

Iran HITS BACK at US, Trump's 'Deal' Sets WW3 | Berletic

Geopolitical analyst and former US Marine Brian Berletic of The New Atlas discusses Iran's ongoing response to US provocations in the Persian Gulf/Strait of Hormuz, and boldly analyzes Trump's negotiations as a set up for a broader World War 3 agenda unfolding before our eyes. PATREON.COM /DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #iranwar #trump

#Danny

Brian, let's begin with the situation regarding Iran and the U.S. war on Iran. So we have, despite all the talks about a memorandum of understanding signed and not signed, the Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei not approving it, and Trump hasn't approved it. There's all this, of course, like we've had in so many of these wars, talks about talks. But as this is happening, the U.S. has been striking Iran. It's done so multiple times in the last week. And according to reports, there were claims that an MQ-9 Reaper drone was hovering in Iranian airspace. Iran says they shot it down close to the Bushehr nuclear site, while CENTCOM is saying no such thing ever occurred. Iran is also saying they continue to witness both U.S. warships and commercial vessels attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz without Iran's permission, turning off transponders, forcing them to fire warning shots that they must turn around. This war seems very much on. What's your understanding of why the war is currently where it is right now?

#Brian Berletic

So we look at just the pattern of U.S. geopolitical objectives and the way they approach trying to achieve those objectives. We look at, say, the ongoing U.S. proxy war with Russia. I mean, this is a war where the U.S. is waging war on Russia in some ways very directly, but indirectly through Ukraine. And we can see the so-called peace process, how all that really is, is a facade that the U.S. hides behind to escalate, to shift burden sharing more onto Europe, to prepare Europe itself to go into the war in Ukraine against Russia. And that's exactly what they're doing in the Middle East right now, vis-à-vis Iran.

They tried their big all-or-nothing push to try to hurt Iran as badly as possible from late February all through March. It was high intensity, but we know the United States cannot sustain high-intensity warfare like that. I don't know why people would just assume that, well, because that failed, they're just going to give up. The United States has been trying to overthrow the Iranian government and

whole political system for decades. And it has gone through many phases where it's become very focused and intense and then fails. It has failed every single time up until now. But they don't actually ever give up.

They just stop that phase of the operation and prepare the next phase. And so that's what they're doing right now vis-à-vis Iran in terms of trying to topple the government. They've not given up on that. They know it's going to take time and pressure. They don't exactly know when it will topple, if it will topple. And if you look at how the United States has attempted to remove other governments that it has targeted in the past—Libya, Syria, decades—these are things that started all the way back in the '70s and '80s and have only just unfolded now. So in that sense, that's what the United States is doing.

They're still waging war against Iran, just right under the threshold of triggering another high-intensity phase of operations, which they would probably like to avoid until they've stockpiled more weapons. People talk about the low military-industrial production of the United States. It's low, but it isn't zero. So every single month that goes by, that is that many more weapons, even if it's just a handful, that they have stockpiled for another large scale, even if it's just one big major attack. So this is something we have to keep in mind. And then there's also bigger-picture objectives the U.S. is trying to achieve and is achieving by just keeping the threat of constant war hanging over the entire region.

#Danny

What have you made of how Iran is handling this? Iran has stayed very firm. They continue to consolidate control over the Strait of Hormuz, and they seem very much aware of the U.S.'s lack of capacity or lack of interest in actually coming to a settlement to the conflict, one that actually meets the requirements not just of Iran but really of the situation. Where the United States, as you said, they don't know—actually, I think this is a bad sign for them—that they don't know exactly how things are going to go, or at least they have no idea. But they are willing, the Trump administration and the rest of the war mongers, are willing to continue on the path anyway.

#Brian Berletic

I think Iran is doing everything that it can do. Hopefully, the people in Tehran understand that there is no possibility for peace with the United States. The United States will not stop what it has been doing for decades, and regardless of who has been president or who has controlled Congress, it has not stopped its pursuit of global primacy at all, ever, throughout its entire history of being a nation. It's not going to stop now because this one major push to try to topple the Iranian government has failed. And in other ways—again, we'll talk about the big-picture objectives a little later, maybe—they're actually succeeding in pursuing those objectives.

So hopefully in Tehran, they understand that that's not a possibility. They're buying time. Just as the U.S. is replenishing its arms and ammunition and reorganizing its military forces, surely Iran is using this time to do likewise and preparing for whatever it is that the United States throws at Iran next. Controlling the Strait of Hormuz, I mean, this sets a precedent. It takes away from the United States this illusion of being all-powerful, that it can do anything it wants, anywhere it wants. Iran is demonstrating to the entire world that it has closed the Strait of Hormuz—not really closed it, but it's controlling what can go through and what cannot.

And there's nothing the United States can really do about it, because if the United States brings ships in to try to open it or escort ships through it, they will almost certainly be hit by anti-ship missiles and drones. And what the United States has done instead is impose its own blockade. But again, that's part of the bigger-picture objectives that the U.S. is pursuing, and in a way that is kind of fulfilling U.S. objectives in that sense. But there still is this factor that they are not in control of the Strait of Hormuz in terms of what is going through and what cannot. So I think it's an important step, maybe more symbolic than strategic, as maybe other people might suggest, but I think it's still a big development.

#Danny

It might get bigger if Iran is able to move more ships through the Strait of Hormuz and collect the environmental fee that they are charging. That's likely to bring in a lot of revenue. But also, there is an interesting dynamic with the Strait of Hormuz, though, because throughout this period, one of the reasons why the U.S.—and I know you definitely want to get into this, Brian—the U.S. has this blockade strategy all over the world is because it's made very clear that it wants to choke off China. But one of the interesting things about what's happening in the Strait of Hormuz is that Chinese tankers have been supplying oil to Iran this whole time, and even during the harshest of hostilities. And yet, with this blockade, I think the United States has been a bit fearful of confronting Chinese vessels, for example.

So there's a contradiction here. They definitely want to cut off—they want to really make this a choke point and maybe even take advantage of what Iran is doing. But there's also this problem that if you confront China regarding trading with Iran, oil for example, getting oil from Iran, then you are also bringing China into the war. And we saw what happened with the Trump visit to Beijing. China was not really interested in talking Iran out with Trump. So what do you make of these dynamics? Because, you know, of course, the U.S. wants to topple Iran, but there's a global picture here that the U.S. is trying to assert. They're pursuing it. They're definitely pursuing it. But there are a lot of, I think, interesting factors that go into how it all happens. What are your thoughts?

#Brian Berletic

Yes, absolutely. I think the strategic implications of Iran regulating traffic through the Strait of Hormuz will become much more significant depending on how this conflict ultimately ends. And I don't mean temporarily, in between fake peace talks that the U.S. is pretending to have with Iran. I mean, if this conflict concludes and the United States is displaced from the region—and that's probably not going to happen anytime soon, not as soon as I think a lot of people hope—but that would be a major development and move forward against U.S. primacy around the globe. But right now, as things stand, OK, yes, Iran can regulate traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, and this is a card that they're holding. Now the United States has placed its blockade.

And as you point out, the U.S. is not targeting Chinese tankers, and that's something that they're probably not going to want to do in the immediate future. But maybe in the intermediate future, that is something they will eventually do. We just have to look back and think of how the U.S. war on Russia has progressed from 2014, when they first overthrew the Ukrainian government, to where it is right now, where the New York Times admits it is the CIA and the U.S. military carrying out these maritime drone strikes on ships carrying Russian energy all around the world—in the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea, off the coast of West Africa, in the Mediterranean Sea, if I didn't say that one already. So that has escalated from not even imaginable to becoming a reality.

This is eventually the direction they're going to go in, in terms of targeting Chinese shipping. This is the absolute ultimate objective of all of this. But what have they achieved so far? By attacking Iran and Iran retaliating against energy production infrastructure among the Persian Gulf Arab U.S. proxies in the region, the overall amount of energy being exported from the region in total has been reduced. The amount of energy from Iran, even though ships are coming through the U.S.-imposed blockade on Iranian ports, has been cut, you could say, maybe by 20, 30, 40, up to 50 percent—but it is still a reduction. If you look over time, you can see how this was the amount of oil and energy China was getting before, and it just keeps steadily, steadily dropping.

It isn't zero, but it continues steadily dropping. Now, the whole point is, China knew the United States was going to do this for decades. This is one of the main reasons they worked on their Belt and Road Initiative, where they have land routes stretching all across Eurasia. This is the reason why they invested so much in the Power of Siberia pipeline, bringing Russian energy into China. This is the reason why they are expanding capacity and expanding imports from Russia to China, Kazakhstan. And they have built alternate pipelines elsewhere to bring in additional energy. Plus, they have the largest strategic petroleum reserve on planet Earth in all of human history.

I mean, you've been to China. You know how big China is. Imagine how big a reserve has to be for a country that size to last, say, like 100 days or more. So this is what they have done, not even mentioning China's electric vehicles, the electrification of transportation, and all the other alternative energy sources they have been working on again for decades. And again, this is why the U.S. rushed into this. People interpret my warnings and caution regarding the U.S. as somehow depicting the U.S. as unstoppable. But I would say the U.S. has been pushed ahead of time, ahead of schedule, into

all of this. Because there is like a five to ten-year window max, ten years max, where China will be energy independent and the U.S. won't be able to do this anymore.

So they're rushing through it. It is succeeding. They've managed to throttle the amount of energy from the Middle East going to China, and they're forcing China to go back on its emergency contingencies now. The one thing I think I want to warn people about, that I don't think people are really noticing, is they've also reduced the amount of energy, critically, that has gone from the Middle East to the rest of Asia. And this is exactly what they did to Europe vis-à-vis cheap energy from Russia. They're now doing it to Asia vis-à-vis energy coming in from the Middle East. They're reducing that. And at the same time, they spent years building up LNG, energy, and oil export projects in the United States that made no business sense at all for years and years.

Just last year, they were doing proposals and they were begging the public to see why it made sense, and they kept talking about contested waterways. And people were like, what contested waterways? And I guess you could almost see them wink and say, well, just wait, wait, just wait a year or two, you'll see what we mean by contested waterways. So now they've cut Asia off from reliable energy from the Middle East, and now they're forcing them to sign contracts. And countries are signing contracts. Yes, they're signing with Russia. They're trying to balance it out. But this is additional leverage the U.S. will have over all of these Asian countries to try to flip them and turn them into battering rams against China, in the same way they flipped all of Europe into a battering ram against Russia, which is something that we can now see escalating out of control in Europe vis-à-vis Russia.

#Danny

We get a little taste of that with Indonesia, too. Of course, Indonesia has made headway with BRICS, its deep interest in BRICS and de-dollarization. But also in recent terms, you would think nationalizing resources would be a huge boon for Indonesia. But many are citing a huge reason why they are nationalizing resources right now is because they want to lessen their dependence on China, many seeing it as a move that was pressured by the United States, given that the Indonesian president has made comments about wanting to be closer to Trump and Trump's son and all of this. So I think your point is well taken, as well as the fact that it could be, as you said, it's not that the U. S. is invincible, but that it has to go to certain lengths at periods of time maybe that it didn't want to engage in at this moment.

And it seems like a lot of this, rather than choking China directly or the rest of the multipolar world, especially these countries that have obviously shown that they're very difficult, if not impossible, to defeat at this moment—China, Russia, Iran—so everything that happens around them is also critically important. Because just because those countries are difficult to overthrow and destroy, it doesn't mean that there is not an impact from trying to destroy the rest of the world around them as a way to try to isolate them. It doesn't always work. China is very difficult to isolate economically, but it does have consequences for the world, and we're seeing it with the world economy. I mean,

look at what's going on. So your comments on this—the world economy is in dire straits in large part because of this so-called strategy by the U.S. empire.

#Brian Berletic

Absolutely. This is a very crucial point you just made. Absolutely. Ideally, the United States would want to maintain primacy over the globe, maintain its corporate financier monopolies over the globe, and maintain it at the high levels that it has for so long. But because they've been forced into this position and are rushing to try to desperately contain China before its irreversible surpassing of not just the United States, but the U.S. and all of its proxies combined, they have switched to a strategy where they're basically saying, if we cannot control the world, we're just gonna—it's just like a sore loser at a board game.

They're just gonna flip the whole board over, throw the pieces everywhere, maybe knock over the table and trash the whole house, and hope that somehow they can walk away the winner, or at least not be defeated at that particular game. And in reality, what they're trying to do is maybe a sort of repeat of World War II, where all of these countries all across Eurasia were waging war against one another. Their whole countries were being destroyed, ravaged by the war. The United States was on the other side of the planet, separated by two oceans from all of the fighting. And they emerged, indisputably, the most powerful country on the planet.

And that is one of the reasons they had this huge head start and enjoyed primacy for so long throughout the 20th and early 21st century. And so they're trying to do that again. The problem is, as other people have pointed out, back then they had a massive industrial base. They had an education system producing a skilled workforce. They don't have any of that now. China has all of that. And there is literally no possible way the United States can catch up to China, match China in any conceivable way, compete with and stay at the same level as China. So their goal is, just as you say, just destroy everything.

And if you can't hurt China within China's borders, destroy everything all around China. And you can see that this is something they've been doing to Russia. There's a whole paper, the RAND Corporation 2019, "Extending Russia." Many of the options are about destabilizing and destroying countries all along Russia's borders or countries that are important to Russia. They have the exact same plan for China. This is the reason I got into geopolitics in the first place — to expose U.S. meddling here in Southeast Asia, which is one of the major peripheries of China — U.S. interference in Thailand.

I covered the U.S.-backed protest in Thailand. There is a war taking place in Myanmar. The U.S. is backing militants and terrorists fighting the central government there who regularly attack Chinese investments and specific Belt and Road Initiative projects, like the Myanmar-China pipeline. And there are U.S. policy papers that literally say we could blow up the pipeline. This is one of the ways we can stop China from circumventing any sort of blockade we place in the South China Sea or the

Strait of Malacca, which brings Indonesia into the picture. Last year, there were U.S.-backed protests, violent protests in Indonesia. A lot of pressure was put on Indonesia to lean a little bit closer toward the U.S. than to China. And that's what we see as a result.

I was just, myself and several others, attacked by these NED, Soros-funded media outlets in Indonesia because we exposed it last year. Why are they talking about it this year? And it's almost certainly that they're trying to get ahead and smear, attack, and silence the people that are going to expose U.S.-backed unrest in Indonesia this year or in the near future. So this is a constant process that's taking place. In Afghanistan, China is working with the government there to develop their economy. They're exporting raw materials to China. China would like to put the processing there in Afghanistan, but they can't. You know why they can't? Because the U.S. is backing terrorists there, attacking the government there, attacking Chinese diplomatic missions, Chinese citizens there.

So it's basically a dirty war the U.S. is waging against China, in a very similar way that it's now openly waging against Russia, and obviously the war of aggression they're waging against Iran. They have launched basically a full-scale war against multipolarism because they know they cannot compete with or stop it in any other way except to just destroy it all. And then what does that mean? That means the battle lines that we're looking at now are... can the multipolar world build and organize faster than the United States can destroy? That's what we're looking at right now. That's the reality we all have to face and try to expose and try to oppose — this policy of just destroying everything in the hopes the U.S. can cling to its primacy.

#Danny

We've talked a lot about U.S. military limitations. It's playing out right now in the Iran war. We're seeing that this transition to a ceasefire, limited engagement, kind of limited strikes arrangement is in large part because doing anything bigger would have huge consequences for the economy and may deplete U.S. stockpiles even more, taking away from all these other fronts. And then, though I think part of this long war is that for China, Russia, and Iran, these countries have proven themselves now to be very strong and capable of defending themselves and building up their capacities.

I mean, we saw with Iranian attacks—missile, drone, and military technology—all of this we're seeing with Iran. Russia, we just saw Russia launch another airstrike, this time at Kiev. We know that they are fortified for a long war of defense. China, it's very difficult to attack China directly militarily, and their economy, as you noted, is incredibly advanced in these areas that is forcing the U.S. to maybe overplay its hand. But a lot of the multipolar world is connecting these countries to the rest of the world and ensuring that every time I go to China, people talk to me all the time.

You know, it's an economy that grows as fast as China wants to be able to produce, trade, and build with other countries so that people are more engaged, capable of developing themselves, so they can then help offset some of the burdens on the Chinese economy as a win-win. If China's producing

all this stuff, they need people to buy it, especially when the U.S. is sanctioning itself and the West is sanctioning itself from these opportunities. So that's what it kind of looks like. It looks like a long war, but this long war—Iran has shown it, Ukraine—there are lots of hot moments in this long war. And I don't think any of these are over quite yet. I think actually all of these fronts are likely to escalate. What are your thoughts about that? Because they're all interconnected.

#Brian Berletic

Yes. The more the U.S. talks about peace, almost certainly, the more certain it is that they're just going to escalate. In policy papers, they literally have entire chapters about diplomacy: this is what we can hide behind while we prepare our forces, and we put the targeted nation into the optimum position to attack and topple them. This is all they talk about. There's no actual interest in diplomacy. And I don't know why, at this point, anyone even believes this. People are talking about peace deals between the U.S. and Iran after the U.S. used fake diplomacy, fake peace deals twice to attack and wipe out the top leadership of Iran. Twice. They've done it twice. So why do people think, oh, the third time's the charm?

No, this is a process. This is a pattern. Please recognize the pattern. You're absolutely right. I think it's only going to escalate. You mentioned China is growing and wants other nations to grow with it so that they can do more and more business together. I live in Thailand. Thailand's largest, most important trade partner is China. And I've watched the transition over the 20-plus years that I've lived here, almost my entire adult life, when it used to be dominated by the U.S.—the entire region dominated by the U.S.—the poverty and the stagnation of development. And then as China began to rise, the rapid rise of Thailand, the advancement for everyone in Thai society from the top—obviously, they're always enjoying luxury.

But even at the lowest levels of society, which is where I'm much more closely aligned, I've seen the benefits. I enjoy the benefits of Thailand doing business with China. But what does destroying the energy flow from the Middle East to Asia do? It causes an economic crisis. No one is doubting that. Yes, one reason is to create energy dependence on the U.S. in these countries. Thailand had to sign a deal with the U.S. They have to. They have no choice. If you have no energy coming in, whatever the reason is, you need energy for your people. You can't say, well, we don't want to do business with the U.S. They have signed deals with Russia too, by the way. We're not going to buy American energy; we'll just let our people go with no energy.

That's not really an option. But the other reason is it creates an economic crisis. People have less money to spend, and they're not doing as much business with China. So it goes back to that whole deal where the U.S. is sitting across from China. They're losing the game badly, and you just flip the board over and say, now what are you going to do? Now you have nobody to do business with. This is the way America does business. Now, if you look at the front against Russia, Iran, and China,

ignore what the U.S. is saying. Look at their actions. I've warned endlessly, probably a thousand times now. I've talked about Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, February 2025, his directive to Europe.

You're getting ready to go in and fight our war against Russia in Ukraine. You get ready, double down, expand military-industrial production, cancel all social programs, dump all the money into military spending, and get yourself ready. Now we're watching it all play out. These headlines where they're saying Russia's thinking about starting a war with Europe. No, the U.S. is feeding Europe into the proxy war with Russia. That is what's actually going on. That's why Russia is using a Russian mix to create a very bold, obvious red line, knowing the consequences of where this war is going to go and how it's going to affect and damage and destroy Europe, while also causing immense pain for Russia. The war in Iran is almost certainly going to start.

It will start whenever the U.S. is ready. And before it's ready, it is doing this low-threshold, constant fighting—war, essentially a low-intensity war against Iran, even during peace talks. And of course, I'm in Asia, and I'm watching the United States continuously build up its military power here. It's networking the Philippines, South Korea, and Japan into a de facto NATO, where they're all sharing information, using the same weapons, and they're all integrating their forces under U.S. military command. I'm watching it happen right now. And so they are preparing to escalate on all fronts. They are at war with multipolarism because they understand that as things are now, multipolarism will win.

And if people see this and they understand this, and they face the reality of this, they will be prepared to invest in this real fight that is actually happening, not the fantasy of America just going away all on its own. And multipolarism will have a chance to prevail no matter what the United States does. That's my message. It isn't that the U.S. is unstoppable. It's that it is going for an all-or-nothing strategy. And if we understand that, and we invest in multipolarism and a fair balance of power among nations in the future, we can stop a future where the U.S. holds dominion over all nations after it destroys absolutely everything. We can all agree that's not the future that we want.

#Danny

As you said, there's the phrase, "China builds, the U.S. bombs." The U.S. wants to bomb. It can't bomb everybody. But what it wants to do is weaken and slow down this process. And it's going to, no matter how weak it gets. Again, an empire in decline does not mean a less aggressive empire. It does not mean tap out, give up. No. The only time an empire taps out and gives up is when it's gone. And the only time empires actually go is not because their rulers and whatnot say, "Well, we're done here, we're going to go retire." No, it usually happens because there are people who want to supplant it, replace it, and hopefully—not always, but hopefully—build something better.

#Brian Berletic

U.S. policy, foreign and domestic, is not driven by Donald J. Trump. It's not being run by the people in Washington. It's not being controlled by Israel, a country smaller than New Jersey with a population smaller than New York City, completely dependent on the United States. It is controlled and driven by U.S. corporate interests. The largest, most powerful corporations in the United States have been driving U.S. foreign and domestic policy for decades and decades. They're the ones who fund the policy think tanks that put out these papers that are literal blueprints. If you read them, they're just going down the checklist, doing one after the other.

If you look at the lower-level staff in any presidential administration—Republican, Democratic, doesn't matter—it's full of people from these think tanks, created, directed, chaired by these corporations. So if you want to oppose something in the United States that is driving this, that will actually matter and not just be a distraction, start focusing on the corporations. Stop giving them your money. Create alternatives. Instead of spending on these giant corporations based in the U.S., find alternatives or create them. And insist on—it's not, "Oh, big companies are bad." No, big companies are just big companies.

It's who's running them and how they're using them. There are big companies in China that do tremendous good. It's about putting purpose over the blind pursuit of profit. That's all it is. It's that simple. And if Americans start insisting on a society that puts people and purpose first over just profit and power, it will make a difference because it does make a difference in other countries that do this. Even to the smallest degree, it improves everybody's lives, from the top to the bottom of society, tremendously. So that's just my final message. That's what people can actively do about this, if nothing else.