

Iran DOWNS MQ-9 Reaper Drone, Forces F-35 to FLEE as US Attack FAILS

Danny Haiphong discusses the latest round of strikes by the US and Iran's response as the world stands at a watershed moment in history. Why did the US strike, and what are the consequences? What is the impact on the world economy and unipolar order? Join us to find out! 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 #iranwar #f35

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. We are back after a bit of a holiday. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. Hit the like button as you come on. Our special guest is coming on in the second half of the show, and we will reveal who that is. We have about an hour today, so hit the like button.

#Danny

And we are going to get started right away with the latest developments of what has occurred in the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran over the last 24 hours. Because, as you may have seen over the Memorial Day weekend here in the United States, the mainstream media, Donald Trump, his administration have all been talking about talks today. Talks, talks, talks are going well. Talks are going to lead to a deal. We didn't see any deal, but what we did see were U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran. So over the last 24 hours, here is the latest update. According to CBS News and so many other outlets, we have confirmed reports that U.S. forces on Monday, late Monday, launched what the U.S. Central Command described, and get this, self-defense strikes in southern Iran off Bandar Abbas.

Keshem and other areas. U.S. forces conducted these self-defense strikes in southern Iran today to protect our troops from threats posed by Iranian forces. And this is the cynicism of the U.S. empire and the Israelis as well. They always claim that the horrific acts of aggression are for their own self-defense, even though Iran is located tens of thousands—well, in terms of Israel, the distance is a little smaller—but for the U.S., tens of thousands of kilometers away. So U.S. forces conducted self-defense strikes. This is according to Captain Tim Hawkins of CENTCOM. Targets included, this is what they say, missile launch sites and Iranian boats attempting to emplace mines.

U.S. CENTCOM continues to defend our forces while using restraint during the ongoing ceasefire. The strikes were conducted in the area of Bandar Abbas, which is Iran's main naval base located there. According to Hawkins, a U.S. official described the scope of the strikes as very small. Well, Iran isn't happy about this. And why are they not happy about it? They have reacted already and retaliated. And I'll get into that in a second. But this is what the U.S. considers small. The U.S. and Israel, they don't care about human life.

They actually killed, according to Iran, four Navy personnel in those strikes. A Telegram channel affiliated with Iran's IRGC identified four naval personnel it says were killed in the overnight strikes in southern Iran. It named four men as Abbas Aslami and Godrat Zarangari. Hussein was due to hold his wedding ceremony in the coming days. So this was an act of aggression, another act of aggression by the United States. Why? Wow, get this—another act of aggression during so-called negotiations, which Iran has poured cold water all over and said there weren't really negotiations taking place.

There have been indirect talks. There has been this memorandum of understanding being batted around. But Iran has stayed firm on its demands and what it sees as its legitimate rights, while the U.S. has made very little headway in making any kind of true negotiation or good faith effort at a real agreement that would end this war. Well, Iran did not stay put. They did retaliate in kind. Here is one of the ways Iran retaliated. Iran, according to RT and Iranian sources as well, published this video—and I'll play it in a second—of the targeted MQ-9 Reaper drone worth over \$30 million. It was downed over the area in the Persian Gulf as it was violating Iran's airspace.

And here is just what that looks like there. Iran has said that they have new air defense systems that they are using in these kinds of situations. And I'll just play that for you one more time. That is the MQ-9 Reaper. That would make up, if we're just counting the one, about the 43rd total U.S. aircraft downed, I believe. Many of these, at least 20-plus, are these Reaper drones. And then it wasn't just the MQ-9 Reaper drone that got hit. There was also an F-35 that was forced to flee the area as the same air defense systems. I have a hunch it's the infrared air defense systems we heard about earlier in the war.

But here is the video politics playing the Iranian politics—footage of this targeting of the F-35. It had to flee the area as it was targeted. And there you see the F-35 trying to hide in stealth, but it had to flee after it was targeted by Iranian air defenses. So this is the activity that was going on overnight in the area of the Persian Gulf, in the area of Bandar Abbas. The U.S. and Israel have essentially put what already was a fraudulent ceasefire—because, mind you, Iran has been blockaded by the U.S. Navy since the ceasefire essentially began. And Iran has called that a violation of the ceasefire from the beginning.

Now, you may ask, why hasn't Iran retaliated with even more fervor than this? Because, I mean, this is a retaliation, but it might not meet the level of retaliation that could be called a tit-for-tat or any

kind of eye-for-an-eye situation. And a big reason for this is likely—there are two reasons. One, the Hajj is happening, and there are—you know, don't ask me to give you a number—but there are millions of Muslims from all around the world now traveling across this region in order to do the pilgrimage, which is considered such a holy time for people of the Muslim faith. And Iranian officials have cited the Hajj as one of the reasons why they are essentially staying, at the very least, to a minimum with the retaliation. But they have vowed and promised that they will retaliate even harder than they did before, overnight. Here is that statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Iran promises not to leave any aggression unanswered after the ceasefire violation by the United States. Aggressive actions coinciding with the diplomatic process mediated by Pakistan once again revealed bad faith and a breach of the promise of the U.S. ruling regime to the Iranian nation, which should come as no surprise because the United States does not keep any promises, nor does it really make promises. But this is another take by Iranian analyst Satara Siddiqui, who I hope to have on the show very soon when we can finally arrange that. She had this take, which I thought was very interesting. She said the fact that both sides are downplaying these skirmishes means they're still hopeful a memorandum of understanding will be reached. Iran's position would only make sense if the U.S. is giving significant concessions during negotiations.

So that's a very interesting take because you have a situation where this, in many ways, is not just a breach of the ceasefire. These fighter jet strikes—U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iranian ports—they killed naval service members. This is not just a breach of a ceasefire; it really is a reigniting of the war regime. But both sides are trying to downplay the significance of this, likely because the United States right now is actually at the table with Iran, trying its best to find a way to surrender, as Robert Kagan, this top neocon, keeps on saying in his recent articles—find a way to surrender while not losing face. And these strikes could be seen in many ways as a face-saving measure.

But more retaliation will have to be brought upon the empire in this case because they did take lives, and that is a significant thing here. But the truth of the matter is, no matter what the United States and Israel do in this situation, these pinprick attacks actually represent a clear indication of their very weak position in this war. These pinprick attacks and the fact that they're downplaying them indicate that the United States does not believe militarily it can effect change to any significant degree, not only on the battlefield but at the table too, which is why they don't go for heavier strikes at the moment. And it's why you see over and over and over again—the U.S. empire kind of losing its mind.

And Donald Trump is one of those who is losing it—the U.S. president himself here today. Donald Trump, on May 18th, published this very unhinged—and you see the date right there—his Truth Social, a very unhinged post about how even if Iran were to have surrendered and everything from Iran was destroyed, from its fighters, its air force, to its navy, to its military, all the leaders were gone, still the so-called fake news media would say that Iran was in a good position. The problem with this tweet is not only that it is incredibly insulting to Iran, but it indicates that the U.S. administration doesn't have any idea or is trying to lie its way out of the actual damage that has been caused to the U.S. military apparatus in the region.

But he did it again. He published the same thing, not eight days later, today, after these strikes. And I think this is a clear indication that there is a crisis afoot, especially when it comes to narrative management around this war. You have Donald Trump's administration, and who knows? Some say it's Donald Trump himself. Some say he has people doing it for him on Truth Social, typing up these incredibly ridiculous posts. But nonetheless, whoever is writing them, they aren't even able to keep track of this, and they're now spamming the same message over and over and over again, which is basically what's been going on.

This is just a quite literal case of that phenomenon. Ultimately, we are seeing the U.S. empire crack, crumble, and lose its mind over a war that it has essentially lost. And we see this again. And I think this is why these pinprick attacks, like what the United States and Israel did in Bandar Abbas, or in their strikes on Bandar Abbas overnight, we see constantly this attempt to push the envelope militarily and then retreat. We saw it in what you could call round two in the Strait of Hormuz, when Trump tried to launch Operation Freedom and Iran used its anti-ship missiles to send the U.S. Navy essentially packing out of the area.

Now we are seeing it with the strike on Bandar Abbas. They, you know, hit Iran, hit the Iranian Navy. Then Iran fired back, and now the United States, CENTCOM, is trying to say, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, this wasn't a violation of the ceasefire. We're trying to be restrained. We're just defending ourselves in a region that they have no right to be attempting to militarily or otherwise govern and dictate. Let's look at this. This is such an interesting scenario. There are reports in the Wall Street Journal, and I'm just—because the Wall Street Journal is so heavily paywalled, this is a recounting of it. There's a report in the Wall Street Journal that the U.S. Navy is restarting its escort missions in the Strait of Hormuz.

You can see the date today. They said that the Wall Street Journal was citing two military officials who reported that the Navy guided a Greek supertanker carrying two million barrels of crude oil through the strategic waterway off the coast of Oman. And you might ask, Danny, that is so strange. How, just hours after the United States struck Iran in Bandar Abbas and Iran fired back by causing the F-35 to flee, using its air defenses to destroy MQ-9 Reaper drones, and they also said they fired anti-ship missiles. I almost forgot this. They did fire anti-ship missiles, the U.S. Navy causing it as well to flee. But let's be honest, it was slow.

The U.S. Navy stays pretty far back from the missile range. You might ask, how is it now the U.S. Navy just gallivanting into the Strait of Hormuz and escorting tankers again? Isn't this a clear violation not only of the ceasefire, but also of what Iran is saying is its authority over the Strait of Hormuz? And why wouldn't they react? Well, because it didn't happen. So everyone who's been paying attention has noted how ridiculous CENTCOM has looked over this period, especially during the height of Iran's retaliation. So at the height of Iran's retaliation, during the 37 days of active hostilities, Iran was hitting bases. Iran was hitting—potentially hitting—U.S. naval aircraft carriers, destroyers.

It was hitting, it did hit an F-15 out of the air, and it might have hit even more fighter jets out of the air. But CENTCOM kept on saying, no, it wasn't happening. Every time Iran said it had done something, CENTCOM would come out and say, no, it's not happening. Well, this time around, CENTCOM is saying what they said, or CENTCOM is saying what reports are saying—reports are saying about its restarting of so-called Project Freedom. The naval escort is not happening. And here it is. The claim was recent media reporting saying that the U.S. Navy has restarted escorting or assisting commercial vessels during transit through the Strait of Hormuz. False.

The truth: Project Freedom has not resumed, and U.S. forces are not currently escorting commercial vessels out of the Strait of Hormuz. So there you go. The narrative management crisis only gets worse. And this is because the U.S. is in such—and Israel too—but Israel gets to play the role of rabid attack dog, proxy leader, or the tail wagging the dog, whatever people want to think about it. Really, they're the same entity, but Israel gets to play the role of a wrecker, a destroyer, just an unhinged and unleashed attack dog. It's doing so in Lebanon right now, currently conducting strikes which have killed hundreds and displaced thousands.

And you had Smotrich, the finance minister in Israel, say—what did he say? He said, for every FPV drone that Hezbollah launches at the Israeli occupation forces, Israel is going to destroy 10 buildings in Beirut. This is the genocidal monster Israel really is. And that's the role it gets to play on the outward level in order to take away from the fact that the U.S.-Israeli regime is acting in concert to wreak terror on Iran, or attempting to wreak terror on Iranians in Iran, with very little success. While Israel gets pounded by Hezbollah, which is happening as we speak, these drones are taking out Israeli military equipment, tanks, and troops too.

And Israel gets to play the role of terrorizing ordinary people in order to try to create the requisite chaos to maintain the U.S.-Israeli regime's hegemony, or perceived hegemony, over the region, because it is waning there very, very fast. It's a very dire situation right now for the United States because they have no out. Not only does the U.S. Empire not have an out, they do not have any capacity to win in negotiations or win in these pinprick strikes what they have not been able to win on the battlefield. This is the big dilemma that faces the U.S. Empire at this time. And it's why we are going to continue to see, in my estimation, the ongoing attempt by the United States and Israel to restart the war, to engage in the war.

They are going to try to keep this war going as long as possible and get to the edge, the precipice of this absolute economic meltdown that Iran is predicting. The Iranian military said, get prepared for \$200 a barrel for the price of oil and gas prices exploding because of it, as they already have been. Brent oil itself jumped more than 3% after these strikes yesterday, as Iran, of course, vows to retaliate. This is CNBC News. The military said it conducted these self-defense strikes, and it complicates the peace talks that Trump said on Monday he had encouraged Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Jordan to join—the Abraham Accords, which we need to talk about.

But these prices are only going to get worse and worse. The U.S. has been manipulating the market so it's under \$100 a barrel. Of course, the purchasing price is far higher. But these prices that we see now have been lowered by this absolutely manipulative tactic of pretending to be in talks when, in fact, the United States is not in any talks at all. The United States is at war, and all it has done is pause the war because it has no idea what to do. The United States has no idea. The U.S. Empire has no idea what to do. Truthfully, the only good option for the United States Empire is to stop the war, to leave.

But in order to stop the war and truly leave, it's going to have to give Iran some of what it wants. Fox News was debating this today. They said that, oh, well, it can't be that Iran gets a blank check like Obama gave them. It has to be just some of the money that was frozen in these Qatari banks, that the United States froze in these Qatari banks. Just some money. But the truth is that whether it's Obama or whether it's Trump, the money is the same. It comes from the same place. This is what happened. The U.S. froze tens of billions of Iranian assets, if not far more, due to these criminal U.S. sanctions on the country. So it doesn't matter who the president is.

The outcome would have to be the same because the U.S. Empire has lost major ground in this war. Now, you know, we have to talk about this ridiculous, I mean, absolutely ridiculous statement by Trump on the Abraham Accords, which are dead. All right, let's be quite honest. Donald Trump is saying... And what's—I mean, this is a wall of text, too. I can't even read it all, this Truth Social post. But according to Donald Trump, one of the conditions—get this—one of the conditions for the signing of this peace agreement, so-called, or the memorandum of understanding, is that they will join the Abraham Accords if it is signed.

So all of these Gulf countries, from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, even Pakistan and others, that they have to join the Abraham Accords—it's going to be a great deal or no deal at all. And of course, it has to be mandatory. He says, look at this, it should be mandatory that all these countries, at a minimum, simultaneously join onto the Abraham Accords. He even says, I believe in this post, if I can even find it—look how much, look how much text—here we go. He even says they would, in speaking to numerous great leaders mentioned above, they will be honored as soon as our document is signed to have the Islamic Republic of Iran as part of the Abraham Accords. I mean, this is absolutely enough. For those who don't know, the Abraham Accords is this absolutely ridiculous project started by Trump, number one, to begin to facilitate the normalization process between Israel and the Gulf countries.

It was essentially a bribe, right? So the Gulf countries would get more U.S. so-called investment. The U.S. would essentially give these Gulf countries more blank checks, military support, economic support, for their participation in the Abraham Accords, which would change their political position on Palestine. We know that these countries are not for Palestine at all. We know that these countries have worked hand in hand with the Israeli regime indirectly and even directly, like the UAE has during this Iran conflict. So we know that these Gulf countries are no innocent players when it

comes to what has happened to, and what continues to happen to, the Palestinian people. But the Abraham Accords would have solidified that, and it would have set a precedent across the world that would have huge ramifications.

It never really took a real foothold. But what it did is it started this process of indirectly moving these countries further—the Gulf monarchies—closer and closer to normalization. And that is what Donald Trump is proposing in his second administration: for all these countries to essentially—it's like a gun to their head—"okay, okay, well, I'll do this pitiful agreement, or at least I'll try to get a pitiful agreement with Iran on the war, and for that, because you've been destroyed or you are in big trouble, you will do what I want." So this is Donald Trump's art of the deal. The problem is that the U.S. position is not strong either. It just happens to be stronger than the position of its vassals.

So the fact that Trump even threw in there that these leaders would love to have Iran be part of it is absolutely ridiculous, because Iran—we know Iran's position. We've gone over it so many times on this program. Iran stands with the Palestinian people. Iran doesn't even recognize anything called the Abraham Accords. It would never sign on to such a thing. Almost all of those countries are hostile actors in this war, or have been in one form or another, one time or another. It's just the goodwill of Iran to do everything it can to keep relations good with its neighbors. It has done a pretty decent job of that, and it continues to do that, actually, because when these strikes happened, remember...

Overnight on May 25th, what was Iran doing? Well, the leader of the negotiations, Mohammad Ghalibaf, and Abbas Araghchi, the foreign minister, were in Qatar at the time engaging in these indirect talks. Some people were afraid for their safety because they had just gotten there and they might have to come back. And we know that Israel has struck Qatar before. Remember that? It wasn't too long ago. That was just after the June war. Right, so the June 2025 twelve-day war. So this is—I mean, this is the state of the situation now. There is a war going on. But the attack itself that the United States launched on Iran again has failed. It's a U.S.-Israeli attack that has failed to do anything.

It has failed to move, make Iran budge. What it's going to do is it's going to build up the case for Iran to retaliate in kind and harder at a time that's very sensitive, especially for people of the Muslim faith, for Muslims who are doing the pilgrimage and who are attempting to participate in Hajj. So this is—again, it shows the absolute duplicity, the depravity of the U.S. empire and of Israel to conduct strikes during the Hajj, to conduct strikes during so-called indirect talks and negotiations, to talk about peace, to talk about memorandums of understanding and stopping the war, and all of this in a deal while engaging in aggression.

It is typical U.S. empire, U.S. imperial, and Israeli behavior. And so this is where things are at the moment with the war. Now, there's going to be this meeting that's going to happen at the White House tomorrow. I'm going to cover that with Alistair Crook at 10 a.m. Eastern time. But according to a lot of different sources, there are two different ways to interpret this meeting that's going to

happen with all of the cabinet, which is very rare. Camp David is a presidential compound where a lot of significant historic developments have happened, including major shifts and changes during the '67-'73 war period, the Suez crisis, etc.

#Danny

But nonetheless, there are some who are thinking or intimating that the U.S. may now be moving further and closer and closer to Iran's position on nuclear enrichment, to Iran's position on a few other items. There are others who say this could be an emergency meeting to talk about the entirety of the direction of this war, that it may be that the United States is preparing for war again, and maybe a bigger one and a bigger kind of quote-unquote strategy. I don't believe that so much because it's quite clear that the U.S. empire does not really have a—they have proposals in front of them—that, you know, General Charles Q. Brown, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Pete Hegseth, if he can even do any of this.

But Pentagon officials, of all branches— all branches of the U.S. military— have obviously drawn up plans, but it doesn't seem like any of these plans work out very well. And so that's why we've seen this major delay in any kind of attack that would provoke a major retaliation from Iran. And that's why we've seen the United States and Donald Trump himself delay, delay, delay, and try to give negotiations a chance. Don't believe for a second that negotiations—quote-unquote—how the United States sees negotiations is essentially a time to pause, try to rearm. They can't really rearm, let's be honest. It's not a long enough time. A lot of these weapons take months to years to develop. But they use it as a time to pause, to throw a little bit of bombs, right, to manipulate the markets, because you've got to make Wall Street money, you've got to make the oil companies money.

But nonetheless, it's... the way, the reason why the U.S. is even in these so-called indirect talks at all, why they're talking about deals, why Trump this past weekend was saying that it was so close, right? It was like, oh, it's almost at the tip of my fingers. It felt like a little bit there on that Saturday and Sunday of this past weekend. A lot of that was because the United States is really trying to find a way out. That's the truth of it. It's trying to find a way out. There are those who don't want to see it. There were reports that the reason why the U.S. ended up striking Bandar Abbas in the first place is because there was major internal pressure and pressure from Israel, which were lumped together to essentially give real delay to any kind of progress made at the table.

And you heard Smotrich today, the finance minister, again, one of the big faces of genocide. And, of course, Ben-Gvir, that torture chief, Ben-Gvir, national security minister, whatever he is, that worm, both saying that Donald Trump and his administration is one of the friendliest administrations to Israel that has ever occurred, that has ever been. I think Smotrich said it is the friendliest that has ever existed. And so you can't say that they're lying there. These genocidaires, they like to lie. They need lies to continue to promote their genocidal expansionist project. But the lies cannot always—sometimes, as some people say, every projection is a confession. The truth is that sometimes people like Smotrich tell the truth.

It's true that Donald Trump's administration has gone much farther than others. And maybe it's not even a Trump thing. It's just the material reality thing. It's just the historic moment that we're in that allowed the Trump administration, Donald Trump himself, to do this. And in many ways, Biden, with the whole October 7th fiasco and how everything went from there, how everything was reacted to, laid the basis for what Trump did, right? It laid the basis for what the Trump administration has done from here. It's all connected. It is not a partisan thing. The empire doesn't work in partisan terms. The partisan so-called duopoly, the two-party system, that is for domestic consumption, okay? That is for domestic consumption.

That is, what did Iran say about Donald Trump's Truth Social post? They said, don't believe anything that he's saying in those Truth Social posts. That is simply for domestic consumption. What you need to look at are the actual actions and results that are coming out of this administration. And I would say the same goes for the U.S. empire. Don't look at what Donald Trump says during his meeting with Xi Jinping. Don't look at what he says about Iran on Truth Social. Don't look at what—you know, or you can look at it, you can listen to it, but don't take it as truth. The only truth that exists is the one that is spoken to us by the reality of the policies and by how these policies impact the world, impact Iran, impact the entirety of this global order.

That is what we need to be paying attention to as developments continue to unfold. Nonetheless, we are going to have our special guests on soon. I am just waiting for them to log in. Until that time, we'll just continue to do coverage here. So, any questions that y'all have, please send them over. That works very well. I know that it is a vacation period, so we are looking at a bit of a lull for a lot of people. But let's continue onward here with some other developments. Of course, you know about the horrific strike that occurred by the Ukrainians, of course with U.S. and European help, in Lugansk. It targeted a college there, students in their dormitory. I believe over a dozen were killed.

This was an attack on civilians that then led to heavy strikes over the weekend by Russia. Sergei Lavrov told Marco Rubio that anyone who is any foreigner there, U.S. and otherwise, they need to evacuate because Kiev is going to be rained on via missiles. And that's exactly what happened. Zircon, Iskander—they were flying over Kiev—and they also used the Oreshnik missile. We're going to get to our special guest now, and it is our good friend here of the show. We're going to do a bit of an Asia dive now with KJ Noh. KJ, good to see you. How are you? Good to see you, Danny. Hey, yeah, good to see you. All right, everybody, hit the like button. We're going to continue on with the show.

I wanted to bring you on, KJ, to talk about, you know, as the Iran war looks like it's going to reignite at any moment—and it likely already has with these strikes overnight. We also have a lot of developments happening in Asia. I was just telling the audience that they should look at what the U. S. empire does, not necessarily what various elements of its ruling elite say. And I wanted your take on this contrast here that we're seeing with the United States and China. Of course, we had that China meeting, the Beijing meeting with Trump and Xi Jinping, and the follow-up to that had Marco

Rubio go to India. And this is from Semafor, which is very much connected to intelligence—a Quad meeting in India.

And it is being talked about in the mainstream media in very unglowing terms. It's being talked about as a weakened anti-China bloc. You had India not even greet Marco Rubio on the tarmac as he was coming in. Nobody, nobody came. And I think Marco Rubio was not very happy about that. They came together over the weekend, but they have been fractured in many ways. This anti-China bloc, the Quad. Maybe you can help us understand what exactly is going on here and why the U.S. mainstream media would talk about it like this, despite the fact that this does exist. And Marco Rubio is still doing the rounds, trying to keep alive these anti-China aggressive institutions that were built under previous administrations.

#KJ Noh

Well, I think the key thing to understand is that U.S. strategy is shifting, but it is constant. U.S. strategy toward China since 1945 essentially has been one of war, or attempts at absorption—that is to say, a kind of hybrid war—or, starting in 2008 again, going back to overt war. So essentially it's kind of a pendulation between overt aggression, passive aggressiveness, and then overt aggression. And now it seems like there's a little bit of passive-aggressive transition going on. But if you look at the large picture, if you pan out and you look at the large picture, you can see that there's continual escalation to war. In particular, the Quad is very, very important because, if you recall, President Obama in 2011 declared the pivot to Asia.

The pivot to Asia was the formal coming-out party of this re-transition to war against China. It was actually prepared two years earlier with the start of the drafting of the doctrine of war called Air-Sea Battle, which is essentially Israeli war doctrine transplanted and designed for China. It's also what the U.S. has tried to use against Iran. Air-Sea Battle, which comes from Air-Land Battle, is colloquially known as shock and awe. So starting in 2009, the U.S. prepared a shock and awe campaign against China. And then in 2011, it began. It came out with the official party, which was the declaration of the pivot to Asia. If you recall, the pivot to Asia was declared in Australia.

And essentially what we're looking at is there is a kind of a base plate on which they want to place all the other anti-China alliances—the anti-China alliances being JAKUS, Japan-Australia-U.S.-Korea; Japan-Korea-U.S. alliance; AUKUS, Australia-UK-U.S. alliance; JAPHUS, Japan-Philippines-U.S. alliance. These are the mini-lateral alliances that they stuck on top of the base plate, which was the Quad. And the Quad was designed to box China in on all quadrants—hence the Quad alliance idea. So it is the coalition of the United States, Australia, India, and Japan, all of them blocking off one of the quadrants in the Pacific Ocean.

And this was the kind of base plate on which you place all the other Lego pieces, mini alliances, the mini-lateral alliances. The fact that they're continually talking and trying to revive this shows that they have not changed any of their designs of war against China. In particular, Quad is important

because India is supposed to be the left tackle against China. And originally, this is the whole idea why they came up with this notion of an Indo-Pacific strategy, because they want to pull India into a Pacific war. But during the early stages of the Ukraine-NATO war, India was still doing business with Russia, and therefore it was in the doghouse a little bit.

But Modi seems to have transitioned back onto the side of the imperialists. You can most notably see that with his embrace and collusion with Israel and Netanyahu. But you can see that the alliances are continually being built, continually being strengthened. The ratchet is being tightened. Most notably, for example, Japan has decided it is going to remilitarize. It has decided that it is going to interfere politically in Taiwan, China's sovereign territory. Korea has been press-ganged into being the quartermaster for NATO during the Ukraine war.

It has sent more munitions to Ukraine than the entirety of the EU, and its military, which falls under the control of the United States, is being prepared for war against China. At least that's very much what people in South Korea think. And then, of course, there's the Philippines, which is being used constantly for provocative exercises. The Balikatan exercises have just recently ended. Japan sent, for the first time, its combat troops to Balikatan. This is a country, quote-unquote, pacifist, which is not even supposed to have an expeditionary military, which is now sending combat troops to the Philippines and the South China Sea to prepare for war.

And then outside of that, you see the constant color revolutions all around China's periphery and with every country that is very close to China. For example, most recently, Serbia's Vucic is visiting China. And you can see that there is a massive escalation and attempt to undermine and have a color revolution in Serbia. So the designs of the empire have not slowed down. They're constantly increasing. The momentum is continuous. And although there has been a setback in West Asia, that does not seem to have really dampened the desires and the intentions of the ruling imperial class as far as they're concerned regarding China.

#Danny

Yeah, when you mentioned India too and how they've pushed more back into the, or maybe they've been pushed, or both, back into the embrace of the U.S.-Israeli side of things, it reminded me of right as there were these attacks, right, these naval attacks. The UAE was involved with them in the Persian Gulf. What did Modi do? He met with the UAE, and it was seen as in very poor taste, especially since all of these countries are supposed to be BRICS countries working on consensus issues.

And they did host the foreign ministers, I believe, today, a meeting of the BRICS, and it was a disaster, with Abbas Araqchi essentially condemning in public, in this BRICS forum, the UAE. So, you know, in many ways, KJ, yeah, it does seem like there is this design by the United States, and this is how they vote, this is how the U.S. empire always wants to fight its wars. It doesn't want to necessarily, especially in the beginning period like we're in now, fight a war itself against China or

really against anybody. It wants others to fight the war for it, on its behalf. And it seems like there is a lot of pressure being made.

Look at what just happened. It's all connected, which is the Abraham Accords. Donald Trump saying everyone has to join the Abraham Accords in the Gulf region if there's going to be any kind of U.S. agreement, or at least an agreement the U.S. can get behind. That's an incredible statement, really. And that's also about China, because in many ways, well, of course, the U.S. wants to see Israel have absolutely no challenges, not even rhetorical challenges. In many cases, the Abraham Accords was to facilitate trade away from China by having them focus on investment from the U.S. and Israel. But anyway, your thoughts on all of this?

#KJ Noh

Yes. So once again, if we look at the larger picture, you can see both the Abraham Accords, the disruption at BRICS. And India has always been a disruptor at BRICS. It really has no real allegiance or place there. But you can see that there's a constant attempt to break up anti-hegemonic alliances such as BRICS. And this is also being helped by, I would say, suspect actors in the alternative information sphere as well. But I think ultimately what it boils down to is that there is a very, very desperate attempt to see if they can shore up the empire through dirty wars, through subterfuge, through color revolutions, through black propaganda. And of course, as you point out, through proxies. And so I think, you know, these are very, very dangerous moments. You know, it's that thing.

It's, you know, it's darkest just before dawn. And I think that we are really, really facing some very, very dangerous moments. Just coming back to East Asia, here's another little thing, you know, a curveball, if you will. Starbucks was recently called out — I may have mentioned this already — but it was called out because it essentially mocked and did a massive promotion mocking South Koreans who had been killed or tortured under the U.S. Quisling military dictatorships. They actually did a promotion on that on May 18th, which is the anniversary of the Gwangju Massacre, which is when the United States green-lighted the massacre of hundreds, if not thousands, of South Koreans who were trying to protest the military dictatorship that had just recently been reimposed on them.

Anyway, they sent in tanks and armored personnel carriers and helicopter gunships and wiped the city out. And Starbucks, on May 18th, the anniversary of that, said, you know, we are going to celebrate Tank Day. And then they also said, you know, thwack it on the table. And "Thwack It on the Table" is an allusion to a Korean democracy activist who was tortured to death. He was actually waterboarded to death. They found diatoms in his bloodstream and in his organs, which means that he was alive when there was water in his lungs, which then was pumped by his still-pounding heart all the way into his bloodstream and into his organs. But anyway, he was waterboarded to death.

He was waterboarded for seven and a half hours. And then, when there was an inquest after his death, the Korean torturers said, oh, you know, we just thwacked the desk, and, you know, this little

cowardly activist had a heart attack and died. And so Starbucks is literally referring to that in its promotion. And why is it doing this kind of stuff? They've apparently fired the head of Starbucks Korea, but it actually belongs to a Korean retail conglomerate called Shinsegae. And the head of Shinsegae, which is actually connected to Samsung — South Korea is the Republic of Samsung, really — but the head of Shinsegae, the chair, is a man called Chung Yong-jin.

And Jeong Yong-jin is actually very closely tied to an organization in the United States called the Rockbridge Association. Rockbridge is kind of a Peter Thiel and Robert Mercer, or Mercer family, funded think tank and political action community. And they believe that it's their job to change the culture of democracy in the United States, change the political landscape, and strengthen U.S.-Korea relations. And so they're doing this incredible propaganda. They launched this incredible, astounding propaganda-slash-marketing event, which was essentially to thumb their nose at all of South Korea's martyrs and all South Koreans who had struggled against imperialism and against military dictatorship.

But, you know, the kind of deep ties that they have with the U.S. deep state, that they have with the Rockbridge Association, with Peter Thiel and the U.S. extreme conservative right, is very, very worrying. And it signals that South Korea is not out of control. It's not out of the crosshairs. It almost underwent a coup with Yoon Seok-yeol. Lee Jae-myung was elected and is trying to steer the country back towards a more independent, if not progressive, path. And you see that there are multinational conglomerates like Shinsegae associated with Starbucks, which is trying to affect domestic politics in South Korea, as well as change the political culture.

So these are ways in which you can see that there's still a kind of full-court offensive on, certainly in the information domain, certainly in terms of regime change attempts and coups, certainly in terms of militarization, in terms of logistical preparation, in terms of military staging. And all of that is a very ominous sign, given that we actually do know that the empire is rapidly fading. Even the elite think tanks ask themselves, you know, what is going to happen after the end of the unipolar moment? But you can also see that they're preparing to hold on for dear life, and they're also moving into this school shooter mode, that they will, you know, nothing will be held back as far as maintaining hegemony is concerned.

#Danny

Just the absolute cope after Xi Jinping brought up, during the Trump visit, during that welcoming ceremony, he brought up Thucydides' Trap. Just the way in which both the Trump administration, Trump himself on Truth Social, reacted to it, and then the media talking heads, the mainstream media talking heads, the think tanks reacted to it, was a clear indication that this is on the mind of most, if not all, of those tasked with managing both the narrative and the political and even maybe economic and military affairs of the United States empire. It's just, there's a big word. So this is one of them, a period that I feel like is really characterized by anxiety in many respects. We're seeing a deep anxiety about this.

Uh, we see Europe, they're deeply anxious about Russia, uh, but they're really reflecting U.S. anxiety about Russia. Uh, we see, uh, U.S. anxiety about China. Uh, you even have reports of Israeli anxiety about China. You have reports that, uh, China may be asked by Iran to look after their uranium. And then, of course, in Latin America, you also have a lot of anxiety about needing to reassert dominance there. We saw in recent days that there were actual, what looked like, military drills. They seemed very light, but nonetheless, there was a military presence sighted, a U.S. military presence sighted, in Venezuela. So it's obvious that the United States empire is not simply just thinking about one or the other target. It's thinking about the whole of the pie. And China is the biggest piece of it.

#KJ Noh

Yeah, absolutely. China, as I said before, is the main dish. The other pieces are side dishes, and they're still strongly, strongly focused on that. That said, you're absolutely right. You know, they are in a funk. They're in a depression. They're anxious. They're anxious about the loss of power. You know, that old Kübler-Ross formulation: denial, anger, negotiation, depression, and then acceptance. They're not at the acceptance stage yet. Some of them are depressed. A lot of them are still angry. A lot of them are still in denial.

I don't think there's any real negotiation happening either with Iran or with any countries of the Global South. And I think, you know, they know that they are in a really, really bad place. I think, you know, Kurt Campbell has said, you know, that he's essentially saying that, you know, we're in a different place, but I'm still raising a new generation of China hawks. And Francis Fukuyama, you know, he's the guy who wrote **The End of History and the Last Man**, you know, he blamed Trump for the decline of the U.S. empire, just as Trump blamed Biden for the end of the U.S. empire.

But essentially what we have to think about is that, you know, there is not quite an understanding of what is going on. Fukuyama says, you know, President Xi doesn't want to get in the way of a declining United States. And he also points out that the United States is indeed declining. Robert Kagan has also said similar things. You know, he points out that the U.S. has not won and has essentially lost in Iran. But still, you can see the cope campaign and the desperation. And they really, really do not want to let go of power. And I think that we can expect more desperate and more dangerous measures to come.

#Danny

And it seems like these forces, whether it's Kagan, the top neocon, or Fukuyama, who is considered this preeminent thinker who declared the end of history after the fall of the Soviet Union, said that the U.S. empire and its unipolar order was the only order of the day that we were going to be fed for the rest of human history. There's a thread that seems to really run through all of their attempts to misunderstand the situation, and it's that they all hope for and are arguing for a more effective

way of doing the same thing. So they're all arguing for a more effective kind of empire. Fukuyama says Trump, Kagan also says Trump — well, they're doing the wrong thing.

Trump has to surrender because he's not playing the cards right. Fukuyama says, oh, Trump is just playing right into China's hands. It almost feels like they're all trying to coach Trump — this administration and this iteration of, I guess, the lieutenants of capital — to do better rather than come to terms with the fact that there may be no good solution to China's rise. It may just be a fact that can't be obstructed or destroyed. The same goes for Russia's military and political stability and rise. The same might go for Iran. And we could go down the line. So what's your reaction to this? It feels like a more effective empire is really what a lot of these talking heads want.

#KJ Noh

Yeah, some of them are talking about more effective empires, and certainly there's a lot of critique of Trump for not being effective as an imperialist. I think that some of them also want a more violent empire. You can see that in a lot of the Washington discourse. Even Kagan, you know, seems to imply that we've lost, and the only way we can get over this is if we escalate even further. And so I think there really is this sense that they don't know what to do. And the main strategy they're thinking of is further escalation. Not a surprise, right? Not a surprise. A country that has been violent for 94% of its history, that has only had 16 years without war, certainly is going to—it's hard to change those habits. But even so, it is very, very disturbing.

And I think that there are some sectors which think that, oh, you know, everything is going to calm down. You know, the U.S. has understood its limits, it's going to accommodate the rising Global South. I think those claims are premature. I think it's going to get worse before it gets better. And certainly we can see with the continued drawing out of conflict against Iran, which is already lost — you know, it's already a strategic loss — but just the fact that they continue to draw it out and have no thought about the pain that is going to be visited, that is already being visited, and will continue to escalate for the rest of the world, shows that I don't believe that they think in terms of, you know, kind of rational and pragmatic or even moderately self-preserving ways. I really think that there is a kind of go-for-broke mindset that's currently going on.

#Danny

Yeah, you know, midterm elections, those come and go. But this attempt to maintain and even expand this very ridiculous notion — but nonetheless, it is the doctrine of the U.S. empire — full-spectrum dominance, that's forever to these. This is forever for them. When Francis Fukuyama said it's the end of history, a lot of the military brass, a lot of those who pay their salaries and who push them through these revolving doors in the military-industrial complex and Wall Street, that's what they believe. They believe that they are forever and that there will be no alternative. It's not that there is no other, it's that there will be none.

And I think that's what we are really seeing, is like, yeah, the midterm elections or any of these other considerations, like economic crises — if it comes down to those things and the threat of the very apparatus that protects the system at the root of all of it, the capitalist system, capitalism, imperialism — they're going to choose what addresses the root the most. They're not going to concern themselves with an economic crash or the midterm elections. Hell, there was a New York Times report with many Republican advisors saying, oh my God, we're actually going to lose this thing pretty badly. Things aren't changing. But that was in the New York Times, which is considered mostly leaning toward the Democratic Party anyway. People in the Trump administration and these hawks, they're not talking about that at all, really. And some of them are even saying, well, we'll win it anyway. And that's the mentality. But in the last few minutes, we have your thoughts on this.

#KJ Noh

Well, you know, I think once again, you know, I think the denial is still very, very strong inside the ruling class. I mean, going back to Fukuyama, he said, you know, there's an agreement the U.S. has become a rogue state and a laughingstock, and it is engaged in such a process of self-harm that China doesn't need to do anything but sit back and watch it unfold. So that's the realist part that understands what's going on. That's the language. But if you actually look at the actions they are taking and the escalations that are happening, you can see that really very little has changed.

Once again, coming back to the Strait of Hormuz, we know that there are six asymmetries that essentially ensure that Iran has escalation dominance, that the U.S. is facing strategic defeat in Hormuz, and yet the U.S. is continuing to try and pretend that it still has some kind of control and negotiating power. What does that mean? Well, of course, we know that oil and fuel are going to hit a crisis very, very soon. Gasoline in California is over \$6 at this point. Diesel is \$8. But forget about fuel for a moment. Of course, we all know about the industrial inputs such as sulfuric acid, methane, helium, and fertilizer inputs. And of course, there's going to be a shortage of naphtha. Naphtha is used for plastics. It's the feedstock for all plastics.

Now, I've heard people say, well, yeah, that just means we'll use fewer plastic bags. No, it doesn't mean that we'll just use fewer plastic bags. That's true. But it means that everything that requires wiring, which is encapsulated with plastic so that it doesn't short-circuit, will not be able to be produced. Your average car, you know, has hundreds of meters of electrical wiring. You know, everywhere you go, anytime you have electricity, you also have insulated electrical wires using naphtha-derived plastics. If that runs out, you're essentially demyelinating the world. It's like you're going to give the entire planet something like multiple sclerosis. And even as that is happening, you can see that there are no concrete steps towards de-escalation, towards an exit, towards meaningful negotiation.

Instead, what we have just seen is attacks unfold on Iran, even as they pretend to be negotiating in Qatar. And so ultimately, we can see that the U.S. is regrettably not agreement-capable. It is behaving not simply narcissistically or psychopathically, but really in this borderline psychotic,

borderline disorder fashion. And I think that, you know, this is the danger, the risk, especially the nuclear risks, are unprecedented. What that means is everybody who, you know, cares about the planet, who cares about the future of the world, really needs to, you know, hit the streets, hit the keyboards, hit the phones, and really give an earful to the quote-unquote representatives who are supposed to be, you know, safeguarding and shepherding this quote-unquote democracy.

#Danny

Yes, and on that note, we are at the hour, everybody. So everyone give a big thank you to KJ. Hit the like button so all of this goes out far and wide before we go. I'll be back tomorrow, not too much time at all—actually, 10 a.m. Eastern time—with Alastair Crooke, talking about this meeting that's happening tomorrow on Iran that the entire cabinet of the United States administration under Trump is going to partake in about Iran. So be there for that. Also, please support this channel in the video description. And KJ, do you have anything you want to say before I hit the end here?

#KJ Noh

No, but I think everybody, do what you can. Every little piece counts. And also, do not be misled by the propaganda, the misinformation, especially the propaganda coming out of, quote-unquote, alternative sources. It is completely, you know, it is completely infested, even, you know, the alternate media network. So we have to turn our bullshit detectors up to 14. I mean, just—one comment on that: Amy Goodman just recently celebrated her 30-year anniversary. Now, I'm of the opinion that Amy Goodman is probably very, very tightly aligned with the Council on Foreign Relations. She constantly has people—she has strong connections there.

And she, despite her claim about being concerned about global warming and greenhouse gases and climate change, has been one of the key vectors attacking one of the truly bright spots in the fight against climate change, which has been the accomplishments of China in greening the planet and developing sustainable energy as a global good. She has been right on the front line of attacking China, attacking China's development or labor practices, especially as they concern the development of global goods for renewable energy. And so the ugliness, the hypocrisy of that—to pat oneself on the back while doing some of the worst things possible to undermine genuine, democratic, positive change for sustainable energy—speaks to the level of hypocrisy and cynicism that pervades the propaganda apparatus.

#Danny

Yeah, for sure, for sure, because China's achievements are just unmatched—from the reforestation to solar energy, all across the world, renewable energy. It is a far cleaner and more environmentally friendly place than it's ever been, China, and it's leading the way in that. And there's a big section of those, especially liberals, progressives, as they might call themselves, who condemn it, criticize it without any thought about the consequences of that. They criticize it because they still have this

Cold War mentality that China is not their friend but actually China is their enemy, and it's not trying to actually address problems—it's, I don't know, scheming, conniving to make things worse. It's an absolutely cynical take, but it's one that a lot of, especially those who, you know, who aren't doing too badly in this time of empire and crisis, they tend to adopt. So, definitely appreciate you bringing that up, KJ. Hit the like button, everybody. We are out of here, and I will see you tomorrow, 10 a.m. Eastern Time, May 27th, with Alastair Crooke. Bye.