US F-35s GO DOWN as Iran BLASTS US Navy Escorts! | Lt Col. Daniel Davis

Lt. Col Daniel Davis brings his expertise to help explain why several US fighter jets have gone down in consecutive days near Iran, and his assessment of where the US-led wars in the Middle East and in Europe are going. Lt. Col. Daniel Davis is a 4x combat veteran and the host of the Daniel Davis Deep Dive YouTube channel. Follow Daniel Davis: https://www.youtube.com /@UCWDN5zr5ttctoIAhZwW6tcQ Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis! Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: https://www.patreon.com /dannyhaiphong SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong Telegram: https://t.me /DannyHaiphong Support the channel in other ways: https://www.buymeacoffee.com /dannyhaiphong Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: $Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: https://paypal.me/spiritofho

#Danny

Welcome back to the show. As you can see, I'm joined by Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis, host of Deep Dive with Daniel Davis, to go over the latest developments. I wanted to get your take on what's going on right now with Iran and the Strait of Hormuz. In the last few days, a number of F-35s have squawked emergency codes and had to make emergency landings, most recently last night in the UAE. Iran has also claimed it fired on a number of fighter jets, including an F-16. In the last four days, we've seen at least four aircraft have to declare emergencies, hightail it out of there, and land.

So first, Colonel Davis, could you help us understand what exactly is going on here? There are still a lot of threats being made against Iran, even today. I believe the United States and Israel have both talked about taking out Iranian leadership. And in the last 24 hours, four tankers in the Strait of Hormuz have been hit by either Iranian mines or anti-ship missiles. So there's a lot going on, but oil prices are going down, and there's an attempt to downplay what's happening. What do you make of all this, especially what's happening with the aircraft that are supposed to be escorting these tankers out of the Strait of Hormuz?

#Daniel Davis

Yeah, there are a lot of crazy things going on, and a lot of them seem contradictory across the board: diplomatically, economically, militarily, you name it. Just a lot of crazy things going on. But I think what's at the heart of all this is that the Iranians have a strategy, and I think they've been preparing for it for a while. Now, looking at it from a military perspective, it seems to me they're starting to roll it out. They're going to start ratcheting up the pressure in the air and at sea.

In the Strait of Hormuz, that pressure is aimed at the United States and Israel, but primarily at the United States right now. I think the Iranians would be happy to keep Israel out of it, but they'll bring Israel into it if they have to. They're saying, "Hey, listen, this whole blockade thing—it ain't working. It ain't working out for me, and it's not going to. You've got to meet the seven conditions we've set, which are basically the terms of the MOU, all up front. If you comply, then we'll start talking about some other stuff."

But if you don't, we're going to start ratcheting up the pressure. You see, President Pezeshkian and Ghalibaf, the speaker of their parliament, have both said, along with Reza and several others—I think Baghaei has mentioned it too—that the supreme leader has given instructions to put an end to this "no war, no peace" situation. So I think they've probably been preparing for this point for a while, and they've been building up their resources behind the scenes by producing drones. We've seen a lot of videos released over the last several weeks showing that Iran has new types of drones and new production facilities, apparently in some of these underground missile cities. They've been working overtime, and now they've built up a large stockpile.

One of the things that really stood out to me in some of the videos they've shown is how much they've stockpiled. So they've been working for a while, and they've built up a pretty large inventory. It looks to me like they've decided, "Okay, now we're ready to start ratcheting this up." I think it was in October that 30 tankers were hit in the Gulf, by whatever means. With these four, I think we're up to 26 for November, if I'm not mistaken. And there's still time left in the month. So I think the rate is picking up. And now there are reports of attacks on our planes in the air. I haven't seen any confirmation from CENTCOM, but that's never a surprise, because they rarely admit anything if it's not positive. And then they claim all kinds of stuff.

So you can't take anybody's word at face value. But it does appear that there have been some incidents in the air. Iran claims it's taken out a number of drones again recently. I think they were MQ-9 Reapers. So, from what Iran's been saying and doing, it looks like they're going to increase the pressure on the U.S. This is going to have a negative impact on the oil supply, even if we're able to manipulate the price, which we seem to be pretty good at, at least from time to time.

But you can't manipulate the supply, and you can't talk your way out of a shortage. If it's just not there, it's not there. And even when the oil is going through, it's going through at a premium. You have to pay dramatically more for insurance than you did before, which adds a huge cost on top of the market price of oil. And that's if you can find tankers that are still willing to make the crossing. Because, man, some of the footage we saw today was very dramatic. These ships are suffering catastrophic losses. And it's not as simple as saying, "Okay, well, you've got insurance, so you can just collect the insurance money."

It's not like that. When you lose a ship, first of all, it creates a real hazard in the Gulf itself. But the ship also has to be replaced at some point. Even if you get the cash, you're no longer making any

money on that ship. And then there's the crew issue. Crew costs are triple what they were at the beginning, assuming you can find enough crews. All of that adds something like $20 a barrel on top of what the oil costs when the tanker is filled, and that cost is already a lot higher. So all of these things keep putting pressure on the United States.

And I think Iran will increase that pressure, because it looks to me like they're trying to provoke a response from the United States that goes beyond tit for tat. Not just hitting a radar on Qeshm Island or something, but maybe launching a big strike. Because I think Iran is just waiting for that to unleash a catastrophic strike on the Arab Gulf states or even on Israel. They're claiming they'll gut everything those countries need to keep their economies running: their energy infrastructure, their power generation, their refining capacity, their pipelines. And that basically locks the world, including the United States, into a depression that lasts into 2027. There's almost no way around it at that point. And it looks to me like Iran is making it clear that's what they're going to do. They're saying, "Wouldn't it be better if we just went back to the seven points of the MOU and called it a day?"

And everybody gets to live another day. And we're going to be in control of the Strait of Hormuz, because that's not going away. They're never going to get rid of that. So that's kind of where I see this going. We're building up to something, and we're still hearing this nonsensical stuff from people like Senator Cotton. I think it might have been yesterday, actually. He says, "Listen, I don't want to surrender like the Democrats want to. No, I want to win this war. All we have to do is decide we're going to win and keep working at it until we do. We'll take out those darn Iranians."

You had Ambassador Mike Huckabee saying on an Israeli channel yesterday, "Listen, if the Iranian side is willing to be reasonable and just give us everything we're asking for, then everything will be fine and we can have peace. But if they don't, then we're going to have to finish the job." And basically, they're asking Iran to surrender. And I listen to this stuff as a military person who's just honestly looking at what's happened over the last eight months or so, and I think, "What planet are you people living on?" There is no military path to success for us. We've failed at everything we set out to do on the 28th of February. And we've created problems that didn't exist before, and we can't solve those either.

And if you go back in with military power, you're going to cause even more problems. It'll probably take decades to repair the damage and fully recover. And the cost could be catastrophic for us and for our Gulf allies. It could completely redraw the map. I don't rule out that possibility either, because if some of these regimes start falling, we don't know what the map is going to look like afterward. We don't know who's going to take control. We've talked about the Houthis and the situation in Saudi Arabia. Everywhere you look, this thing is on a knife's edge. It could turn into a catastrophe. And we're still blindly pushing ahead like we're in control, like we get to call the shots and we'll just see if those darn Iranians do what they're told. I mean, that's kind of where we are right now.

#Danny

Right. And I brought it up on the screen. I mean, these are the images we're seeing every day. Some people on X who follow these things have even said that a lot of accounts should just pin "Tankers hit in the Strait of Hormuz" to the top of their profiles because it's happening so often. As you said, yes, the prices are being manipulated, but there's still a lot of intense activity today. And I guess my question for you, Colonel Davis, is this: What exactly are we seeing here with these F-35s and the other fighter jets? There's even one aircraft I'm not familiar with: the USN CMV-22B Osprey.

I believe that's a drone. No, an Osprey is basically a tiltrotor helicopter used by the Marine Corps. Okay, all right. What exactly are these aircraft doing? We know warships aren't sailing through the Strait of Hormuz. It looks like something is forcing these aircraft to make emergency landings while they're escorting tankers through the strait, and that often coincides with launches from Iran. So what do you think these aircraft are supposed to be doing?

#Daniel Davis

Yeah, what they're supposed to be doing is basically running combat air patrols. They're supposed to provide cover for some of the tankers using the approved lanes in the Omani corridor so they can get oil out that way. The idea is to provide an umbrella so Iran can't launch attacks against the tankers. At least that's the intent. But you can see that it's obviously not working. Some of them could also just be up on patrol so that if anything kicks off or if shots are fired from Iran, there are already aircraft in the air. So if satellites spot a mobile missile launcher coming out and starting to set up, they can direct a plane that's already in the air to knock it out. That's the general idea. I really couldn't say what any one of these specific aircraft might be doing, but that's what they're doing, generally speaking.

#Danny

All right. Well, you know, if that's the case, maybe you can talk about what's going on with Israel. We're hearing reports that Israel is pressuring the United States every single day to launch a larger operation, and that this time Israel is saying the operation would target Iranian leadership. There's a very urgent call for this to happen. But according to recent reports, the Trump administration has said it's waiting until after January 1, 2027, before it seriously considers anything like that. I'm wondering what you think about this kind of maneuvering by both the United States and Israel in this war.

#Daniel Davis

I put literally no stock in a word that comes out of President Trump's mouth. I mean, how could you? He's said so many things about the Russia-Ukraine war and this war that turned out to be false, sometimes even on the same day. He's claimed we were negotiating. He's said, "Well, I'm going to hold off on this for a week," and then two days later he's doing something. So nobody believes a

word he says. You can just ignore that. The only people who seem to pay attention are American media types, people on social media, and his supporters. And most of it's for their benefit.

But in this particular case, my guess is that Trump would be only too happy to put this off until after New Year's Eve. He wants to get through the whole holiday season—Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, and all that—without a war messing up his Christmas parties or anything else. So I honestly think he actually means it, because I don't think he's personally under any time pressure. I think the way he sees it, whether we do something now, after Thanksgiving but before Christmas, or after New Year's, it's not going to make any difference. But waiting will be better for him personally, because he loves the limelight and all the parties he's going to get invited to.

I'm not being facetious when I say that kind of thing. So I think that's his intent. The question is, will Iran allow that to happen? You can certainly see why it might be in their interest not to wait. They're under a lot more time pressure because of the consequences of the ongoing naval blockade. It's definitely hurting them. They have ways to get around a lot of it. Some things are still getting out through the Gulf, though not a lot. Some things are also going out through overland corridors and across the Caspian Sea, but not in the volumes they need. It's a lot harder, and it's more expensive. So it's costing them a lot.

And then there are the economic factors too, from Bessent and whatever else. All these things are doing real harm to the Iranian people and their way of life, so they want to get this over with sooner. And that's why I said at the outset that it looks to me like they're building up the pressure with these physical actions. Maybe that now includes even these aircraft, if this is legit. I mean, maybe they're trying to shoot some down to provoke a response. It looks to me like Iran wants to provoke a major strike by the United States so that it can carry out these strikes in response. Because if Iran just goes ahead and launches them, then a lot of people around the world, you know, will turn against Iran. They'll say, "Wait, President Trump—and even Mike Huckabee—was saying, 'Well, we're still willing to have a negotiated settlement if they'll listen,' blah, blah, blah. And then you forced the issue. You went ahead and hit all this stuff."

So, you know, they would take some heat for that. And I think they're saying, "Let's just suck it up a little bit longer, ramp up the costs for the United States, and see if we can get them to launch something. Then we'll be free and clear." And then everyone will say, "Oh, well, you were the victim here. The United States came after you again, and now you're hitting back." It's all a dance. It's all a game. I mean, the fact that they're hitting these targets makes it pretty clear they're trying to spark something. And if they do, they're going to hit that stuff anyway. They've been very open about it.

But that's the diplomatic dance. That's the public relations dance. Everybody's trying to manipulate foreign audiences, influence their own audiences, and keep people happy. And the thing that really stands out to me in all this is that both sides are doing the same kind of thing. Nobody wants to

start the next round, but nobody's doing anything to actually reach a diplomatic solution. The United States isn't, and Iran isn't either, because Iran has these impossible demands. They know that no president could ever agree to all seven of those terms. They can't do it. They know that.

So they're offering a poison pill to make it look like diplomacy, because maybe some people will believe it. But President Trump is doing the same thing. When you listen to what Tom Cotton said, when you listen to what Mike Huckabee said, you know, these are official representatives of the United States. They're asking for things that no leader in Iran would ever agree to. So both sides claim they're looking for a diplomatic solution, but neither side is. Both sides have ramped up their militaries and are ready to go. So to me, the only question is what's going to spark this, because I don't see any possibility of this ending with a plan for both sides to walk away, and that's the last chance we have.

#Danny

I'm glad you brought up how perceptions of Iran might be influencing the way Iran is maneuvering right now in what Mojtaba Khamenei called the "no peace, no war" scenario that they want to break out of. What's interesting, I think, is that Donald Trump did sign the memorandum of understanding back in June, and it included those demands. I agree with you, Daniel: U.S. presidents can't meet those demands. That doesn't mean the demands aren't just or that they shouldn't be met. A lot of people look at those points and say, "Well, you know, you've been bombed, you've been sanctioned." And yeah, of course, there have been sanctions, bombings, and acts of aggression. But for a U.S. president, meeting those demands is incredibly difficult given the vested interests.

#Danny

Those are the interests they ultimately have to serve. But here's what Donald Trump said today, which I think gives a sense of what you were saying.

#Donald Trump

Since we established our naval blockade, not one ship from Iran has gotten through, except during a brief moratorium. And we learned that you can't trust them.

#Danny

So he's saying they had a moratorium. They had a deal, I guess, and he's actually acknowledging it. But he's saying you can't trust them, and that's what led to the current situation. What's your reaction to that, and how closely does it reflect reality?

#Daniel Davis

Okay, the memorandum of understanding was signed on the 17th of June in Versailles to great applause. Trump was bragging that he'd gotten the deal, and then, in a rare moment of coherence, he said, "Well, we had to sign this because if we kept going, our Strategic Petroleum Reserve was going to get too low, and I didn't want to be president during a depression." So he knew what the risk was if he continued the war. We had to get out of it. But then, according to sources I have inside the White House, he came under immediate and withering pressure from the pro-war lobby, the "war-luster lobby," as I call it.

A lot of the AIPAC folks, a lot of those who love the Israeli side and are obsessed with war, got to him. And then, within five days, if memory serves, he added a southern corridor through the Strait of Hormuz that we would control. Of course, that was nowhere in paragraph five. That paragraph gave Iran exclusive control over the Strait of Hormuz and said Iran would coordinate with Oman to figure out how this stuff was going to work. That was for 60 days. After that, Iran would work only with Oman to decide how things would work going forward. That's it. We were nowhere in there.

We had no role to play, but we took one. And of course, Iran said, "Hey, that's not in there." And when we started using that southern corridor, they warned us: "Hey, if you keep going down there, we're going to fire at you." And then, of course, they finally did. And we took that opportunity to say, "Oh, you broke the MOU and started attacking ships. So now we're going to attack you." And then we started that 13-day tit-for-tat situation, and the MOU was over. So now here's President Trump saying, "Well, yeah, I signed this MOU. I never thought it was a good idea. And you can't trust them." I mean, I think it's literally that way.

There's no connective tissue between "I got out of it" and "I can't trust Iran." Iran didn't break it. We did. Iran was doing what they were told. I mean, hell, it was only five days old when all this stuff started, so there wasn't really time for Iran to do anything. And we only did part of what we were supposed to do. We never followed through on paragraph one, which was to end the war on all fronts, especially in Lebanon. That never happened.

We didn't follow through on the other issue of releasing the frozen funds. That never happened. And of course, the idea of reparations never even got off the drawing board. So none of the things that Iran was looking for got done. And then we added something that wasn't in there because we wanted to kill the deal. We didn't want it to go through. We wanted to get back to war because that was the only thing that would satisfy these war lovers. So now you hear him saying, "We're looking for a deal." He keeps saying this over and over, nearly every day, some version of "We're looking for a deal" or "They're begging for a deal." What deal? I mean, seriously, it's not a rhetorical question.

What deal are you talking about? What's even on the table? What are we doing to negotiate? Because after the midterm election, you had the vice president of the United States himself working on finding a deal. He was trying to coordinate a direct meeting with Reza, Khamenei's senior military adviser. And then he took him off the task. So that leaves no one working on it. There's no diplomatic path. You're just threatening more war if they don't submit and surrender, basically. So

there's no path for diplomacy. The only thing left, then, is continued conflict. And at some point, it's going to blow up again. I don't know how it could be any different.

#Danny

You know, you mentioned war lovers, and I wanted to ask you about Ukraine. NATO is reportedly scrambling to hold an emergency meeting after a couple of missiles were said to have been fired into Poland. Dmitry Medvedev is saying that NATO has already violated Russia's nuclear doctrine and that this gives Russia a reason to use nuclear weapons if it really wanted to. What are your thoughts? The conflict in Ukraine has now extended beyond the region. Ukraine says it was defending itself when it struck a Russian warship in the port of Benghazi, Libya. How does this war factor into the plans and interests of these war lovers, as you call them? Because this war isn't de-escalating by any stretch of the imagination. Any stretch at all.

#Daniel Davis

I mean, when President Trump first came into office, you know, he made that grandiose claim that he was going to end the war and get it off the table in a day. And then it was, "Well, 100 days." And then, "All right, actually, it's more like six months." And then, "All right, well, Anchorage. That's going to be in, I think, August." And then it was, "Forget it." He just kind of quit trying for a long time. So everything he'd tried to do was just a complete failure.

He didn't succeed in doing anything. And the issue that was on the table at the beginning was NATO membership. Zelensky kept trying to get NATO membership the whole time, I mean, ever since 2019 at least, and it always failed. Now, they said, "You're going to be on the list later on. You're going to be there someday." But they didn't give him a Membership Action Plan, the MAP. They didn't give him a date or anything else. They just said, "Don't worry, you're going to get in." And so he was getting aggravated by that. He kept pressing them once the war started, but nobody would play. So when Trump comes into office, Zelensky tries again, and Trump just shoots it down cold. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth said, "No, we're not going to do it." So did Vice President Vance.

"We're not going to do it." Trump himself said NATO was not on the table for Ukraine. So just shut up. And they pretty much did. They kind of went dormant until now. Now, all of a sudden, seemingly out of nowhere, that's back at the forefront of the media narrative pushed by these war lusters. And right now, Friedrich Merz is at the forefront of that. Mark Rutte is openly talking about it again. You had Mr. Streeting, the UK defense secretary, praising Zelensky again and bringing back another trope from earlier in the war: that he's actually Churchill. And what's even more bizarre to me is that you have the UK defense secretary coming out and denigrating one of their national treasures, you know, Churchill, the former prime minister of World War II fame and all that.

And you want to say that this guy has what Churchill had when he's losing a war and has no prospect of winning it after five years? And so Zelensky is now flush with all this new boasting, flush

with Merz saying over the weekend, "The best lesson we've learned from the Russia-Ukraine war is that the best security we can have is to expand NATO." What do you think he means by that? Zelensky didn't wait to find out. He went on the offensive himself. At a European meeting—I think it was in Berlin—he says it again, and it's broadcast for everybody to hear: "Hey, man, don't talk about Article 5–like guarantees for us. I mean, if you're going to talk about that, then just give us Article 5. I mean, just give us NATO enlargement."

"Give us NATO membership. Isn't that better?" Blah, blah, blah. And what does anybody think the impact of this is in Russia when they see a Russian corvette, a warship, being sunk in Benghazi? It wasn't even related to this war. It was just vulnerable. It was out there operating and probably had no idea it was even at risk. And now it's at the bottom of the harbor. You've also had civilian tankers and cargo vessels sunk. And now there are some in the Baltic, some off Finland. I mean, we're expanding it. There was the attack on the Kerch Bridge. It's like we're just doing everything we can to provoke Russia outside the borders of Ukraine.

And of course, they continue to try to do things inside Russia's borders. They continue to provoke Russia. It appears to me that, far from seeking any kind of diplomatic solution, they're not even trying. And the U.S. seems to be helping, because we apparently provided some electronic warfare support for both the Kerch Bridge attack and the Benghazi attack. So whatever Trump's saying publicly, the CIA or the Pentagon, or both, seem to be helping Ukraine hit Russia like that. No one's looking for any kind of diplomacy, and everything is moving more and more toward escalation.

And so it's not just me, a vet, talking about nuclear weapons. Vladimir Putin was also talking about nuclear weapons over the weekend, and he made a point of telling Europe, "By the way, you don't have a nuclear early warning system like we do, like America does. You don't have one. And by the way, the few nuclear weapons you have are insignificant compared to how many we have. You don't want to get into a war with us, especially one that goes nuclear, because you won't survive it." And he said, "If anybody's thinking, 'Oh, well, if that happens, we've got America backing us up under Article 5,' you're going to get nuked."

And Putin looks right into the camera and says, "I doubt that very seriously." He's basically saying, "I'm willing to take that risk with your survival." So there's too much of this boisterous talk on both sides here, and it's bringing the specter of nuclear war, Danny, into the realm of the conceivable. And, of course, it has to be conceivable before it can become actionable. And that's why I think this is so dangerous. You've got Ukraine, you've got Europe, and you've even got some people in the United States still saying, you know, when this new Democratic Congress gets in, they need to start shoveling bucketloads of money into Ukraine again.

They have to win. Russia has to lose. All this kind of stuff. All this talk has been spun up in just the last few weeks. I'm not sure why this is, but it's clearly some kind of coordinated operation. It's putting all of us on the brink. I'm talking about civilization-altering paths that none of us want to go down, because it's just so terrifying to think about what could happen on the other side of that. But

we need to think about it because, unfortunately, these people aren't. They seem to think it's a game, and I promise you, it's not a game.

#Danny

Well, in the last 120 seconds or so that I have you, Colonel Davis, maybe you can comment quickly on this: Are Europe and Israel playing similar roles in escalating tensions on the two fronts we've talked about? Of course, there are plenty of people in the United States who are eager for war, but it seems the U.S. is trying to maintain some plausible deniability. All the reports say that Europe wants to escalate the war with Russia and that Israel wants to drag the U.S. back into the conflict on its front. Do you see them as playing similar roles, or are their roles different?

#Daniel Davis

Yeah, they're definitely playing similar roles. I just don't know whether they're coordinating directly. They could be. They could also just be on parallel tracks. I don't know. But I know a lot of these people who lust for war have the same views on Ukraine as they do on Israel. They seem to be taking the same position, and they seem oblivious to the potential consequences. So I'm not really sure whether there's, you know, some secret cabal of people supporting both and pulling the strings in both cases. I don't know. I don't rule that out, because it's very possible, especially given how we see these things happening in parallel. Or it could just be a coincidence. I don't know. But one thing I can tell you with absolute confidence is that this mentality of lusting for war, which is present in both cases, had better be checked, or it's going to destroy all of us.

#Danny

Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis, host of Deep Dive with Daniel Davis. Everyone should subscribe to that YouTube channel. Thanks so much for joining me. I'll have to have you on again very soon. I know you've got a lot of work to do, so I'll let you go. Thanks so much. Appreciate it, Danny.

#Daniel Davis

Thank you very much, and I hope you and all your viewers have a happy Thanksgiving. Thank you.

#Danny

Appreciate that.

#Donald Trump

You too. Bye-bye.

#Danny

All right, everybody. We've got plenty more show to go. I'm going to do some analysis with all of you. If you're just tuning in and you missed Daniel Davis, you can rewind any of my streams to the beginning. So you can watch from the beginning and catch this second half afterward. And everyone, hit the like button as we finish up the program here. Let's talk about these F-35s, because that was our opening story today. It's still very fresh, and these incidents are happening a lot more often. I don't know if you've noticed, but during this so-called lull—or, as Donald Trump called it, a moratorium—since the Memorandum of Understanding was signed, we've had a lot of F-35 issues. We've had a lot of F-35 emergency alerts, squawks, and emergency landings. And there's been a lot of mystery about what's actually going on.

But I think it's highly likely that a lot of this is happening because Iran is firing on these aircraft. They do have air defense missiles that can do that. Or they could be causing problems through electronic warfare, like jamming. But we also have to look at the aircraft themselves. They're touted as the cutting edge of U.S. Air Force hardware, but even the Government Accountability Office found in its report that a lot needs to be done to sustain the F-35 and address its persistent readiness problems. Well, the United States has been at war with Iran since February 28th, and in many respects, these aircraft aren't even ready to take part in these kinds of operations.

The F-35 is the Department of Defense's most costly weapons system, but it hasn't met its performance goals, and the cost of sustaining the aircraft continues to rise. The Pentagon has launched a $13.7 billion strategy to improve F-35 readiness by 2030. It aims to address challenges they've identified, like a lack of spare parts. But the Government Accountability Office found that several issues could threaten its success, including the industry's limited capacity to meet rising demand for parts. Well, let's look at the highlights. The mission-capable rate is the percentage of time an aircraft can perform one of its assigned missions. For example, that mission might be to fly over a tanker in the Strait of Hormuz that's hugging the Omani line.

And of course, you know, the UAE has a coastline there too. If these tankers are supposed to hug that line with F-35s flying overhead, the mission-capable rate—the percentage of time the aircraft can actually perform a task like that—fell from 67% in 2021 to 44% in 2025. So this aircraft is actually getting worse over time. The full mission-capable rate—the percentage of time an aircraft can perform all of its assigned missions, not just one—fell from 38% to 25% over that same period. So in many respects, this aircraft is actually pretty unusable. And in response, the Pentagon has updated its strategy and plans to spend $13.7 billion. See, this is how it works, right?

The military-industrial complex produces absolute junk. I mean, the United States is supposed to have the strongest military. It's supposed to have the most advanced military. And it spends, you know, $1.5 trillion under Pete Hegseth's military budget. Before that, it was nearly a trillion. Before that, it was $900 billion, $800 billion. Do you see what I mean? Over successive administrations, going back at least to the George W. Bush era and the war on terror, if not earlier, the military

budget has gone up from something like $600 billion to over $1.5 trillion. And yet they're investing all this money in things like this that constantly need to be repaired. So do you see what's happening here?

It's not just that the United States lusts for war, as Daniel Davis said. That's 100% true. The neocons, they lust for war. And there are profiteers who lust for war. But they're also enshittifying things. They're making products that are meant to keep churning out contracts for themselves so they can rake in even more profits. And this is what has made the U.S. military, in some respects, what some call a paper tiger. It's not that it lacks the capacity to maim, to kill, to destroy. It's that this capacity not only has severe limitations but is also rooted in a military that's actually much weaker when it comes to affecting outcomes and achieving what militaries are supposed to achieve: political goals.

Militaries aren't just there. We don't call a single weapon or a single aircraft a military. No, militaries are formations, bodies of armed people with technology at their disposal, organized to use violence. Some militaries claim they're there for self-defense, and maybe they're justified in that claim. The Iranian military, for example. But many militaries also take an offensive posture, like those of the United States and Israel. And these bodies of armed people are supposed to achieve political goals.

And these F-35s are ostensibly there to help them achieve those political goals. But as you can see, there's a massive decline in their capacity to do that. And here's a little graph. It compares the minimum full mission-capable rates contractors need to meet to receive a portion of their incentive fees with the rates the services require. And here you see just how badly things are going for them. So why did the GAO do this study? It's because the F-35 is the Department of Defense's most costly weapons system, with lifetime sustainment costs for the United States alone estimated at $1.6 trillion. So get that: lifetime sustainment costs for the United States.

So the lifetime sustainment costs for the entire F-35 fleet—if you call it a fleet; I don't know what the military term is—are $1.6 trillion. That's as of 2024. The DoD sustains 800 of them and plans to buy about 1,700 more aircraft by the mid-2020s. The DoD uses the F-35 to perform a wide range of missions, like what's happening in the Strait of Hormuz with this so-called plan to open it up. The strait was open before, but now they're supposed to open it up by escorting these tankers. And that takes a lot of fuel. That puts a lot of wear and tear on the aircraft.

They don't just have to take off. They have to refuel and then carry out the mission. And they have to do it every single day. Every single day, for as long as the United States maintains the blockade, keeps the war going, and threatens to attack again in a bigger operation. As long as this war continues as it is, all those aircraft need to be sustained: the F-35s, the Osprey that Daniel Davis talked about, the naval helicopter, and the F-16 that was fired on. Iran did take credit for that a couple of days ago. Was it three or four days ago? And keeping all those aircraft going is becoming incredibly difficult for the United States.

Now, of course, I asked about Israel's role here, but I'm not drawing any conclusions about Israel based on this situation alone. And here's Iran International. Okay, they're saying that Israel is warning about Iranian chemical weapons as Iran vows to break the blockade. So you have Israel, right? And I believe the role it plays is that of an attack dog. And it's become a very powerful one in terms of its influence on the United States. And now it's even concocting a narrative—very poorly, very ineffectively, mind you—that's meant to blame Iran and make it look like Iran is developing chemical weapons. Meanwhile, Israel has used biological weapons, and it uses white phosphorus all the time.

And of course, it commits war crimes against Palestinians every single day. I just read a report that Palestinians are lining their tents with sandbags all over Gaza, in refugee camps and other camps where they've had to huddle because their homes were destroyed. They're using sandbags to protect themselves from Israeli gunfire now that Israel has resumed military operations there. So, of course, it's pretty rich and pretty ironic that Israelis are saying Iran is the one developing chemical weapons. But it all goes back to this question: What role is Israel actually playing? Some people believe Israel is just running the show. But in my view, it's the warmongers, the neocons, the Washington consensus, the elites, the ruling class—whatever you want to call them.

The people at the top in Washington, in the military-industrial complex, and on Wall Street value Israel as much as Israel values them. They use Israel to give themselves plausible deniability. That allows them to sic this attack dog on the region and then try to come in and take advantage of the spoils. But it's getting more difficult to do that. I mean, chemical weapons, right? They're blaming Iran for chemical weapons after AI mistargeted the school in Minab, killing more than 160 children—168, I believe. And thousands of Iranians have been killed. People have disputed this with me. They've said, "Danny, thousands of Iranians haven't been killed in this war." Well, no. Thousands of Iranians were killed in the war.

Why are U.S. and Israeli munitions so depleted after this one campaign, with 40 days of intense strikes? It's because they hit something like 20,000 targets. A lot of those were civilian targets, and a lot of people were killed as a result. So yes, thousands of Iranians were killed in this war, and it severely depleted U.S. munitions. And so when it comes to Israel, you know, we have to ask ourselves, okay, then what is its role? Well, its role is to be the force that keeps the war going when all the pressure, all the momentum, is toward stopping it. There are so many interests behind this war, right? So many of those interests have failed.

And now there needs to be a breather. I say this all the time. We can see the facts. This isn't even an opinion. It's obvious that the United States needs a breather—the military, the empire. But Israel is the force that allows the people lusting for war—the warmongers, the neocons—to keep pushing forward, even against the grain of the material reality on the ground. So Israel is playing that role, keeping the war going even as the momentum shifts in the opposite direction. It's like, okay, you've

got to tap out. You've got to take a break. You know, you've got to let some time pass before you can try to do this again, because, again, it's not as if the interests are changing. It's not as if the aims are changing. No, it's just a matter of how and when this war is actually fought.

Israel plays the role of pulling the United States back in, even though we know that the Washington consensus—the elites, the neocons—wants the war. They want the war, and they're actually the architects of it, even though many people would say Israel is the architect of this war. Now, the United States has been fighting this war since 1979. They wanted the revolution in Iran gone. They wanted the Islamic Republic gone. They've wanted to turn Iran back into what it was under the Shah: a compliant state that would basically allow the United States to control and own the key to Eurasia. That would give the United States enormous influence over what happens east of Iran and, of course, across West Asia and into Europe.

Iran sits in a key geostrategic location. The United States not only wants to undermine Iran's ability to use its vast wealth and resources to develop itself and the rest of the world, but it also wants to use Iran's geostrategic position for its own benefit. So we shouldn't downplay or underestimate the role of the U.S. government. I don't mean the American people. But again, this is tricky. People in the United States have no control over U.S. foreign policy, no way to influence it. Still, when a government that claims to represent you does things you don't agree with, there has to be accountability—actually, a good amount of it. And that includes voting against what the government is doing.

Unfortunately, swapping the party in power for the other one doesn't work in the United States. I don't know if you saw this, but right after NVIDIA's Jensen Huang got the go-ahead to resume chip sales, Hakeem Jeffries said, "No, we're not going to let the Chinese Communist Party import our great chips. We're really going to clamp down when we come in." That's the mentality. It's a hawkish Cold War mentality. Even someone like Jensen Huang, one of the most influential corporate leaders in the United States, maybe even in the world, can come under attack on those grounds. That's how deep the lust for war goes.

And that's why, when Daniel Davis talks about "war lusting," it really does describe what's going on with the whole regime in Washington, both economic and political. On top of that, there are major escalations on the European front. It seems like this happens every winter. I don't know if you remember the last couple of winters, right? We almost had a nuclear provocation in 2024. I don't know if you remember, but Joe Biden authorized ATACMS missiles to be fired into Russia. Then Russia used the Oreshnik missile as a demonstration, basically to say, "Don't do that." Well, now it seems like this is happening over and over again. As fall gives way to winter, we're seeing this conflict flare up again.

And it's getting to the point where major publications are talking in a very reckless way. For example, the Washington Examiner says here, "NATO fails Russia's missile test, and the next test may involve dead Europeans." The article talks about what happened in Poland: "Last Friday, when

Russia supposedly crashed two missiles and a drone deep inside Polish territory, no one was injured. One of the munitions was a Kh-101 cruise missile launched by a bomber aircraft. This missile is accurate and expensive. While another missile was fired into Poland back in July, the fact that this most recent attack involved three separate weapons further indicates that it was deliberate rather than accidental. So does the fact that the Kh-101 landed just 50 miles from an area where European militaries were engaged in a major exercise."

"That exercise is focused on providing a tripwire for Ukraine should an agreement be reached to end the war. Regardless, Russia has scored another win here." So you see the language they're using. Despite all the provocations by Europe and the United States against Russia, we're being told that Russia is the one winning here because it's provoking Europe without getting a response. Again, this is an admission that the whole point of the European project right now, politically and economically, is to prepare for a big, big war. It's not to develop European economies so that people can prosper. It's not to integrate those economies so that people and the planet have a better chance of not just weathering economic headwinds, but also building a better life for everyone on this planet.

No, the entire European project right now is being pushed toward a major war with Russia. And again, we have to say that this is happening at the behest of the United States. It wasn't Europe that drew up the Wolfowitz Doctrine, which said Russia was going to be carved up after the Soviet Union collapsed. And though we know many European leaders were very much okay with this, it wasn't the Europeans who took the lead in the Cold War, pressing for the collapse of the Soviet Union and then trying to dismember Russia and plunge the country into nearly a decade of humiliation.

The Europeans didn't lead that effort, as much as many leaders in the new, so-called unified Germany and other European Union countries would have you believe. They certainly supported it, but it's a U.S. project, right? The U.S. project to contain Russia didn't just go away because Donald Trump decided that Vladimir Putin was his friend. And for both political and very real geopolitical reasons, the United States just doesn't have what it takes to confront Russia on its own and can't afford to look like the aggressor.

The fact of the matter is that there are hawks all across Washington, including those coming into this new Congress, who want to double down. They want to spend tens of billions of dollars more to supply Ukraine with weapons that haven't even been produced yet. But they want to keep this war going. Okay, so do not let the optics of politics fool you, because this is all about the facts on the ground and what history has shown us. It's not simply a matter of what a politician says. Hell, it's not even a matter of what a politician does on camera. When a lot of people see Donald Trump shake Vladimir Putin's hand, they say, "Wow, Russia and the United States are friends."

No, if Russia and the United States were friends, the conflict in Ukraine—the proxy war—would be over, because friends don't treat friends that way unless you have really bad friends. I just want to show you that because right now, NATO is holding a series of meetings there, you know? If there's

one thing that's true about that article, it's that Europe has had a tepid response to what are, in a lot of ways, just kind of fabricated stories about Russian aggression. And in this case, even if Russia did fire those missiles, the article literally just said that Poland was the site of a massive military exercise against Russia. These exercises happen all the time.

There's an active war going on. And, of course, Ukraine has already taken this war beyond the so-called battle lines. It's gone so far as to try to sink Russian assets and strike Russian assets in Libya, right? Of course, we have to understand that Ukraine doesn't do this on its own. Ukraine is a proxy. It's now become a very empowered proxy, though not one that has the same stature and prestige in the United States as, let's say, Israel. Israel is given so much cover that it can talk about being almost like a regional hegemon, a colonial state that seeks to throw its weight around and, of course, use the violence, genocide, and all of that that goes with it to try to exert power in the region.

And it does so with the full backing of the United States. Ukraine also has the full backing of the United States in many respects, but that backing just isn't as meaningful, as politically powerful, or as politically influential. If there's one thing that's changed under the Trump administration, it's that there have been more rifts. That's happened out of necessity because things have kind of run out. Military assets have run out. Air defenses have run out. When things run out, it doesn't matter what you think. If you don't have the air defense systems, the Patriot batteries, and so on to give to Ukraine, well, Ukraine just isn't going to get them.

And you need better optics than just saying, "We're not very capable of doing this." Well, of course, then you start creating rifts and conflicts. Many people view Donald Trump, as president, as someone who isn't intelligent. But make no mistake: there are different kinds of intelligence. And in a setting as evil, as twisted, and as absolutely dangerous to humanity as Washington, Donald Trump does have some intelligence when it comes to shaping the optics and creating a spectacle. Even if it doesn't make him look good or competent or whatever, it does draw some attention away from the real facts on the ground. So some people will say, "Well, then he's giving us, you know, alternative facts and all that."

No, actually, what matters more to the Trump administration and to Donald Trump himself is putting on a spectacle so that even if the facts on the ground can't be hidden, they seem less significant to a lot of people who are following what's happening. They're busy watching Donald Trump yell at Zelensky, but they're not paying attention to the fact that the United States doesn't have the weapons to supply Ukraine anymore. They've drained U.S. stockpiles, and the war with Iran has made that even worse. And yet you're still paying for it. It's still causing major economic problems and, of course, a humanitarian catastrophe in so many respects. So that's what they don't want you to pay attention to.

They want you to pay attention to the optics around Donald Trump: "Oh, he doesn't really like Ukraine. He's angry with Zelensky. They don't like each other." All of that could be 100 percent true.

Hell, it probably is true, right? It's not as if any of these people are very likable. And unlikable people don't like each other either because, well, they're just insufferable. You know, try hanging out with these people. Most of us don't have access to people like that. In any event, everybody, I want to cover these developments for you because I think there's a bigger picture here that we need to talk about. To really understand what's going on in these conflicts, we have to look a bit deeper than what meets the eye.

And so I hope you enjoy today's show. Please do hit the like button before you go. Tomorrow, at the same time, 3 p.m. Eastern, I'll have Larry Johnson and Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson on the program to continue the conversation, go over the day's developments, and dig deeper into them. That way, we can keep building our understanding of what's happening in the world, how these forces are moving and why, and why Iran, the U.S. empire, Israel, and all these other forces are acting the way they are. We'll talk more about the Russia-Ukraine conflict, too. I think we'll have a lot of reports to discuss that will be important to all of us and to the world.

I just want to put in a plug for subscribing to the channel as well as hitting the like button, because I think YouTube has been making a big effort to scrub its subscriber rolls as part of a massive cleanup of so-called AI bots and all that. But the truth is, a lot of people get caught in the crossfire. I know a lot of people watch the show when it pops up in their home feeds. If you happen to be one of those people, please subscribe to the channel. It definitely helps keep the channel growing. But hitting the like button, of course, is the best thing you can do to boost the show so more people see it. And if there's anything you'd like to talk about, leave a comment below.

And as we head into the holidays, there are plenty of ways to support the channel, including Patreon and Substack. I've been posting transcripts of these interviews on both for those who prefer to read what we discuss on the show. Some people learn better that way. So please subscribe there if you'd like to support the channel. All right, everybody, hit that like button and save the date: November 25th at 3 p.m. Eastern, with Larry Johnson and Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson. I'll see you on the next show. Bye-bye.