

# Mark Sleboda: Iran Is Jamming GPS Across the Region – U.S. Tankers Move Into Gulf

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## #Nima

Hi everybody, today is Saturday, May 23rd, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother Mark Sleboda is here with us. Welcome back, Mark.

## #Mark

Nima, thanks for having me. It's always an honor and a pleasure to be on Dialogue Works.

## #Nima

Yeah, we had, last night, a huge, you know, sort of a lot of chaos, by the way, in the Middle East. Iran, specifically, what was happening in Iran — two delegations. One, Muneer, his name is... his first name, I just forgot his first name. But Muneer was in Iran. The head of the army of Pakistan was in Iran talking with the Iranian side. And we had Qatari delegations in Iran — I don't know what was the main reason. Today I asked Professor Miranda, what was that, what was the main reason? He said they had some regional talks with the Qatari delegation. And today, before coming to this live, we've learned that Donald Trump said to the Israeli Channel 12 that "I will not make any deal that is not good for Israel."

This is the sort of chaos that we're living in. Nobody knows if there will be some sort of attack. Last night, many people were talking about an attack coming. There were some reports from Iraq and Syria that fighter jets were heading toward Iran. Nothing happened last night. I don't know if tonight we're going to have some sort of attack or some sort of announcement. But what I can say, in my opinion, is that what's not going to change is the Iranian position, because we are hearing over and over that they're saying our basic terms, our important terms, are still the same. They have not changed. Your understanding of what's going on?

## #Mark

Yeah, well, so first of all, you shouldn't really beat yourself up over the fact that you can't figure out whether Trump is going to bomb Iran again or not, because Trump doesn't know, right? I mean, they're obviously flailing around. This is not 5D chess, right? This is not some Trump master plan. This is them not knowing what to do, creating a lot of bluff and bluster, backing down, considering options, trying crazy plan A, crazy plan D, and looking for a way out of the situation that Trump has put himself into. And yeah, it's a zugzwang, to use the chess term. Anything he does will only make the situation worse. That's why they're flailing around like they are.

And they realize that bombing Iran again is probably 90% unlikely to change anything. They'll kill a few more Iranian leaders. They'll destroy some more stuff. But it's not going to make Iran capitulate. It's not going to make them give in. It's not going to relinquish the Iranian hold over the Strait of Hormuz. But they don't have any other good options. They can't just take the L and walk away, right? Because Iran controls the Strait of Hormuz. As long as that is the situation, even Donald Trump can't spin that into a victory. I mean, at some point he may yet try, but it's extremely unlikely that he could pull that off.

I fully expect him to eventually limp away from Iran at some point, right? He may bomb again for a while and then declare victory and walk away, but I expect him, on the way back from Iran, to beat up on Cuba just to make himself feel better because Cuba is in the Western Hemisphere. It's low-hanging fruit, right? Cuba doesn't have the military, the military assets, the geopolitical location, you know, all of these things that Iran has that make it so difficult for the U.S. to regime-change Iran. Cuba lacks a lot of those, quite obviously.

So, um, yeah, Cuba may end up getting shafted by Trump's, shall we say, pent-up frustration over Iran, uh, on the way out the door. That is, uh, looking like a very real possibility. But, um, whether he bombs again or not, even he doesn't know at this point. He realizes that it probably won't change anything. He has at least some level of understanding of how low the Pentagon's inventories of air defense interceptors and of standoff munitions like the Tomahawk and the JASSM are. And he keeps promising to, you know, put Iran back into the Stone Age, to destroy their civilization, to bomb every bridge and power plant in the country.

And he can't do that. They can't, because they don't have the standoff munitions left to do that. Look at Russia — it's been hitting the Kiev regime's electrical infrastructure for, what, at least three years now. And yes, it's teetering on the edge now, and they can tap it locally and knock it out when they want. They obviously don't want to destroy the whole thing. They haven't taken that action. But the point is, it took them a long period of time to destroy Ukraine's existing Soviet legacy air defense system, then to destroy the imported, haphazard Western air defense system that they brought in, then to start taking out the electrical infrastructure piece by piece.

It took them years to do that. And yes, the U.S. has some more advanced air assets than Russia does, but not that much more advanced. And we heard, leaked from the Pentagon, from U.S.

intelligence, on the pages of the New York Times, that the Air Force is afraid of Iran's detection and air defense capabilities — that if they went into Iranian airspace to make use of the closer munitions that they have, rather than standoff munitions like the glide bombs, the JDAMs, which they do have many more of, then they would be putting their own Air Force at risk because Iran has various new air defense capabilities.

First of all, air detection. So my understanding of that is that it's a combination of infrared and, rather than active radar defense, which is easily detected and then homed in on, right, they're using a non-active detection that at least in part involves cameras that are placed all over the country at the sky, and the information is collated with artificial intelligence and filtered through. And so this combination of infrared and this has given them a fairly good capacity to detect even the U.S.'s stealth capabilities.

You have F-35s and, and, uh, some of the B-2s and, um, that, um, and they're, they're still, you know, obviously they still have enough, uh, air defense, uh, interceptor assets, uh, you know, launch systems and interceptors that, you know, we saw all those U.S. planes fall out of the sky in the few days before the ceasefire started. And the, right in the Western mainstream media. This is not coming from us in the alt media, right? This is coming from them. And they say, yeah, Iran has too much capability in that regard. And first of all, it's very interesting when you hear these things. We've heard a whole lot of leaks from U.S. intelligence and the military in the last couple of weeks.

They admit that Iran can probably outlast the U.S. blockade. They admit that Iran still has 70% plus of their missile, missile launch, drone capacity, everything. They admit that they have capable air defense. They admit that the Trump administration has no answer to their fast attack plans — uh, swarm boats in the Hormuz. That's whenever you get leaks like that, I mean, they confirm what we have known and we've been talking about — you, me, many other people on your show, right across the alt media for the most part — they confirm, right, they vindicate what we've been saying for months now. But why? Why are they leaking this?

Why are they leaking this now? Who's leaking it? Why are they? Whenever you get a leak like that, you have to ask who's leaking it and why. And as best as I can tell, this is elements within the deep state, the U.S. deep state, right? Within the intelligence apparatus, within the Pentagon, that it is a desperate cry warning what a bad situation the U.S. is in and trying to divert Trump from attacking again — not because they don't want to attack Iran, but because they believe that ultimately that will simply put the U.S. in an even worse position on the other end of it.

Which is fascinating that, I mean, that is a cry of what a bad situation it is in — that their own deep state, or at least elements of it. Right. There's no monolithic deep state, right? There are many different factions within their deep state, within the blob, right? As Ben Rhodes called it, the foreign policy and security elite. There are elements within it that are making a desperate cry to alert the public, to alert the media, and thus to try to put pressure on the Trump administration — don't do this thing, right? Don't attack Iran again, because it likely will not end well for us. We'll likely be in

an even worse position, because it's certainly not out of a moral principle that they're leaking this, right? So that's all very fascinating. Every time, there have been so many of these leaks to the media from intelligence and from the military.

And of course, it is all, again, we've been saying all of these things for a long period of time in the alt media. And they just are 180 degrees almost from the absolutely, you know, mad, unhinged, puerile, man-child rantings — megalomaniac man-child rantings — of Donald Trump. And, I don't know how well... I'm not a historian, but like many, I'm sure, out there in the audience, I am a history fan, right? A buff. And I particularly myself like ancient history. And I've come to the conclusion that Donald Trump is the Emperor Commodus of the Roman Empire — the one who used to fight in, you know, the one that *\*Gladiator\** was kind of fictionally pieced together out of various elements. But yeah, I mean, there were some elements that were kind of true in that. But I mean, the real Emperor Commodus, the one who used to, yes, fight in the Colosseum and everything.

He is the U.S. Empire's Commodus. After Commodus, the Roman Empire went straight down and never came back, right? Not for any significant period of time. And I'm convinced, you know, we know that history doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes. Well, yeah, Trump and Commodus, you know, I could very much see him as a reincarnation, if you will, in historical terms, of that creature. And this is the U.S. I mean, we saw, of course, I've lost a lot of respect over the past couple of years for Tulsi Gabbard, but Tulsi Gabbard has now obviously stepped down under pressure, under protest. And, you know, I'm fairly certain, and I don't think it's too controversial to say, that she has tried to prevent Trump from launching a second — or do we want to call it round two, round three, round four?

## **#Nima**

Round three, yeah.

## **#Mark**

Round three. All right, let's call it round three. It all depends on when you start the counting. But let's call it round three that Tulsi Gabbard obviously objects to, or is warning against it if she doesn't object to it. And, you know, for the U.S.'s own interests. And she's gone now, and one of her top deputies also stepped down in the last week. So a whole lot of defections from the Trump administration as they...

## **#Nima**

Just breaking news that we've learned from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, that they expect a memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States could be announced as soon as tomorrow.

## **#Mark**

Go ahead. They were saying the same thing last week and the week before that. So maybe. Right. But I wouldn't count on it. I do not believe that any U.S. president can accept Iran's terms. Donald Trump or not, I don't think that any U.S. president put in the same situation could accept Iran's terms. So they can't do that. They can't take the L and walk away. What else do they have left but to roll the crap dice, to take that risk, no matter how unlikely it is, and hope that some black swan event comes out the other end of it and improves their situation by dropping a few more bombs? Because that's what the U.S. does. That's what they do. They don't seem to have any CIA-Mossad options left.

If they had them, they probably already would have used them. So now they've just got, you know, the bombs, the standoff munitions and so forth, and they haven't achieved anything yet. And, you know, maybe they'll kill Mojtaba Hamid. Maybe they'll take out, you know, another round of the heads of the IRGC and so forth. If they bomb again, almost certainly that's what they would try to do. And then they would try to claim it's the second regime change. And then if things don't change, they would still say, well, we've removed the regime and we've bombed them and they don't have anything left and we're going to walk away. We're done.

## **#Speaker 03**

And wipe their hands of the affair.

## **#Mark**

That's a real possibility. Now, if they were more sane, they might at this point just do that without bombing again. But I don't think that they're sane. I don't think that they're logical or rational. So it would be a mistake to think, to reason, that a sane person would walk away now before the situation gets worse. But they're not sane people. So... it is always dangerous to try to put yourself into the thought process of someone who is not sane, not rational. But unfortunately, that's what we need to do, you know, as analysts and journalists, you know, covering this. And yeah, it's... let's say it's precarious to our own sanity to do that too much.

Don't look too long, too deeply into the abyss. Let the abyss stare back at you. But, you know, that's what we've got to do. So I don't see any good options for the U.S. Nothing has changed. We're still in this geoeconomic game of chicken, you know, this hurtling towards the precipice or towards each other, however you want to term it. And Iran is in their economy, and Trump is stuck driving the global economy affected by the global energy crisis. And we keep getting closer and closer to that cliff. And even U.S. intelligence told us last week that Iran will outlast this attempted U.S. blockade. They've got too many other options now.

They're, of course, still getting ships out, you know, again, hugging the Pakistani, the Indian coasts, land trade routes over Pakistan, the Caspian Sea routes, trains that cut through Turkmenistan down from China down to Iran. They've just got too many possibilities. You can strain their economy, there's no question about that. You can cause them to get less oil out in tankers than they were before. But of course, at this point, getting less oil out is hurting the global economy as well. That's the conundrum. So they're hurting themselves in that regard and shortening their own timer, right, to the precipice. No good options.

I don't, you know, unless they've got a magic Death Star or something. And evidently, even the Europeans are so worried that we now know what we were thinking when Trump started going off a few weeks ago about, you know, ending Iranian civilization. They were worried. European leaders were worried he might start using nukes out of frustration. And that even the Europeans were afraid of that. Now, we talked about that at the time, you know, that it was a scary possibility, but one that you couldn't discount. But that is still a possibility, of course. We like to think that some U.S. generals would restrain and prevent Trump from doing that, not obey his orders. But we don't know that.

### **#Speaker 03**

We don't know that.

### **#Mark**

So it's... you know, we're all right now, we're waiting for the next insane megalomaniac social media rant from this unhinged man. We're breathless. Oh, Trump is canceling his—he's not attending his son's wedding, he's not doing his weekend golf routine because he's in the White House, right? It's almost surreal, right? You know, the world that we find ourselves in. And they say that there's a constant argument in international relations about the role of individuals, about agency, right? Versus systems, versus institutions, versus the weight of history and culture and these things. But how can you say that, you know, even if it's not the final determinant, that in absolutely powerful and power-mad ways, unhinged like Donald Trump, you know, isn't creating this chaotic situation by himself, you know, to a very large degree.

And so we're all, you know, this foreign policy by social media is almost becoming normal to us now already, just, you know, over a year and not even a year and a half into his presidency. And we're all taking it as normal at this point. It's already become—other leaders are doing it as well. The Iranians are doing it, right? Everything is now part of this global public theater that events are being played out on. And, of course, when you're performing for the audience like that, you are also, however consciously or unconsciously, changing your own behavior because you are in a public theater now.

That doesn't give me a warm fuzzy about the situation that we're in now, because that is not actually a good thing, because it makes it harder for people to back down. It makes it harder for concessions.

It makes you more likely to jump to a knee-jerk emotional response to some provocation because your own public, right, gets hurt, um, upset over a situation. So it's so unstable, it's such a dangerous situation. And, you know, the other great powers, Russia and China, of course, are sitting behind this, and they're backing Iran quietly. And in Russia's case, maybe not so quietly anymore. You know, we're being told in the Western media that all sorts of things that Iran and Hezbollah are doing now are, you know, being helped or provided by Russia. And we can only, you know, speculate about whether that's true or not. Uh, but, uh, Russia and China are not only backing Iran to various degrees, but they're also very, very worried about this situation spinning out of all kinds of control, both economically and, of course, in the military field as well.

## **#Nima**

Mark, Donald Trump said to CBS News that we are getting closer and closer to an agreement with Iran. I don't know what this agreement means because I don't see any sort of agreement coming. At best, it's going to be a memorandum of understanding, which doesn't mean any sort of agreement or deal.

## **#Mark**

It could, of course. They've been talking about this now for two months. How long have we been talking about a deal? Trump is always talking about a deal that is about to be reached, and we know that. Okay, some of this is the Americans and the Iranians talking to each other through the Pakistanis. Some of it might be some texts going back and forth or replying to each other's social media posts at this point. But we also know that a considerable amount of these posts, these reactions by Trump, are intended, at least in part, to manipulate the oil market. I mean, I don't think there's any question of that now. So we can't take anything that Trump says with any degree of veracity. You know, we have to take everything he says with skepticism. I don't trust anything he says until I have it confirmed by multiple other sources, including, of course, the Iranian side.

That's the world. And when even, you know, we can't trust anything he says, of course, how could the Iranians trust the U.S. in any deal anyway? So... Last night, when I was doing the last thing, I heard that Axios and others were saying, oh, a deal is about to be reached. And the Iranians at the same time were saying, no, that's false. There's no deal. We're deadlocked. And I heard hours ago that supposedly the Iranians had a proposal put forward that they were considering giving up their toll of the Strait of Hormuz. But that was coming out of the Western media. So is that true? Or is that more disinformation hoping to shape the narrative and thus hoping to shape the events themselves, or at least to shape the oil markets, even if only on a temporary basis?

It's very hard to judge these things right now. I certainly don't have—I mean, I know, again, certain parameters. I know the U.S. is in a bad situation. I know that Iran is still in a position where they have escalation dominance going forward. And if the Trump administration does drop more bombs, well, then buckle your belts, because the global economy is going to take so many hits—from the cutting of undersea fiber optic cables to the closing of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, to the bombing of the East-West Pipeline to Yanbu across Saudi Arabia, to Fujairah, to the desalination plants that make life sustainable in most of these Gulf states. All of that is on the table if the U.S. goes forward.

So again, I have not heard anyone present an argument that would dissuade me from believing that Iran has escalation dominance in these responses. Yes, of course, they are asymmetric responses. No, Iran can't bomb U.S. cities. That is not in their range of capability. But perhaps what they're doing to the global economy is more effective. This asymmetric response, this using the historically tried and true U.S. weaponizing of the economy—they've flipped that, and they're now doing the same thing back to the U.S., using economics, using the global energy markets, the global economy to put pressure on the U.S. to stop this mad war on Iran. And, you know, yes, I think there is a definite argument to be made.

While I still do believe there is a utility, a certain utility, to a strategic deterrent, to a nuclear weapon, there are many people who make the argument that this is, you know, they've long argued that closing the Strait of Hormuz is Iran's nuclear weapon. But now we know not only is it a nuclear option, but it is a usable nuclear option that has real results, right? So there is also the argument to be made that Iran doesn't need a nuclear deterrent going forward because they have this chokehold over the global economy. That is, of course, one ultimately, you know, that the Iranian National Security Council and the Supreme Leader will decide, you know, is that enough, or do we need this end of strategic deterrent moving forward?

That is for them. But, you know, certainly this has very real results. And if Iran couldn't reach out and do this to the Strait of Hormuz, they would be in a much more difficult position than they are right now. But geography is what it is, and that's where Iran is. And they're on that choke point, and they have the capability. And it has been pointed out, they don't actually need that much of a capability. All they need to do is make demonstrative attacks with fast boats or mini subs or drones or whatever. And no ship, you know, capitalists being capitalists, is going to risk their ship, their investments, their insurance, and everything going through it.

So it's a powerful ability that Iran has. You know, we've long known that they had it. They've long known that they've had it. But now there is a real empowerment through their use of it, such that it was just a couple of weeks ago that there were articles in The New York Times and The Washington Post admitting that Iran was emerging out of this not weakened, but as a kind of de facto fourth great power in the world — if a little bit behind the others in various spheres — but as a new kind of power and influence that they've always had, but they've never exercised before. And that makes all the difference.

## **#Nima**

Mark, the Iranian Speaker and Foreign Minister Bagheri said that the case of the Strait of Hormuz is a regional case. It's not related to the United States. It's about Iran and Oman deciding about it. That's why there isn't—what's going on in Iran, Mark, is that they are formalizing the mechanism of the Strait of Hormuz through the parliament and having it accepted so nobody can change it. And that's why they're coordinating right now, coordinating with the Omani government to finalize that as part of the Iranian constitution. And when it comes to the GCC countries, Mark, they're going to be—just remember what has happened during the last three years since 2023. You know, we had October the 7th.

Before that, before Hamas attacked Israel, Israel was normalizing its relationship with GCC countries together with Turkey. That's gone right now. That's not going to—what's going on with the GCC countries is they're going to be more dependent on Iran and the Strait of Hormuz than before. That would bring some sort of leverage to acts of resistance, in my opinion. That's why Israel is doing everything to get closer to the UAE. I don't know what they're doing, but they're somehow teasing or hurting the UAE to make them more vulnerable. But they're trying to do their best to divide, to make some sort of division within the GCC countries.

## **#Mark**

Well, there is a division, right? I mean, they're Gulf monarchies. Let's not lose sight of that, right? They are a little... antiquated monarchic states, right? That's what they are. And personalities play a greater role than institutions to the highest degree. And we see there is at least some divergence in reaction between, shall we say, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, you know, not putting them in exactly the same place, of course, but on one side, and the UAE on the other, where the UAE has been cleaving closer to the United States and Israel than they were before all of this. Remember, the UAE even joined BRICS Plus, which has now, of course, paralyzed BRICS Plus.

And, you know, they were pursuing a multi-vector foreign policy up until now. And Saudi Arabia has been going back and forth. We heard from some sources that Saudi encouraged the U.S. to go through with this war, others saying that they were doing the opposite. We don't know the truth. Certainly, I don't know the truth in that regard of what Saudi's position is. But at the moment, they seem to be trying to cool the situation down and considering their options. But ultimately, coming out of this, the Gulf states are going to be more insecure, right, in both, you know, their security situation and their geopolitical situation than they were before.

There's no question about that. They're going to be left with a U.S. and Israel, which have an eroded—not completely gone, but an eroded—power, an eroded hegemony in the Middle East. And they have Iran, which is becoming, shall we say, to some extent, through leverage, through

asymmetric means more than anything else, but also through their demonstrated long-range strike capability as well. So that's hard power, but greater hegemony in the Middle East. And they're going to be empowered and angry coming out the other side of this.

## **#Mark**

I don't believe that these Gulf Arab states can subjugate themselves to Iran, right? Because that's ultimately how they would see it. They can't make their economies and their militaries completely vulnerable to Saudi Arabia. That means they need to continue looking to an outside security provider. Now, never mind that that outside security provider has brought them to this situation and dragged them, willing or not, into this conflict with Iran, thus making their security demonstrably less secure. Yes, that is a logical conundrum, but they've got really no one else seriously to turn to.

One of the interesting little details we got out of the recent Russia-China summit was that China has quietly been selling arms to the Gulf states during this whole thing, right? Forget, yes, are they probably selling drones and other things, or at least components, to Iran as well? Yes. But they were also selling defensive supplies, you know, almost certainly anti-drone and interceptors, to the Gulf states. Now, can the Gulf states completely switch to China as a security provider at the end? No, they can't, right? Their militaries are locked into the United States and the West. So I expect the U.S. to have a smaller footprint than before.

There's probably a lot of these bases that they will consider just too vulnerable to Iran, geopolitically and militarily, to expose themselves to. They haven't helped us against Iran. They've actually made us more vulnerable because they've given a part of us left hanging out there that Iran can hit back at, right? Whereas all of their other assets in the U.S. itself are far beyond the horizon. So some of them they will probably quietly give up, without saying that they're giving them up. Because they can't do that. Because that is the prestige of the United States. They can't do that. But they may give them up. But they're not going to be completely out of the Middle East.

At the end of this, that's not... Iran has a lot of leverage and power, but they don't have that much leverage and power. Let's be honest about that. And the Gulf states are going to both cling more to the United States at the end of this in some regards, and they're also going to be exploring how they can have a more multi-vector foreign policy, right? They will cut pragmatic deals with Iran to get their energy to the global market, but they won't like it. And that's going to create a very tense situation. I don't believe there's going to be any signed deal at the end of this where the U.S. and Israel agree never to attack Iran again or anything. That's just not possible. It's not political.

## **#Nima**

Never, never.

## **#Mark**

The removal of sanctions, it's got to go through the U.S. Congress. It's not going to happen. Giving back Iran their frozen funds, that's not going to happen. It's politically impossible. So whatever the endgame of this is, it's only still going to, yes, empower Iran in some regards moving forward, but it's also just going to be kicking the can down the road for a few more years until the U.S. and Israel feel, theoretically, that they are in a stronger position to resume this conflict with Iran. It is not going to be an end. It is only going to be a compromise.

## **#Nima**

Mark, just let me read what Lindsey Graham is crying out about right now.

## **#Mark**

He says, if a deal is struck... You are more of a masochist than I am, subjecting yourself to Lindsey Graham's posts.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, he says that if a deal is struck to end the Iranian conflict, because it is believed that the Strait of Hormuz cannot be protected from Iranian terrorism, and Iran still has the capabilities to destroy major Gulf oil infrastructure, then Iran will be perceived as being a dominant country, a force requiring a diplomatic solution. This combination of Iran being perceived as having the ability to terrorize the Strait in perpetuity and the ability to inflict massive damage to Gulf infrastructure is a major shift in the balance of power in the region and, over time, will be a nightmare for Israel.

## **#Mark**

And this is amazing that Lindsey Graham is admitting all of this. Remember, first we had, a couple of weeks ago, Robert Kagan, right? The arch-neocon himself, the husband of Victoria Nuland, right? The architect of neoconservatism, of U.S. hegemony in that sense, the one that even European leaders quote from his books, right, as part of their, you know, exceptionalist, supremacist, messianic ideology of exceptionalism now. He has had two pieces out in the last couple of weeks. First, this "Checkmate Iran" piece, and now a second one where he, yes, did this same type of walk-of-shame mea culpa that the U.S. has been strategically defeated, right?

That they have suffered a strategic defeat in all of this via Iran. And now Lindsey Graham is actually making some sense and also saying these very same things. That is remarkable that these— I mean, how long ago was it that Lindsey Graham was screaming fire and fury down on Iran? And now he's been dragged, you know, to the proverbial river and made to drink. It's... I mean, I don't want to distract from the potential tragedies that could still befall the Iranian people in all of this. There could be renewed war for a period of time. There could be many hundreds, thousands of deaths.

## **#Nima**

I think nobody's going to be surprised if, tonight, the United States attacks Iran.

## **#Mark**

No one would be surprised. I wouldn't be surprised. But there's just a geopolitical death knell that is now self-evident. And even Lindsey Graham and Robert Kagan are seeing it. We are seeing such dramatic events now.

## **#Speaker 03**

All wars are one war.

## **#Mark**

I believe that at this point. So there are a number of other events that have led up to this. The U.S. has been continually playing whack-a-mole against the Houthis in Yemen, wasting munitions. All of the U.S. and allied military assets that were wasted in Ukraine. And then the U.S. went out here with Iran and they overreached — classic imperial overreach — and they've been smacked, and smacked hard. And they are still trying to distance themselves, to some extent at least publicly, from the war in Ukraine. And now to have this — this is too many defeats to the hegemon, you know, to the American empire, if you want to call it that. They're not going to recover from this. We are seeing it in everything they do. If they attack again, it will ultimately make their long-term geopolitical position worse, and it will bring that erosion of that hegemon, of that empire, ever quicker.

We keep seeing they keep accelerating this themselves because of their hubris and their unwillingness to accept changes in the world that are occurring, and trying to cling on to that hegemony. They are ultimately hastening the end of it because they're overreaching. You've probably seen Star Wars, Nima, right? A New Hope, the first Star Wars movie — it's number four in the canon or whatever — but that line when Princess Leia is talking to Grand Moff Tarkin, and she says that the more you try to tighten your grip, the more star systems will slip through your fingers, or something of that sort. That is the situation — that is the proverbial — and forgive me for retreating into that Americanism, but I think a lot of it will bring the situation closer to understanding for a lot of the people out there in the audience.

That is the situation that the U.S. is in right now. Everything they do only makes their situation worse, which is why they're so—and that makes them very dangerous, of course—because if they're desperate and they stand to lose face, they stand to lose political careers, they stand to lose geopolitical and military standing, every which way they turn, they are more likely to take mad risks, to do desperate and dangerous things, because they simply can't accept it. I mean, Trump still insists he's winning.

I just saw a video yesterday where he says he has 100% control of the Strait of Hormuz. And maybe he believes that to a certain degree. I don't know. I can't see inside the man's head that much, and I probably don't want to. But that's what's making them so desperate, and that makes them dangerous, of course. This is still a case where Iran has now joined Russia and China with this very weighty burden that these three countries are now jointly sharing. And that burden is how to manage the decline of US-led Western global hegemony, the American empire, without it all coming down and collapsing and bringing the whole world down with it all at once, right?

Or without it lashing out in its, you know, fading years and dropping nukes or doing something else desperate and crazy as a result of that. That means Iran has now joined Russia and China as, shall we say, the adults in the room, the elder statesmen who think they need to consider at times. Yes, yes, national interests are still a priority, but they also have to think a bit beyond that as well, because the future global order and the future of humanity depend on them being able to manage this decline of the U.S. empire without us all going up in flames as a result of it. That's a heavy burden. And it often will make them make decisions to not push the U.S. too hard at every opportunity that they could, perhaps.

## **#Nima**

You said that all wars are one war. And here is the Pentagon confirming what you just said.

## **#Speaker 04**

Buy arms from us. And all of a sudden, there's a pause. What are you hearing from the Taiwanese about the pause?

## **#Speaker 03**

Chairman, I have not spoken to the Taiwanese. However, we have done some foreign military sales to them. It's just that right now we're doing a pause in order to make sure we have the munitions we need for Epic Fury, of which we have plenty. But we're just making sure we have everything. Then the foreign military sales will continue when the administration deems it necessary, sir.

## **#Nima**

It's just confirming that's why the Taiwanese government is not receiving the \$40 billion in weapons, because of the war between the United States and Iran. And we know what has happened before—the United States coming to the war against Iran in Ukraine. And these are all connected.

## **#Mark**

Yeah, there was a video. I mean, this is already about a year or so old, where Trump's envoy, his babysitter for the Kiev regime in Ukraine, the former retired General Kellogg—he's been kind of shuffled off to the farm now—but he gave an interview where he pointed out that the problem the U.S. has with what they call strategic simultaneity now is that Russia and China and Iran and North Korea, and a few other countries you could throw in there, are now so linked together through strategic partnerships and alliances, largely because the U.S. pushed them all together at the same time. We have provoked them all and did not do the Realism 101 of strategic balancing or divide-and-conquer principles.

You know, they provoked, and, you know, out of their imperial hubris, their hegemonic hubris, they provoked them all and helped push these very different countries with very different political systems, cultures, histories, and religions together into this cooperation. And Kellogg noted that the U.S. cannot move now against any one of these countries, particularly the big three now, but the others as well, without it having negative backlash effects via their positions with the others. For instance, they go to war with Iran, and the result is the global market goes—energy markets go crazy.

The price of oil, the price of gas, the price of aluminum, the price of helium, the price of fertilizer—the price of all of these commodities that are byproducts of these hydrocarbon industries as well—go through the roof. And of course, Russia benefits from all of this. So yes, they are handing gifts to Russia. And if they sent military assets to the Kiev regime in Ukraine over the past few years, that means when they came for Iran, they had less available left—fewer interceptors, fewer assets available to do that. That is a result not of, shall we say, some 5D chess on Putin's or their part. It's simply that everything is connected so closely together now that you can't break one web without it having an effect on the whole structure. And that is the problem.

And the U.S. tries to frame it now as the answer in Russia, with simultaneity, you know, the preferred idea is how to do the strategic sequencing—what is the proper sequence to go after Russia and China and Iran to somehow preserve U.S. hegemony at the end of it. And they can't, because they turned against Ukraine. They first turned against Russia—“We can take Russia out.” Oh, we can't do that, their economy is too strong. We couldn't crush their economy. We can't defeat them militarily. Actually, they're just getting stronger. Let's pivot and take out Iran. Oh, that's not working out either, right? And it's just worsening their position.

Now we had the Washington Post, everyone two weeks ago was coming to the same conclusion that we already had—that now the U.S. was in too weak a position, with its remaining inventories of munitions, air defense interceptors, and standoff munitions, to do anything against the Chinese if the Chinese did decide—which they don't want to do—but if they did decide to militarily recover their wayward separatist island province of Taiwan from U.S. influence, that there was very little the U.S. could do about it. Now, I actually believe there wasn't much the U.S. could do about it anyway. But now their position, of course, is even worse because they went after Iran in such a big way.

And not only did they waste all of that hard power, but they didn't even achieve the results that they wanted from it. In fact, they may have ultimately, in some respects, empowered Iran out of it. It's a terrible position for the hegemon to be in. And on one hand, yes, that brings a nice cynical smile to a lot of our faces to realize what a bad geopolitical situation. But on the other hand, we have to be very careful with that wounded beast of the hegemon, because a U.S. put in this position is likely to lash out desperately and, you know, illogically, not wanting to accept this, you know, largely self-inflicted damage to themselves in all of this. But it is amazing times we're living in, Nima. Amazing times.

## **#Nima**

Exactly. Just unbelievable what is happening right now. Mark, thank you so much for being with us today. Please go to—let me just put it here and do it—please go to Mark Sleboda's website. He's at Boosty. You can see it right to the right side of Mark: [boosty.to/TheRealPolitik](https://boosty.to/TheRealPolitik). And you can go there. I know that you may find his YouTube channel or his Substack, but he's not active on those accounts. Yes, Mark, you're using Boosty. Yeah.

## **#Mark**

Again, I'm a Russian citizen living in Russia, and all your Western governments are sanctioning me. So I can't, you know, support myself via YouTube or Patreon or Substack or Buy Me a Coffee. But Boosty is sanctions-proof. It's good for you, it's good for me, it's the one thing that does work. That's where I've set up shop. Anyone can follow me there for free. I put all of my interviews with Nima and Danny and Rachel and Garland and Crosstalk and all of those other things I do — they're free for everyone. But then I also have, for those who want to subject themselves to a little bit more of my cynicism and fatalism, you can support me and become a subscriber. And I put out hours and hours of exclusive content for them on top of everything else every week. And we have a private Discord channel for chewing the geopolitical fat and so forth. And thank you — this was not a paid advertisement.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, no, no. Please go there and subscribe. Subscribe. We have to support Mark Sleboda and the journalism that he does that is important for the alternative media.

## **#Mark**

Analyst, not a journalist. Analyst, exactly. You're a journalist.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, exactly, exactly. Thank you so much, Mark, for being with us today. A great pleasure, as always.

**#Mark**

Thanks for having me.

**#Speaker 04**

Thank you.