pleasure. It's great to be with you.

## #Danny

Yes, it is always a pleasure, Elijah. Well, how about we begin with the last 24 hours of developments in the Iran war and West Asia. I first want to begin with a curious development that I believe might be related to why things have changed so much in the last 24 hours. So, in the last 24 hours, there have been a lot of reports of these refueling tankers, the KC-135s. There was one that disappeared, it seems, over the Strait of Hormuz as it was, I believe, departing from the UAE. Then there were reports that there were helicopters now lifting off from Al-Hudaid Air Base, ostensibly in some kind of rescue mission or to retrieve the tanker. And then just after this, Elijah, there were no refueling aircraft going over West Asia, going over Saudi Arabia, refueling the UAE, etc. So, a massive change in the last 24 hours.

And then we had, not too many hours after that, Donald Trump saying that he got a request from Pakistan that Project Freedom, which ostensibly a lot of these refueling aircraft were aiding—there's

a lot of fighter jets that were supposedly going to help escort ships out of the Strait of Hormuz—that Pakistan requested that this be paused or abandoned for the time being to give Iran a chance at a deal. And of course, we'll get to this later, there's been a lot of back and forth about a so-called memorandum of understanding. But maybe you can help us make sense of these developments. Iran has not really changed its position, has ostensibly even intensified its regulation of the Strait of Hormuz, and in a flash it seems like Project Freedom is, at least for the time being, done. So what's your reaction to this? Can you help us understand what has happened in the last 24 hours with these changes?

## **#Elijah Magnier**

There were many points you've raised in one question, so I'll try to answer as much as possible. So first of all, Project Freedom—let's look at it from a logical and factual point of view. There are two American warships that went and took out only one warship, one American ship. So for the Americans to escort one ship at a time, and we have more or less 1,500 ships in the Strait of Hormuz, it's an impossible mission that would take forever. That's one point. Secondly, there are not enough U.S. warships to escort the 1,500 ships that are inside the Strait of Hormuz. It's just an impossible task. Number three, actually, it is not about the ships being escorted. It is about the ownership of these ships and the insurance companies.

These two elements are essential for any ship to navigate anywhere in the world. Therefore, no ship owner will accept endangering a \$100 million ship in a very volatile area where there are mines and where the Iranians, as the authority in control of the Strait of Hormuz, can say you cannot pass, and then it is fired at, and then the ship is sinking or needs to be repaired in a nearby harbor, and then this is an extra cost. Therefore, Project Freedom is not feasible from a practical point of view. And I think President Trump saw that there is actually no demand for any ship to be escorted and then to risk being fired at and then the insurance company not covering it. That's one aspect. The second aspect is the name of Project Freedom.

So we heard Secretary Rubio saying that now the Americans want the Strait of Hormuz situation to return back as before the war. So we have moved from what the Americans call regime change, and then the elimination of the grand leader of the revolution by Donald Trump, who wanted to participate, and then the destruction of the Iranian missile and nuclear programs and preventing Iran from supporting its allies in the Middle East, to now reopening the strait that was open and had free navigation in it prior to the war. So the whole Project Freedom and the project of war have failed. Now, if we take into consideration your first point about more military assets gathering in the Middle East and West Asia, it is true that the Americans continue to bring more military assets.

However, what is the purpose? To bomb Iran for which objective? So the Americans tried to bring down the ruling system, and they failed. They asked the Europeans to help them, and the Europeans didn't come to rescue them or to support them. Then they are asking the United Nations now. And then they said, we arm the Iranian people to turn against their government. So what, the US and

Israeli jets can start bombing Iran to achieve what? I think even the less intelligent person in the US administration today understands that a war will not achieve any objective. And the only way to move forward is by negotiating. And this is where we move to another phase of our discourse: negotiating on what?

## **#Danny**

Yeah, Elijah, I don't know if you—I know you were following developments. There was a lot of, as this Project Freedom gets paused and there's talk now about the memorandum of understanding, it comes as there was a lot of talk about Iran having fired missiles and drones at the UAE. Of course, I went over this mysterious disappearance of the KC-135. And then there were also talks of multiple warships having been fired upon by Iran, and these warships, these U.S. warships, actually having to leave the area based on Iran's warnings. What actually has been happening? Because Iran denied the UAE attacks, but no one can seem to say what was actually happening at that time. Do you know the extent to which Iran has been enforcing the regulation of the Strait of Hormuz with these kinds of measures, these kinds of more kinetic measures, based on the fact that, I mean, they have said over and over again that what the U.S. is doing was a breach of the ceasefire?

## **#Elijah Magnier**

There's something consistent in the Iranian army and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. So we're talking about the IRGC taking one side of the Strait of Hormuz and the Iranian army, which is a different body, taking the other side. They have never failed to acknowledge any attack on any Middle Eastern country when they are responsible for the attack. On the contrary, they wanted to make sure that all the Gulf countries from where the US military attacks took place against Iran are targeted, and for these countries to understand that the Americans cannot protect themselves and cannot protect the hosting countries.

In fact, the New York Times told us that the damage to the U.S. bases reached \$50 billion, and some of these 16 bases are impossible to repair. Therefore, Iran will not deny any attack on the Emirates if Iran carried it out. Iran said no. However, there is a new thing that has been imposed on the Emiratis. If we look at the geographic map of the United Arab Emirates, we see that the Fujairah harbor is outside the smallest and narrowest part of the Strait of Hormuz, where the Iranians, two days ago, included al-Fujairah for an obvious reason. First, the United Arab Emirates exports up to 3,200,000 barrels per day, around 1.5 million barrels through the Fujairah oil duct.

Therefore, the Iranians included Fujairah to make sure that the whole world is paying the price of Donald Trump imposing a blockade on the Strait of Hormuz. So the attack, if the Iranians said they did not attack, means they did not attack the United Arab Emirates. However, they did attack tankers and ships that were trying to sneak in along the United Arab Emirates coast from Al-Fujairah, where other ships were gathering, waiting to enter the Strait of Hormuz. And the Iranians were very clear. They said anyone who wants to come in needs to send an email, pay the fees, and

then will be given permission to navigate. And today the IRGC thanks all the captains for their patience and for abiding by the law of Iranian navigation in a straight format.

And that has a lot of significance because the Iranians are saying to the world, all the ships are responding to me and not to the Americans. Even though the Americans have an excess of military power, the world is not responding to the invitation of the Americans to be escorted or to navigate into the Strait of Hormuz. So again, who attacked the Emiratis? I have no idea. But we know that the Emiratis have been attacked, and we also know that their installations are extremely fragile if the Iranians want to attack them. And there's no meaning for Iran to attack the Emiratis because there is no reason to reignite the bombardment or the war from the side of Iran, because Iran was attacked first and did not initiate. So I really don't have an answer to this attack.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, well, there are some who surmise, given that there has been a whole lot of even sabotage that Iran has not taken credit for in the last several weeks or so, a month or so, with regard to the oil situation, especially certain refineries, etc., being destroyed, hit during the ceasefire period. Iran has said they're not responsible. They would never not announce an attack and then target energy unless they were attacked first. So some have surmised that—could it be Israel? Could it be that Iran has accused the United States itself of creating so much chaos in the Strait of Hormuz, in the Persian Gulf area, through this Project Freedom, that it was them, that it was the United States that had actually hit a lot of these sites, and even civilian ones? Maybe you can talk about that. There was a civilian boat, or two civilian boats, I believe, that were hit, and the U.S. CENTCOM claimed it was speedboats, fast boats of the Iranian Navy.

## **#Elijah Magnier**

Yeah, they attacked and killed five fishermen and Iranian civilians, while the Iranian army and the IRGC denied any involvement in these small boats that were navigating. In fact, there are many boats and ships navigating the Strait of Hormuz. We're talking about 173 kilometers long. So you have 1,500 ships, but you also have many boats navigating the Strait inside without crossing to the outside, without coordinating with the Iranians. So what the Americans are doing now, with the full awareness of President Donald Trump, when the gallon in America is increasing from \$3 to \$6 or \$7 in some areas, particularly run by the Democrats.

We're talking about California, for example, over \$6.15 a gallon. He said yes for a while, so he acknowledged what's happened. He acknowledged the expenses and the price that the Americans are paying due to his own blockade. However, the blockade is leaking. The Iranians are managing to sell a large part of their oil, not the entire quantity, but much more than in 2018, 2019, when their oil production and selling reached only 300,000 barrels per day. Today, they are still exporting between 1,200,000 and 1,300,000 barrels per day, when they used to export around

## **#Elijah Magnier**

So again, we see China reacting and ordering all the refineries to receive the Iranian oil and to disregard completely the U.S. sanctions because China is hurt by these American decisions that are changing all the time but still imposing the blockade. So at the end of the day, it is not Donald Trump who is suffering in person, but certainly the American people and the rest of the world.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and, you know, Elijah, as I said before, there was, you know, a mysterious development of all these refueling tankers that were, you know, as you said, building up, building up for so many days. There were many, there were in the last several days of just this past week, there were reports, OK, the U.S. and Israel, they're going to strike, they're going to strike 24 hours from now, there's going to be a strike. And then suddenly these refueling tankers have obviously landed because they're not showing up on tracking radar. And then we had this development just in the last, what, not even 24 hours, 12 hours or so, that Donald Trump has said that, assuming Iran agrees to give what has been agreed to, a report in Axios saying that there is a memorandum of understanding being passed around between both sides, which is perhaps a big assumption.

The already legendary epic fury will be at an end, and the highly effective blockade will allow the Hormuz Strait to be open to all, including Iran. If they don't agree, the bombing starts, and it will be, sadly, at a much higher level and intensity than before. So maybe you can help us understand, what are these reports? Of course, it's from the infamous Barak Ravid, the Israeli spy and Channel 12 journo who is constantly reporting on developments related to non-existent peace deals and ceasefires and all of this. So your thoughts on what's actually going on between the U.S. and Iran right now? Are we truly, actually close to a quote-unquote memorandum of understanding, or is Iran saying the opposite?

## **#Elijah Magnier**

The leaking of the information to Axios, for example, is effectively contributing to the change in the market price of oil, the price of oil. Of course, today the prices are very sensitive to the internet and to information, and they change accordingly. So saying there is a deal that's very close brought the oil from \$113 to \$100 in just a few minutes. However, the prices are back in crescendo because the information is incorrect. And I'm going to explain how people need to think about this kind of information when they receive it, regardless of who is behind it. For the Iranians, delivering the enriched uranium that they have in Fordow and Natanz and Isfahan is out of the question. They will never give it to the Americans.

This is one of the main demands of Donald Trump. However, the Iranians proposed to the Americans to move away from the nuclear deal because that would take years to negotiate on very small details and technicalities. Donald Trump, Steve Whitcomb, and Jared Kushner are not

informed, and they have no competence in the technicalities related to the nuclear program. It takes really expert people in the U.S. and Iran to sit together and agree on every single detail about the enrichment, uranium, the percentage, where and why, and then the centrifuge, the potential of the centrifuge, which generation. They need to discuss all that, and how they will run the inspection of the IAEA. Really, the nuclear dossier is not as simple as that.

This is why the Iranians said, we'll leave it on the side, we will talk about it later. However, we will not speak about anything with you unless the war stops, but not under a ceasefire agreement. Because a ceasefire, there is a legal agreement and legal language behind it that is very complicated for a normal audience who did not follow the war and these kinds of treaties, obviously. So if you're talking about a lasting ceasefire, or you're talking about a temporary ceasefire, or talking about an immediate ceasefire, or you're talking about a permanent ceasefire, all these can be contested, and war can begin anytime from one side to another. Therefore, Iran is asking for the end of the war, and they want the end of the war on all fronts in the Middle East, including Lebanon.

Benjamin Netanyahu refuses to include Lebanon because he wants to continue flattening the villages in the south of Lebanon. He did that with 20, and he wants to continue to 55, and he doesn't want Donald Trump to stop him. This is the first main obstacle in front of any deal to end the war between Iran and the United States, because the United States depends on Israel's approval at this point. Secondly, they need to talk about the nuclear dossier, or they need to talk about the sanctions.

If the Iranians are saying we talk about the nuclear dossier last, the sanctions, is Donald Trump going to accept to sell to the neocons in the United States that he has released the billions of dollars that are Iranian billions frozen in different banks in different countries around the world, including Iraq, where they did not pay fully for the gas, in Qatar, in Korea, in other parts of the world? So is he going to say, I gave back the Iranian money? Again, the neocons and the Israelis will stand against him, and they will tell him, no, you don't give back this money because Iran will finance terrorism in the Middle East. And then they attack him.

And he himself criticized Barack Obama because he released some of the Iranian frozen money in 2015. So there are serious complications in this deal between the Americans and the Iranians. Therefore, when you guys hear that there is a deal and there are 14 points, every single point is a trap. Therefore, there should be an agreement where both sides agree to end the war in the first place. But then if the Americans say we accept to end the war, it means that Iran can declare victory because Iran did not start the war and America did not achieve anything. So again, Donald Trump will be attacked, and they will say, well, you have failed to achieve anything against Iran, and now you want to end the war under which basis? So this is where the complication lies.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and Elijah, how much, you know, we've seen what appears to be delays in restarting the war from the United States, from Israel. And a lot of it seems like stalling, like continuing to try to push

along this—I don't want to call it a stalemate because I believe that Iran militarily has obviously succeeded to a far greater degree than anything the United States has done. But they're trying to keep it in this limbo, this kind of no peace, no war arena. But how much have developments like this—you know, the Washington Post, this is after CNN had an entire investigation of how badly Iran hit the United States?

But now the Washington Post has come out and said that, according to their data, they are seeing that 228 targets—or they have found 228 targets—of U.S. military sites across the Middle East were damaged or destroyed by Iran: hangars, barracks, fuel depots, aircraft, key radar and defense systems included. And then your impressions on the latest report—I won't play it because it's a very long report—but CNN also has come out, as has Reuters, talking about how Iran's nuclear capacity, its nuclear energy, uranium production, etc., has not been obliterated, far from it. And it appears this is a way to kind of undermine Donald Trump's narrative that it has been obliterated.

### **#Elijah Magnier**

So, what do you make of these developments?

### **#Danny**

Has this played a role in stalling and keeping things where they are, where the U.S. appears unwilling to engage in true peace, but also appears unwilling, at least at this time, to restart the war?

### **#Elijah Magnier**

Well, Donald Trump has trapped himself when he said he has completely obliterated the nuclear dossier and the nuclear program. There is nothing left, including all the enriched uranium. And then he's telling the world that Iran is making a nuclear bomb and he is stopping it. And then now he's talking about actually wanting the enrichment of 60% to be shipped to the United States. So he is delivering so many versions in one sentence that people find it very difficult to understand what he wants at the end of the day. But we know that he is acknowledging that Iran still has the nuclear dossier intact in some aspects, which means it has been damaged, but the knowledge is still there, and creating or manufacturing centrifuges is so easy.

And the 60%, in the first place, Iran increased its production from 3.75% to 20% when the Iranian head of the nuclear program, Fakhrizadeh, was assassinated in 2020. And then Iran went, in 2021, to 60% enriched uranium only when the Mossad and the CIA attacked the Natanz facility and introduced a virus to create a catastrophe in it. So this 20% and 60% for Iran are not useful for any of its programs, in particular because it is not willing to produce a nuclear bomb. However, having said that, as Iran is part of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the NPT, Iran has the legal right to produce even 90% enriched uranium.

## **#Elijah Magnier**

With the control of the IAEA organization, but without going toward a military nuclear program. So Donald Trump wants to deprive Iran of making any level of enriched uranium. And this is why Iran is standing against it. Now, Donald Trump acknowledged that the knowledge of the Iranians cannot be destroyed. It's impossible. This is what Rafael Grossi, the director of the IAEA, has been saying for years to everybody in Israel, in the West, in Europe, and to the United States — that you cannot destroy the knowledge the Iranians have acquired throughout the decades. Therefore, there is a need to sit around the table and negotiate — not trust, because both sides don't trust one another — but to negotiate and impose a mechanism where everybody is happy. Is the enriched uranium still intact or not? Well, the centrifuges are there. The knowledge is there. If they are intact or not, it makes no difference because Iran can go to any percentage anytime.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and another development that's happened in the last 24 hours that has caused oil prices to— on the one hand, they dropped with the reports of an imminent memorandum of understanding between the United States and Iran, and then they rose quite dramatically again when Iran reported through Iranian media that they now have a website that details and outlines their mechanism of control, deepening and making more specific the terms by which, you know, cargo, commercial ships, etc., are to actually pass the Strait of Hormuz. Could you talk about what this is, and what are these regulations exactly, and why are they significant now to come out with, especially in the form of a website? I mean, it seems so basic, but at the same time, it has caused quite a bit of panic in the oil markets in particular.

## **#Elijah Magnier**

Regulations about what, sorry?

## **#Danny**

The Strait of Hormuz — the website, there's a new website.

## **#Elijah Magnier**

Yes, it's a new regulation that Iran is making available online. If any ship needs to cross in either direction, they need to send an email, and then they will get the approval. And the approval means they need to pay the fees to the central bank in local currency, and then they will get the approval to cross the Strait of Hormuz in any direction. This is why the Americans cannot impose on the ships not to pay, or arrest, or confiscate, or pirate these ships, because this is piracy at the end of the day,

since they have paid the fees. So the problem today is that the crossing of the Strait of Hormuz has been reduced to 45 ships in the last 60 days, when it was 120 ships per day that would cross the Strait of Hormuz.

Because again, as we said at the beginning, the ship owners and the insurers are very much afraid to use the crossing at the moment. So Iran was very clear: if you want to cross, you need to abide by our regulations. Why is that? Because Iran is forcing all the ships now, since there are mines in the middle of the Strait, in a crossing that is more or less 33, 34 kilometers wide, to cross on both sides of Larak Island. And Larak Island is an Iranian island. And when any ship crosses the Iranian waterway, it means this is Iranian territory where the Iranians can impose any fees, inspect, and stop any ship crossing its waters.

This is why Iran is saying, well, now the crossing of the Strait of Hormuz has new regulations and will never return to the stage before the war, because rightly Iran is saying, well, I have suffered more than \$200 billion in damage by Israel and the United States, and the only possibility to reverse this procedure is for the United States and Israel to say, okay, we pay all the damage that we have caused to you in this unlawful war, and then negotiate with Iran not to impose fees on the Strait of Hormuz. That could work. However, I don't see Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu accepting to pay a penny back to Iran.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and before we get to maybe the broader regional situation, just a quick question on the Gerald Ford. It has left the area. It is going home. It is no longer going to be stationed in the waters surrounding West Asia. I'm curious about your thoughts on this. With the refueling aircraft now having slowed down quite dramatically, and with the Gerald Ford going home, how does this impact things? You know, Trump keeps saying that if Iran doesn't follow his demands, the U.S.'s demands, the bombing is going to restart, and it's going to restart even worse than before. But how does the Gerald Ford leaving affect what the United States can do or even wants to do in a scenario like the one it finds itself in with Iran?

## **#Elijah Magnier**

Carriers, in the case of Iran—and we're talking about 1,648,000 square kilometers, this is the surface of Iran—are insignificant in relation to the war. Of course, they can contribute with a few hundred jets. However, the United States relies on the static position more than the carriers. This is why they have all these KC-135s to refuel all the jets coming from Israel and

## **#Elijah Magnier**

This is where they maintain the bulk of their operation, and this is where they fear they have the largest interception missile system to down all the Iranian missile systems in a time of war. So

having carriers in the sea and bringing them close to the Strait of Hormuz or within the range of Iranian surface-to-surface missiles, drones, or ballistic missiles, they are sitting ducks. So the movement of these carriers is really, militarily speaking, irrelevant in this case, because they are not in active war, but they are on a state of alert and they're hiding in Bahrain. They don't bring them close to the Strait of Hormuz within the reach of the Iranian missiles.

Therefore, I wouldn't look at the movement of the carriers at this point, because even if Donald Trump every single day is going to come up with a new sentence like, "I will eliminate and destroy the Iranian civilization," or "I will bomb Iran like I have never bombed it"—but why, he did bomb it like he has never bombed any other country in the world, him and the Israelis together for the first two weeks at least, non-stop, bombing so many places in Iran. But because the Iranian geography is so big and so vast, people can live in a different situation than in a state of war when we see them on social media or on television.

Therefore, I wouldn't really rely a lot on the movement of the carrier to measure if there is an intensity level of the war or not, particularly when the bank of objectives of military targets by the Americans and the Israelis has already been exhausted. So each one has its own bank of objectives, and both banks of objectives have been exhausted. This is why they went to civilian targets and started bombing bridges, old depots, schools, universities, hospitals, media buildings. Therefore, what kind of objectives can they bring to the table to force Iran to negotiate? There aren't any.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and now maybe we can get to the regional situation, Elijah. Hezbollah is still actively fighting Israel. Israel, of course—many in my audience have noted to me that Israel is currently torturing two directors of the latest flotilla and has extended the detention of these two leaders of the flotilla. And I'm curious where you see Israel's role right now, not just in the conflict with Iran, but also in the regional situation. Obviously, the regional situation is influencing Iran quite greatly, because one of its primary terms, as you said earlier, was for the fighting regionally to stop, not just with Iran. And that certainly hasn't happened. So where are we right now regionally? What's going on? Maybe you can help us understand.

## **#Elijah Magnier**

Israel is mainly focused today on Lebanon. It is destroying the villages in the south of Lebanon and making sure that the society that supports Hezbollah is paying the price. Even in the south of Lebanon, there are Christian villages who are against Hezbollah, and these villages also have been attacked by the Israelis, where we have seen the convents destroyed. We have seen many local Christians suffering and expressing how they were attacked by the Israelis when they were not involved in this war. However, for the Israelis, it is very clear: they want to make sure they are

flattening the south of Lebanon. And they want to do that in 55 villages that they do not occupy at the moment. And this is why Hezbollah is conducting a war of attrition. For the Israelis today to stop the war, it is like a suicide attempt for Benjamin Netanyahu because he has failed to defeat Hamas.

Hamas is still in Gaza. He has failed to defeat Hezbollah, still there. He has failed to change the ruling system in Iran, and Iran is still imposing its conditions on the United States. Therefore, for him to see the card of Lebanon slipping away, or Donald Trump forcing him to stop the war there, it will be the end of his political career. And this is why Benjamin Netanyahu is really speeding up the destruction of civilian homes in the south of Lebanon. Even those unrelated to the society that supports Hezbollah, he is exerting what is called collective punishment and war crimes, crimes against humanity, again against the people in the south of Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley. Because, for example, today he gave evacuation orders to 12 villages in the Bekaa Valley included.

He's not limiting himself south of the Litani River. He's going also north of the Litani River and even around Sidon. So... the enlargement of the war is something that Donald Trump is supporting because without his support, Benjamin Netanyahu would not do it. The resistance, on the other hand, is making sure that it is conducting a war of attrition against Benjamin Netanyahu because the point of the resistance today is different than in 2024. Today, Hezbollah is not defending the geography. On the contrary, it is allowing the Israelis to come in, enlarge their presence in different villages, and then pick up which target they want to hit first.

This is what offers Hezbollah numerous targets, and that makes the cost for the Israelis much higher than what they expected. Lebanon has a different topography than Gaza. It's not a plain territory, and the topography in Lebanon is completely different. There are valleys, there are mountains, there are hills. So there is a variation of ambushes for the Israelis that are waiting for them. And this is why Hezbollah counts on Israel to be static in a position and attacks this position. Is that going to give Benjamin Netanyahu any strategic objectives? Of course not. But this is not a war that can finish in one week, or in one month, or even in one year if there is no ceasefire.

What Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump are counting on is to arm the Lebanese army that received orders from the president to withdraw on the first day the Israeli occupation forces advance into Lebanese territory. And today the Americans want to arm this army to fight domestically a civil war against more than a third of the Lebanese population. This is what some of the political leaders in the country are trying to avoid because, again, that serves the American and the Israelis' objective to turn the attention of the resistance away from the borders and to focus more domestically on what's happening inside the country.

## **#Danny**

Is the goal then, Elijah, just endless war? Because it doesn't appear that Israel or the United States can affect an outcome. Israel is causing damage to Lebanon, as you just noted. It can't defeat Hezbollah. The United States can't defeat Iran. And of course, there are all the other unresolved

questions on every front that Iran has raised, but that the United States doesn't want to touch. So is the goal here for Israel endless war? And how is it pressuring the United States into this? Because while the U.S. obviously has ambitions and desires to maintain a grip on West Asia, the direction, the overall trajectory, and of course, the outcomes that we have noted, even just in this program, seem to call into question even just the method, the timing, the pace, all of it. So what's the goal here? Is it just endless war? And does Israel just have that much leverage right now, given its unique position and relationship to the United States, to keep this going?

## **#Elijah Magnier**

The Americans and the Israelis always try to achieve in peacetime what they have failed to achieve in wartime. But on the other hand, the opposition groups, state or non-state actors, are very much aware of the Israeli and American plan. It doesn't mean the Israelis and the Americans do not succeed in some areas. For example, in Iraq, they imposed the prime minister. The prime minister of Iraq, selected by the majority of the parliament, failed because the Americans said, we do not accept him. So in this case, they have succeeded.

In the case of Lebanon, they have not succeeded because they did not really show any intention to have a peace deal with Lebanon. They refused to withdraw from any occupied Lebanese territory, and that gave the possibility for the local resistance. Because Lebanon, as the U.S. presidential envoy Barak, Thomas Barak, said, is a failed state. It's a state that cannot defend the country, cannot offer protection to the population. The prime minister, during his visit to the south of Lebanon, said, "Do not ask me for protection because I can't offer it." This is why they rely on the resistance.

So Hezbollah withdrew from the south of the Litani River during the 15 months of ceasefire, kind of a ceasefire, when the Israelis did not respect it and violated it between 10 to 15 thousand times, killing more than 500 Lebanese. Now the resistance is back to the south of the Litani River and will not leave it. That is a different position than before this last war of February 2026 that the Lebanese government needs to deal with and thought that that was behind them. So the whole work of Israel and America now is to try and achieve something without using military means, because if the Americans and the Israelis fail to disarm Hezbollah, they want to give the task to the Lebanese army to do it.

It's impossible for the Lebanese army to do it because it's made of different sects, different religious sects — Sunni, Shia, Christian, and Druze. And in the first instant that the order is to attack Hezbollah, then the branch of the Shia inside the Lebanese army, most of them will leave, and that will create a division and will create a catastrophe in Lebanon, which is a perfect scenario for the Israelis. So these are the plans, more or less, at the moment. The plan is also to try, from the other side — from the Iranian side, for example — to reinforce the relationship with Yemen, because Bab

al-Mandeb is very important. We have seen how Bab al-Mandeb was a very strong card during the war on Gaza and was not used during this war, but could have been used had the Europeans joined the war in the Strait of Hormuz.

And then all the Iranian allies would have used all their tools and their powerful cards to stand against the Israelis and the Americans. And we understand today that Iran will reinforce the relationship with Hezbollah in the future because even with the ceasefire, as long as Israel is commanded by the far right who believe in and voice the Greater Israel plan, which includes parts of Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and part of Egypt, it means that there is not going to be peace in the Middle East, and any end of the war today or in the next weeks or months that is going to be signed is not going to be respected in the long term, and everybody will be prepared for another war.

## **#Danny**

And, you know, on this note, Elijah, is there any scenario where Iran comes to an agreement with the United States that doesn't include these fronts? Because Iran has stated that Lebanon has to be at least on the road to being resolved, meaning a ceasefire, and that fighting has to cease on every front. Do you see a scenario where Iran would give that up? It hasn't yet. It hasn't abandoned those terms yet. And in all likelihood, even though, you know, there are many reasons why Iran hasn't made any agreement with the United States, it seems like a big one is that the United States and, of course, Israel at its side are refusing, of course, to stop this fighting.

## **#Elijah Magnier**

No, because in the past decades, this question was always evoked in any meeting Iran and the U.S. encountered, direct or indirect meetings. Iran always said, it's not up to me to tell Hezbollah or the Yemenis or the Iraqis what to do. Iran, in its constitution, Article 154, is to support oppressed people around the world. Iran supported Venezuela, where there are Christians, the Kurds in Iraq, in Kurdistan, and there are Sunnis and atheists. So they supported the Sunnis in Palestine, the Islamic Jihad, and Hamas.

So for Iran to support these groups, if they want to continue their struggle against the occupation forces, then Iran will not stop. But it cannot dictate to these countries or these non-state actors or state actors what to do and what not to do. Iran cannot tell the Gulf countries to stop their relationship with the United States, because the Gulf countries will say, hey, well, that's my business, and I decide with whom I have a relationship. So why do the Americans and the Israelis want to dictate to Iran with whom Iran can have a relationship?

## **#Danny**

And I wanted your comment as we head into the final 10 minutes or so here on developments relating to Iran and the larger world order, the shifting world order. Today, Abbas Araghchi is in

China, in Beijing, meeting with Wang Yi, has met with Wang Yi, and he made a comment that a lot of people are taking note of, which is this: that China believes that post-war Iran has a higher international standing than before it. This hasn't been the only meeting that Iran has had. Of course, there was Araghchi's visit to Russia, where he met directly with Vladimir Putin. And then Putin had a phone call with Donald Trump. There seems to be a high level of coordinated diplomacy in this post-war period between Iran and its two biggest friends. What's the significance of this in your estimation, and if it will have any impact on post-war developments to come?

## **#Elijah Magnier**

I think the world will not be the same after this war for a simple reason. Today, people can argue against what I'm going to say, and that's their right. But for me, the biggest loser is America, for the simple reason that the Americans are known to be the strongest, the superpower, and the most powerful country in the world. They went to attack, with the strongest military power in the Middle East, a country that is Iran, under 47 years of sanctions, and failed to impose or achieve any of its objectives after 40 days of extremely heavy bombardment from all their positions in eight countries in the Middle East. They've used all their power. They've also used the internal insurgency against the Iranians.

They use the opposition, they supply them with arms, they supply them with Starlink satellite communication, everything. They infiltrate the country to change the ruling system, and they have failed. China is watching. Today, the Arabs are discussing and questioning the presence of the Americans who failed to defend themselves, to defend their bases, and to defend the Arab countries that are hosting these bases. That is also very visible. China is also watching the way the Americans are fighting, and they're watching the way the Iranians are retaliating—what hurt the Iranians the most and what hurt the Americans the most, what kind of weapons are more effective against the Americans or against the Iranians. All these lessons are drawn by the military in every single nation, but today China can sleep much better.

Because China can look at the Americans and actually say, well, these are not the superpower that they were trying to scare me with throughout the decade, threatening me through Taiwan, through the Philippines, in the China Sea, everywhere around me, trying to create a circle to surround me and intimidate me. Today, China feels much stronger because China understands that its relationship with the Global South actually is much better and much more productive than with the West, even if that will not stop China from dealing with Europe. But today, Europe is completely on the side. The Americans are on their own. They were abandoned by the Europeans. They were abandoned by their allies, even NATO. This is why the Americans have lost all of that, and this is not insignificant.

On the contrary, today we see what Iran has done with the United States. It has dared to attack every single U.S. base in the Middle East. No one since 1945 has attacked American bases at this level and destroyed these bases and gotten away with it, even if it was bombed. China is much more powerful than Iran. So the comparison between what the Americans can do to China and to Iran

today is very visible to the Chinese. And this is why we heard China saying very clearly to all the refineries, the four refineries, you do not abide by the U.S. sanctions and you continue receiving oil from Iran. That was the first very visible, overt challenge to the United States. And I can tell you, after the war, when Iran will regain its health and particularly its military strength, China will be the first to support Iran.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, there are reports, Elijah, that Iran has already gotten busy rebuilding. Why would it not? I mean, it has this period of time where the United States has not been able to, or desiring to at the moment, drop bombs on the country. And that means, it seems, Elijah, that the United States has not only faced setbacks militarily, as you noted, but also it seems like, and maybe we can conclude on this point, if you want to talk about maybe beyond the military side, what kind of setbacks the United States and Israel are facing when it comes to Iran, given that even with the destruction that they've caused, there seems to be a high level of will, morale to rebuild and to get ready for any kind of next phase. No indications that Iran doesn't have the military capacity that it did when it began its retaliation campaign after the February 28th strikes. This is not a good equation for any kind of outcome that favors the U.S. in this case. So what other setbacks, what other issues and things should we be looking at as we head out of here?

## **#Elijah Magnier**

The last three, four years, I've been pushing back when I am asked, is it the end of the U.S. empire? And I am not a fan of conspiracy theories. But for the first time, I say this is the beginning of the end of the U.S. empire for a very particular reason. And this reason comes from the Gulf countries. The United States is strong today only because oil is sold in dollars. What happened in the last 60 days, and in particular the 40 days of war, imposed a reality on all the Gulf countries, who are the oil-rich countries. They are the ones who are going to bring down the United States through their selling of oil. Today, these countries will go toward Iran at the end of the war and will have a security treaty and agreement among them to make sure that they will not be attacked in any next war.

In exchange, they will not rely on the United States to use their bases or to host American bases on their territory, apart from Bahrain. Keep Bahrain on the side. The Emirates will be stubborn for a while, but then will have to acknowledge it. And I will explain even more why. The Strait of Hormuz is indispensable. Those who believe today that Iran used and abused its guard of the Strait of Hormuz, and that the Arab countries will go toward the Red Sea following the Saudi Arabia Yanbu plan to export oil from the Red Sea, are mistaken because, first, the Arab countries need between five to ten years to be able to join their operation toward the Red Sea and give up on the Strait of Hormuz. Second, to do this kind of project, they need \$100 billion. People might argue they have enough money. I agree. But the third point is the most important one.

How are they going to protect all their pumps on the way crossing the desert? One single drone on each pump will cripple the entire production and blow up the whole \$100 billion investment. And to confirm what I'm saying, one attack from Iran against Qatar, an installation that cost \$26 billion, according to the Qataris, created damage, one single attack, of \$20 billion. So today, Iran is in control of the Strait of Hormuz. And because of that, the Arabs understand that they cannot be at war with Iran in the future, either on the Red Sea or in the Strait of Hormuz. And that will push America to the side, and it will be the beginning of the Arabs looking toward diversifying their security with Pakistan, Turkey, and also Iran, but again, making sure that they don't want to be in a position where they are in the middle in any future war.

## **#Danny**

Well said, Elijah. I want to make sure everyone knows that your website, [ElijahMagnier.com](http://ElijahMagnier.com), is in the video description below where they can find your work and support your work. Everybody, hit the like button before you go as we conclude here. Thanks so much for watching today. That helps boost the show in the algorithm. All the places that support this channel are also in the video description below. Elijah, any final words before we get out of here?

## **#Elijah Magnier**

Well, thank you very much for having me. I enjoyed this conversation.

## **#Danny**

Thank you so much, Elijah. We'll head out of here together. All right, everybody, hit that like button. As I said before, go see Elijah's work and support it in the video description below for his website. And you can also find all the places to support this show in the video description. Tomorrow I'll be back at 12:30 p.m. Eastern Time with a friend, Mohamed Rondi. Be sure to catch that there. Thanks so much for the single super chat here by a loyal viewer, Sparky6086. Without further ado, everyone, see you tomorrow at 12:30 p.m. Eastern Time. Bye-bye. See you then.