

Patrick Henningsen: Iran Strikes US Bases in Jordan – Retaliation Begins

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Wednesday, June 10th, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Patrick Henningsen, is here with us. Welcome back, Patrick.

#Patrick

Pleasure to be with you, Nima. Thank you very much.

#Nima

Patrick, we had a confrontation between Iran and Israel after Israel attacked Dahia in the southern part of Lebanon. Iran attacked Israel, and the Iranian attack was basically focused on the northern part of Israel. Then Israel attacked Iran. And from what I've learned about the Israeli attack on Iran, it wasn't a big deal. They didn't hit the targets, or those targets were not that significant in the eyes of the Iranians. And then the Iranian response to what Israel did — they were hitting bases. The Israelis were telling us that they intercepted everything, no damage, nothing happened. Then the footage came out showing that Ramat David Air Base was hit.

Today, Israel accepted that after releasing those footages, coming out and saying that we are investigating the whole case of these missiles hitting the airbase. But they said no casualties, no damage so far. The investigation is going on. Then suddenly, yesterday, Donald Trump came out and said that there was an attack on an Apache helicopter in the Persian Gulf patrolling the Strait of Hormuz. It was shot, it was hit by something. Iran hit the helicopter. The two pilots are alive, they're safe, uninjured, nothing has happened to them, which was so amazing to hear. And he said he is going to respond. Later on, he said, no, that wasn't a big deal, we may not respond.

And then in his interview with CBS later, after the comment that it wasn't a big deal, he said that we may respond to that. So our understanding was that he's going to respond. It's going to be a limited response on the part of the United States. Then they attacked last night. They attacked Sirik Island, Peshma Island, and the port of Jask. They hit the targets. A telecommunications tower was hit in

Sirik. Two water tanks were hit. Then we had the Iranian response to what the United States did, and the attack was on Bahrain, Kuwait, and Jordan. The Iranians said that they hit 21 targets, or they targeted 21 important locations, in the case of the American air bases or the sensitive areas in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan.

That's all, that's the whole case of what has happened so far. Today, Donald Trump said that he's going to—basically, what he's talking about, he says Iran's military is a complete and total mess. Much of it, like their Navy and Air Force, doesn't even exist anymore. They have been completely defeated. Iran is all talk and no action. The bully of the Middle East is dead. They have taken too long to negotiate a deal that would have been great for them. Now they will have to pay the price. It means that my understanding is that there is no point in negotiating with the United States anymore. So what is your understanding? What has happened? And what do you make of what Donald Trump is talking about?

#Patrick

The thing is, Nima, that's what he's saying today, or this morning, Washington time. It might be something completely different by the time he goes to bed tonight, and then something different altogether tomorrow morning. So I can't really put any currency in "they're going to have to pay the ultimate price." And you could see him in an interview later tomorrow or something saying, "Well, I think we can meet with the Supreme Leader. He seems like a nice guy, seems like a good, strong young man." He'll give all of this back and forth. Donald Trump's advocates say, "This is what we love about this president."

He's so unpredictable. He's not like those other presidents, those other weak leaders like Biden, who was so predictable. Trump is unpredictable, and that's what makes his enemies afraid of him, because they don't know what he's going to do next. Well, I got a newsflash for you: Donald Trump doesn't know what he's going to do next either. So that's the part that's not in Sun Tzu's Art of War, which is, if you don't know what you're doing, your enemy doesn't either. And that's the problem here. And there is no strategy from the U.S. right now. They've backed themselves so deeply into these positions.

A lot of them are based on false assumptions, premises, propaganda, and just outright lies. And they spend a lot of time managing the information space, as you know. There's also the profiteering on the back of the oil and the stock markets that's been going continuously with this administration. So first of all, I'm going to have to say I'm not convinced—I see conflicting reports on whether Iran actually shot down this Black Hawk helicopter. The U.S. or CNN reported that it was a Shahed drone that hit. I know Shahed drones don't travel that fast, so how it hit a Black Hawk helicopter, I'm not sure. Some Iranian sources have said that they believe the helicopter crashed and wasn't necessarily hit.

Now, that does happen a lot. And with the amount of air sorties and missions you're flying, the odds are that there are going to be malfunctions and there's going to be a crash. Not to mention, in terms of maintenance and staging and things like that, any Black Hawk helicopter in the Strait of Hormuz is out of area, quite frankly. And they're already stretching. So there are questions around what this is. One thing I can say, if I believe that it crashed rather than was shot down, that means it's a false flag by definition. Because if it crashed and then they're using it to claim it was shot down and then using that as a pretext for escalation, that by definition is a false flag.

The United States is using their own military assets and crashing or whatever. In no way is it a proportional response by the U.S. They claim that the pilots were rescued. Now, were the pilots rescued or not? We don't know. Are they ever going to be named? Probably not. Like the Isfahan failed raid to grab the nuclear dust. Where is Private Ryan? Private Ryan doesn't have a name still. He should be a hero. There should be a Hollywood blockbuster film about his daring rescue, you know, the daring rescue of this airman in Iran. So what can we believe from the U.S.? Nothing. Nothing. It doesn't make any sense at all. And even if it was true, the Strait of Hormuz is not an area to patrol. It's not international waters. That is Omani and Iranian territory, full stop.

The U.S. has no business and no right whatsoever to be flying Black Hawk helicopters around enforcing a naval blockade there. And they're already using U.S. aircraft to fire at empty tankers, ships they claim are sanctioned. This is just outright piracy and kind of international racketeering. That's the best way to describe what they're doing. So they're caught in this situation that they absolutely can't back out of. And there's only going to be more and more triggers for escalation. So you could just have this long-running, relatively low-intensity conflict to save face, to be involved, not to get things too escalated with Iran, but just enough to justify the U.S. and give time for the rearmament of Israel and the U.S., of what positions they do have left in the region.

So that's one way of looking at it. The other way is if there is a massive escalation, like if you took Trump's word on the threat he issued just recently that Iran's going to pay the price—well, how long can the U.S. sustain a major escalation? Barrage at Iran, two weeks max, two weeks max. And what's the retaliation going to be from Iran? It's going to be massive. It's going to be massive. And if, for instance—I'll give you an example, Nima—reports suggest that Israeli F-35s received air-to-air refueling support over Saudi Arabian airspace.

If that's true, and it looks to me like it is, then Saudi bases become fair game. But guess what else becomes fair game? Saudi allowed Israel and the U.S. to use airspace to fly through Iraq and then to attack Iran. That means Ben Gurion Airport, which is used to house all of the U.S. air-to-air refueling tankers—60-plus aircraft of that type, I'm led to believe, based on the photographs and what people reported—then Ben Gurion Airport becomes at the top of the target bank list. Now, I just can't see how you could get out of this conundrum if you're the U.S. or Israel.

Because Israelis who are desperate to flee during a time of war, if that airport is wiped out or rendered inoperable, it's already de facto—hundreds of flights have been canceled because there's no room on the tarmac for any more passenger airlines, because they're full of U.S. military aircraft. Imagine if Ben Gurion Airport comes under Iranian missile strikes—sustained Yemeni and Iranian missile strikes and Hezbollah drone attacks. Then what? What are the people of Israel going to do? They're going to beg the world to send boats to Haifa, and they're going to evacuate them to Cyprus and Albania so they could stay on, maybe build some settlements on Kushner's Island—but that's not going to happen. So I just don't think—I can't see this as sustainable. None of this is sustainable.

So, yeah, it's hard. I know you want—people want to hear an answer of, you know, what do you think Trump's going to do? But he just flip-flops constantly, so it's impossible to say what his position is at any given moment. I'm just looking at the math on what each side has in position, what munitions and military assets it can expend. And Iran has the advantage in the balance of force in the region by nature of their missile and drone fleets and by nature of the fact that they effectively control the Strait of Hormuz. And the U.S. blockade is just a nuisance. And it's not impervious either as a blockade. Ships are getting through. It can continue to, you know, fire at commercial ships using the U.S. military to destroy unarmed ships. For the U.S., that's kind of embarrassing.

But is that the best use of the world's most powerful military in the history of Earth, which the U.S. is constantly touting every five minutes? And all you can do is blow up empty boats? Because that seems like the majority of the activity of the U.S. military. That's kind of a ridiculous embarrassment at the moment. And again, that's not sustainable either. So they can only run this blockade, this sort of sham of a blockade, for not much longer actually—not much longer. And it's not really effective either. There are all sorts of workarounds that have already been charted around it, either via sea or over land or along the Iranian southern coast. So it's really something as a political showpiece for Trump back at home. But besides that, very little in terms of utility.

#Nima

My understanding, Patrick, is that the response of the United States was a response to what Iran did against Israel, the latest round of attacks. The Iranian attack on Israel, because Israel has shown no capabilities with their offensive attack on Iran. You know, the country doesn't have the capabilities when it comes to the offensive, when it comes to their defense system. So, for those people who are arguing that Israel without the United States is going to be able to do anything in West Asia, I think that's delusional. That's totally delusional. That's why they're not going to let the United States leave the region. That's the ultimate goal. There is no way for the United States to get out of the region. I don't see that happening with the Trump administration and these people, these ultra-Zionists in the United States. They're going to stay there in Jordan, maybe in Israel, in Diego Garcia, in Greece, and they're going to manage something there to stay there.

#Patrick

Well, they won't leave. They won't leave voluntarily, but they could leave by force. And that's definitely a distinct possibility. What form that takes and along what timeline, that's another question altogether. But if you look at, I mean, the fact that they're using Ben Gurion Airport, a civilian airport, as their main air staging ground in West Asia, that is just a level of desperation that's hard to comprehend, quite frankly. But that's kind of what they're left with. And the reason they're left with that is because Iran has done something that maybe a lot of people didn't expect, which is that they treated all the GCC countries as co-belligerents when this conflict, this round of shooting, began.

And by doing that, they basically rendered the U.S. geostrategic military footprint in the region pretty much useless. So they managed to put pressure on all of the U.S. allies for participating in this, and then the economic damage and deprivation that's come as a result to Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia is significant. And it has worked, it has worked. It hasn't completely deterred the U.S., certainly not Israel, but it's severely hampered the United States to the point where they have very limited options when striking Iran, very limited options now. They've played out all these hands. Iran has been hammering covert facilities in Iraqi Kurdistan, in the KRG, hammering them. That's huge.

That's huge because that's been the real ace card that the U.S. and Israel have held since the beginning of this fighting. And so that, and dismantling a lot of the U.S. intelligence and spy networks and collaborators and agent provocateurs within Iran, so definitely the tide has turned. Iran has the upper hand, there's no doubt about that—geopolitically, militarily, and also economically. There's very little the U.S. can do in terms of sanctioning to hurt or damage Iran that hasn't already been done. And all they're doing anyway is forcing more people out of the dollar in Asia as a whole and globally as well, and also just really fast-tracking China's Belt and Road network and other sort of overland solutions.

And, you know, they can arm the Baluchi terrorist separatist groups and, you know, get them to carry out terrorist attacks in the Pakistani port of Gwadar and do all of these things to disrupt and sabotage China's Belt and Road Economic Network, which is a land, sea, rail, road—land and sea combined—network, an economic network of trade and distribution and supplies and things like that. You can keep doing that, but there's only so much you can— you can only go so far with this. The U.S. strategy, all they have left is sabotage, is disruption and sabotage. That's all they have left. They are absolutely accelerating it.

And the more other countries get cut off from that network, i.e. U.S. allies or Arabs under normalization policies, it's going to restrict their economic opportunities as well. So it's not going to be good for them economically, much in the same way that Europe has kind of strangled itself off by sanctioning Russia, and it's kind of destroyed—it's suicided—its own economy by doing that. So these things are not going in favor of the United States. What the U.S. has tried to do, which Iran has also broken—the U.S. has tried so hard, as Israel has, to compartmentalize this conflict in Gaza, into Lebanon, and with Iran, and saying that, oh, well, this is between the U.S. and Iran.

No, it's not. It's the U.S., Israel, and Iran. And the U.S. is always trying to portray itself as a neutral country, a broker on this. They started the war, they're backing Israel, they're arming Israel, they're providing every sub-level of support to them militarily, and then pretending that they're, you know, playing referee in the middle. And nobody believes it anymore, but they have to do that because Israel relies on that compartmentalization. While the U.S. is fighting Iran, they're going and destroying and massacring people in South Lebanon and massacring Palestinians in Gaza. And they need the world to see these as separate conflicts. This is a really important part of the Israeli deception, of how they deceive the world in their sort of disingenuous framing.

And what Iran is saying is, no, the source of all hostility, all death, all destruction in the region is Israel. It's the Zionist entity. And we have proof, because as soon as Iran fired missiles the last few days at Israel, what did Israel go do? The first thing they did was shut off aid to the people in Gaza. First thing they did. So Israel is saying, we're going to punish the Palestinians for what the Iranians have done. How dare they have the nerve to fire missiles at us? We're going to punish those Palestinians. And we're going to use the Palestinians as leverage against the Iranians. That's exactly what Israel is doing. So there's evidence there. So Iran doesn't have to make a case.

Israel has demonstrated that it's using the people of Lebanon and the people of Gaza as leverage, as leverage against Iran. And so by extension, the U.S., by allowing the compartmentalization, is also allowing Israel to do that. So Iran's drawn the red line, said, you bomb Beirut, we're going to—there's no ceasefire—we're going to hit targets in Israel and hit them hard, and we're going to hit U. S. bases, and they did. So Iran's drawing the red lines now, and the U.S. and Israel have to react or not react, whatever the case may be. But so now Iran is setting the pace. That's what changed this week. Iran is now leading the pace of action-reaction. That's a big difference from where it was before.

They achieve this by being patient during this lull in hostilities and then coming out with a very clear strategic doctrine and policy, and drawing red lines. And only—and I will argue this, Nima—in international relations, it's my belief through the literature, through my studies, and through what many other great scholars have intimated, that in the international system, the system bends in favor of normative powers over time. Rogue states—the system does not bend in favor of normative—rogue states can create problems temporarily, but in the long run, they're going to be overtaken by other normative powers who are bandwagoning together, and stability will be achieved through those normative forces.

Iran is acting like a normative power. More and more, more and more. Only a normative power can draw a moral red line. Weaker states can't do that. They can't enforce it either. Iran has drawn it and is enforcing it. That is, you could argue, that's what superpowers are able to do, but at the very least, a mid-tier regional power and a normative actor in the international system. So other normative actors—China, Russia, European countries—European countries have to recognize this course of actions and reactions because they themselves abide by the same rules in the international system, or they have to. The U.S. doesn't have to abide by international law norms or anything like

that. It can take it and leave it as it suits it because it's established itself as a global hegemon. And Israel's allied and tethered to the U.S. It also does not have to abide by any human rights conventions, any international law, any norms whatsoever. And they don't. And they've proven they don't.

But that's the irony of the international system: while the top power doesn't need to play by the rules, the rest of the system must come together and have to, even if they don't believe in international law, don't believe the U.S. will ever abide by it, or their ally Israel, or Britain, for instance, when they're allied with the U.S. doing these very same activities. The rest of the world must, because if they don't, there'll be total chaos in the international system, and more countries will lose as a result of that should hostilities careen out of control. So, Iran's now stepped into that position, and let me tell you, many people could not have predicted that three months ago. And it's happening—it's incredible how it's happened—and it's been very subtle. But as long as they stick—and what I'll say, Nima, last thing on this—if Iran sticks to its principles and does not budge, and includes Lebanon in any ceasefire packages, and does not budge, does not give any ground whatsoever, the longer they maintain this position, the other normative powers in the international system will see that.

That's more bankable. It's more predictable. You can invest in that, right? They're eventually going to blame Israel as the source of the instability, and probably the United States as well, ultimately, which many already are. But it will become very clear. So then that opens the door for other countries to take action, either through sanctioning or diplomatic pressure. And all Iran has to do is maintain its position, its policy, don't budge, maintain their red line, enforce the red line, and all of a sudden, if Iran is immovable on these conditions, then other countries will have to conform to that. And you look at what's happening already—look at the fighting between Israel and the U.S. politically. There are some serious shouting matches and insults going back and forth in the U.S., the Zionist camp against Trump, the U.S. against Israel, Israel against the U.S. That's all because of Iran.

That's because Iran drew this red line. That is the cause of that infighting. So Iran's already created political friction between its two enemies who are supposed to be the best of allies. And that's as a result of what they have done. They could have not done it that way. They could have kept it compartmentalized and said, we don't want to worry about Lebanon. It's going to complicate our situation here. Let's just focus on Iran and the U.S. or whatever, our security.

And don't worry about Israel, and don't speak about Palestine. That's what most countries would do. But a superpower or a regional power can do more than that. And Iran is doing just that. And look at the results. They can sit back and watch their enemies start sniping at each other, arguing with each other about what to do, what not to do. Look at Lebanon. I mean, Nima, did you see the interview with Christiane Amanpour and Joseph Aoun, the Lebanese president, just a few days ago? Did you see how strident and how Aoun was just slagging off the Iranians and Hezbollah, wagging his finger and saying, you can't interfere in our affairs and whatnot? But guess what? What's he been saying in the last 24 hours? Oh, Israel cannot have total security, and warfare is not a solution.

Before, he was saying, we want good relations with Israel. Please, Israelis, please bomb us all you want. But we're not going to do anything against you. We're going to be a good little neighbor. But the problem is Hezbollah and those Iranians, blaming everything Israel is doing on Hezbollah and Iran. He's now flipped. The reason he's flipped is because the pressure is accumulating on him as a puppet, as a proxy of Washington, of Riyadh, and Tel Aviv. He's feeling the pressure because of this. And that's because of what Iran has done. Not necessarily because of Hezbollah's resistance and steadfastness — that's been a constant — but because Iran stepped up as a regional power and drew the line and forced it. That is, look, it's just amazing. I'm watching all the shifts in position after this week. To me, it's incredible.

#Nima

I think when he says, Donald Trump says, "All talk, no action," it reminds me of what he was talking about during the presidential election against Joe Biden. He's really feeling that he's running the show. The enemy somehow is the rival. But this is not the rival. This is totally different. They have done each and everything that they told us before this war started. They said, "We're going to close the Strait of Hormuz." They did. They said they're going to hit each and every base in the region, American bases in the region. They did that. What you just mentioned, I think, is so important. This is the first time—to understand how significant this shift is in the Iranian strategy in the region—this is the first time Iran is attacking Israel without being attacked by the Israeli government.

#Patrick

Exactly.

#Nima

That's the whole point of what has happened so far, and nobody seems to believe that in Israel. There's so much shock at the reality of what's going on.

#Patrick

Who acts first sets the pace of actions and reactions. And the U.S. always acts first. They always do preemptive strikes. And they know that strategically they're able to then control and modulate the escalation ladder, as it were, and what their opponents might or might not do. And Iran waited, waited, waited, and waited. And while they're waiting, the political situation is deteriorating in America for Trump and in Israel for Netanyahu. And it's also created—this whole situation this week has created loads of new problems politically inside Israel with the Netanyahu regime. It might not be significant.

It's not going to change the ambitions of the Zionist state, but it's going to basically, I think, create a lot of indecision and delays, and a lot of people will send questions, even in the military, will begin to

question whether this is sustainable or not, whether we can fight a five-front war, whether that's sustainable or not. They have all sorts of structural problems in Israel as a result of this. Same with the United States. Militarily, the U.S. has huge structural problems in the region now. They can't maintain total deterrence. They can't defend Israel anymore. They can't. It's not happening. So this is just going to transform. So if it's a war of attrition, you have to favor the Iranians in a war of attrition.

And this is ultimately going to be a war of attrition. It is a war of attrition. And probably by the same token, if Hezbollah sticks to their guns and doesn't waver from their position and doesn't do anything, I think it would be a huge mistake to go into any disarmament talks with the Lebanese government, because we all see what happens as soon as you disarm — you get wiped out. The Israelis would go completely all out if they didn't have any resistance in South Lebanon. They would very quickly annex one-fifth of Lebanese territory, without a doubt. And that would be the end of that. And then they'd put a buffer zone over the Litani River as well. So, I mean, that's just certain that's going to happen. And that's what a lot of people in Israel are calling for now.

They view that like they view the Golan Heights, like they view Mount Hermon. They view South Lebanon as theirs — theirs in terms of their zone of security interest, but also theirs in terms of biblical birthright. They believe that that's part of the kingdom of Israel promised to them 3,000 years ago, and they're going to take it. And this is a golden opportunity. The hard right, the ethno-nationalist, quasi-Nazi right in Israel, they see this as their golden opportunity to realize the first steps in a Greater Israel project. And they feel that if they don't take advantage of this now, they won't get this opportunity again because they're never going to have a pro-Israeli administration in Washington. This is it. Donald Trump is the last hurrah for the Zionist state in America. I'm telling you right now, this is it.

After what they've done, they didn't win the lottery in three weeks like they claimed or thought they would, with regards to breaking Iran and gaining regime change in Tehran. And now they're stuck with this incredible situation, and there's no way out. The only way out is to cut your losses. And the U.S., classic late-stage empire, they just can't. The collective ego of the empire — they can't transition out of this position they've gotten themselves into. They can't do it gracefully. I would even argue that they can't do it as gracefully as the British. By comparison, the way it's going for the U.S., the British did it much more gracefully than the U.S. have done. But Britain had an actual material commonwealth that comprised, you know, 25% of the world's inhabitable land or something like that.

So, I mean, the U.S. doesn't have the Commonwealth officially, but their empire is global, and it's total in terms of military and economic enforcement. And it's going to be very hard for them to admit defeat, especially with Israel — how tightly wound they are with Israel politically in the U.S. and internationally. So it's just going to mean they're going to have to bleed out. The U.S. is going to bleed out economically in the very same way that I believe Europe is bleeding out economically by sticking to their old colonial machinations and visions of grandeur of old Europe — that they're

destroying their own economy and the viability of future industries and so forth in order to stick it to the Russians over Ukraine.

So to the point where life will be unaffordable in Europe because of ridiculous energy prices and the fact that all the governments are putting all their money and piling up debt to rearm Europe against a Russian menace that wouldn't be there, quite frankly, if the United States didn't create the Russian menace by fomenting a civil war in Ukraine. So it's the same problem in the Middle East — the U.S. is going to have to bleed out, and so are the Gulf monarchies, quite frankly. And what's left at the end? What will happen to Israel? Who knows what shape that situation is going to take.

But I guess the thing that we're all concerned about, Nima, is what could happen on the way down — how much damage could happen on the way down as Israel also kicks and screams all the way to the exit of history in terms of the viability of their political, you know, ethno-nationalist, Jewish nationalist project in Israel, the Zionist project. How much damage can they do to the region, to themselves, and to their neighbors as they're kicking and screaming all the way to the exit door of history? Who knows?

#Nima

I think what you've just mentioned about Ukraine is the key issue in Lebanon as well — the civil war. And they're trying to do that by using the Lebanese government. Because if you're not capable of defeating Hezbollah in the southern part of Lebanon, then you have to bomb Beirut. If Iran comes in and says that if you attack Beirut, we're going to attack you, then the third option would be using the government in Lebanon to make some sort of civil war. Because the whole concept, Patrick, is to put pressure on Hezbollah to be more focused on domestic issues than on fighting Israelis.

#Patrick

Yes.

#Nima

This is what they're trying to do. And that interview you mentioned about the president of Lebanon on CNN, that didn't last long. That didn't age well for him, because right after that, the Israelis attacked a major general commander of the Lebanese army in his vehicle, together with another commander and a soldier. They killed all of them in that attack. That was the end. And then the president of Lebanon didn't have anything to do. He didn't know what to say about it.

#Patrick

Well, he's shifted. He's shifting now. And, you know, listen, if Lebanon had solidarity among the sectarian factions and weren't so slavishly pro-US and pro-Saudi... The problem is, Lebanon is—the

structural corruption in that country is tragic. And by keeping it in a state of crisis for 50 years—Lebanon has been in a state of crisis for 50 years. It's a very small country. It doesn't have a manufacturing base. It's got some agricultural base, and they had finance in Beirut, but that's all gone pretty much. They've destroyed the economy and the banking sector there.

They also had trading and shipping, but in the last couple of decades, they're just surviving off of Gulf money—either the injection of Saudi or Emirati or other money coming into Beirut to build high-rise apartments so that Saudis can, you know, have some fun on the weekend. They come to Lebanon and have, you know, muta marriages, you know, sign up a wife for two weeks and then divorce her by July and then go back to Saudi. They're relying on the largesse of the Gulf. And the mentality—it's created Stockholm Syndrome for the Lebanese government. Very dysfunctional. They're stuck in this confessionalist system that's based on a 1958 census that doesn't reflect the actual demographics of Lebanon.

If it did, then the Shiite—the president would be Shiite. Joseph Ayoun would be the speaker of that parliament, and probably the Sunni would remain prime minister. But what happens when you create—the whole economy is on a short-term knife edge. Everyone is an opportunist. You tend to clump together with your sectarian compartments in the country. It's families and sectarian identity, and there are only people you trust to do business with. And then that makes it very easy for the Saudis and the Americans to go and sort of pick people off and separate them and give money to some and not money to others, and to really corrupt—to make people very self-interested, very tribal.

And that's what they've done in Lebanon. Saudi does it mainly with money. The United States does it with money, development contracts, loans. The IMF is also part of that U.S. influence operation in Lebanon. And then through the U.N., the number one employers in Lebanon are foreign NGOs. There are thousands of NGOs in Lebanon. So in terms of the educated class, college graduates, NGOs are one of the biggest employers in the country. And then they'll poach all the best ones to work in Europe or New York for McKinsey or whatever, these U.S. consultancy firms. And then they'll just buy off the other people, Maronite Christians with U.S. passports for their kids.

The parents of the kids are not born in the U.S., but they've all got U.S. passports. That's part of the influence operation. And for the Shiite community in Lebanon, nothing—no money, no funding, no U.S. passports. You get nothing. You get nothing but threats and accusations that you're all terrorists and that you are the reason why Lebanon is not performing economically. And they managed to engineer this type of atmosphere in Lebanon, and that's how the U.S. is able to get in and just nearly start a civil war under this president. They're really pushing, they're really pushing the Lebanese hard with incentives, coercion, threats, and bribes.

And the Saudis are part of this as well, saying that you need to disarm Hezbollah. Well, look, this is exactly the same playbook as the Lebanese civil war from 1978 to the 90s, when Israel used the Palestinians, the PLO, to create division in Lebanon, to get every possible group fighting each other,

pulling Syria into the equation, because effectively that's what it was. It was a war against Israel. It became a war of Syria versus Israel, or Israel and U.S. interests versus Syria and also Shiite factions in Lebanon. But they've done the same thing here because, as you rightly pointed out, Nima, just a few minutes ago, if they can get Hezbollah embroiled in domestic issues, Israel has full carte blanche to do and take what it wants in South Lebanon, including gas deposits off the coast of Southern Lebanon.

So that's been the goal of the U.S. and Israel throughout all of these conflicts in Lebanon — to have the country completely embroiled in civil war, civil strife, infighting. And by doing that, they can then control it and also take whatever land or resources they need conveniently. And, you know, I'll say this as well: when all those factions disarmed from the civil war in 1991–92, there was a massive disarmament. That was one of the beginnings of the end of the long-running Lebanese civil war, which was devastating for that country economically, socially, and in every other way. It drove a lot of people out of the country.

Lebanese went to Australia, Mexico, Brazil, the United States, Europe, you know, all into the Gulf as well, but it emptied out the country of their best and brightest. And they said, you all have to disarm all the Christian militias, Lebanese Forces, all these other different factions, Muslim factions as well. Only one faction was allowed to keep its arms in 1992. Guess which faction that was? Hezbollah. Why? Because they needed somebody to defend the southern border. Because the Lebanese army couldn't do it. Because the Lebanese army is not allowed to do it. The Lebanese army is not allowed. The U.S. polices every single piece of equipment that gets procured for the Lebanese army. They're not allowed to have any air force, any air defense, anything like that.

They're forbidden. Not explicitly, but that's the U.S. policy. That's the power of the Israel lobby. The Israel lobby exists in America to micromanage what the U.S. does to its neighbors. So this is the way of Israel controlling Lebanon without having to be in Lebanon. They do it through the U.S. as their proxy. And Israel is very clever. They know that there are certain things that cannot be shipped to the Lebanese army — anything that they can use to defend its airspace or its border. They want it just to be down to Hezbollah because then they can label them as terrorists, as we spoke about previously, and get the U.S. and their allies to do the same, and all of a sudden it's a war on terror.

It's not a war of aggression by Israel against their neighbor Lebanon. It's not apartheid in Palestine. No, no, it's a war on terror. That's how they frame it. And they want to keep it in that frame. The U. S. and Israel want to maintain that frame and not allow it to be framed as what it is. And Iran has said, no, no, no, we're reframing it. We're going to bypass everything that you constructed, all the fake edifice, the fake framing of Middle Eastern affairs and groups and conflicts. We're reframing it now. We're going to frame it strictly under international law and strictly in terms of holding Israel accountable for all of the egregious crimes against humanity that it's committing with impunity.

The whole U.S. position... The entire U.S., everything — politically, militarily — it's all designed to protect Israel's impunity, to allow Israel to act with impunity. That is really, ultimately, what the U.S.

function is — politically, militarily — all the sanctions, all the labeling of terrorist groups here, there, and the other. It's all for one single reason, which is to defend and protect Israel's right to act with total impunity and criminality against its residents, its neighbors, its illegally occupied Palestinian residents there, and all of its neighbors as well, and Iran and everybody else. And that policy of the U.S. is going to bring down the United States. It's bringing down the U.S. as a global empire. By having to maintain that, it's so unsustainable. It's so obviously unsustainable.

And this president is clinging to it desperately, as is the entire U.S. government and political establishment. Because they've been doing it for so long, they don't know any other way. They can't imagine a world without, sort of, you know, "Israel's our greatest friend and ally." There's no other option for them. They just can't envision a world where this lie doesn't exist. Everything — all the money, I mean, the money, the blood, the treasure, the lives, the price that's been paid to maintain this false facade that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East and they're like us. They exude European values, and we must protect them, and everybody who is resisting them is a terrorist. That's the complete Western paradigm right there. And it's not sustainable. And it's taken the Islamic Republic of Iran to prove that it's not sustainable.

They forced the issue. And no one has stood up for the Palestinians. Nobody has put their money where their mouth is. I remember the day True Promise won, Nima. I see the pictures of Palestinians looking up at the sky. You're seeing all the fireworks come, and they're out there just crying in the streets of Gaza, crying. They say it's the first time anybody on this planet has stepped up to do anything for us. You know, it was just like, to me, that was a historic moment. And, you know, not to take anything away from Hezbollah, they've effectively done the same thing. They tried to enforce a red line in order to pull a large contingent of the IDF, who was conducting a brutal genocide after October 7th against the Palestinians. Hezbollah got involved to pull a large percentage of the Israeli forces away.

And you know what? It worked. Temporarily, it worked. They had to pull out forces from Gaza and reallocate them, and it created a panic. And of course, what's resulted has been devastating for Lebanon. But to blame that on Hezbollah means that you're okay with allowing Israel to just massacre hundreds of thousands of women and children, that you're okay with that. And that's a big pill to swallow for any Arab country. And Iran's the only country, aside from Hezbollah—and I'll give the Lebanese credit for that because Hezbollah are a part of Lebanon, so technically that's Lebanon. And that's why they need to stop this sectarian defining the Lebanese have against each other. It's just so horrendous and so short-sighted. And ultimately, that will be their undoing.

If Lebanon can't get over, get past their petty, small-minded sectarian worldview, they're going to lose territory. That's what it's going to end up with. Lebanon will be smaller. It's already a tiny country. It's going to be even smaller. Because the only thing that they can do to survive intact as a country is they need to have total solidarity. And that needs to come from the top. And unfortunately, you've got U.S., Saudi, Israeli puppets in Joseph Aoun and Nawaf Salam. Sadly, they're installed by Western interests and Zionist interests and paid for by the Gulf in various ways.

And that's very sad. If this current leadership in Lebanon can't wake up before it's too late, otherwise they're going to end up fleeing government.

That's where it's going to end up. They could either stand up and do the right thing, or they're going to end up having to flee, probably to a foreign country, because what they're doing is they're really opening the door. They're rolling out a red carpet for a violent civil war and allowing the Americans to totally manipulate them. Tom Barrack is just walking in there like he's the viceroy of the Levant. And he's saying, the Lebanese army needs to disarm Hezbollah, you know, and we're going to make sure that happens. And they need to do that because we're telling them to do that. Therefore, you know, it's just so colonial, the arrogance. And nobody can say a word about Israel. And it's the Stockholm syndrome, Nima.

They end up loving their oppressor and blaming other inmates in the prison. That's kind of what's happened with Lebanon. It's an incredible situation, but, you know, small states are weak. But small states can also play an important role in stabilizing a region if they can have cohesion internally, because then they have allies. And then they have leverage. And they have European allies as well. The Europeans—if Lebanon had solidarity against Israel, there would be quite a few European countries that would be forced to come to their support. And that changes things massively. And that's the thing that America and Israel do not want to happen. That's the thing they fear the most—Lebanese solidarity against Israel. That is the number one fear of the Americans and the Israelis.

And the Americans have spent billions of dollars to break up that country—billions—to have them fighting against each other. And so have the Gulf states. And Israel as well, obviously—that's at the top of their list. So there's a book by—actually, it's in my important books to read—which is by David Hurst. I don't know if this comes out: **Beware of Small States**, former Middle East editor of **The Guardian**. That explains some of what I'm talking about in terms of the geopolitics of the post-Sykes-Picot era in the Middle East. And the other one is this one, which is by Hala Jaber, **Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance**, which is, to me, the definitive history of the beginnings of Hezbollah here, which is a great book by Hala. But I doubt anybody in the Trump administration has read any of those. No, they don't want to.

#Nima

Patrick, there is a report from Iran saying that a Qatari delegation has arrived in Tehran to discuss bilateral relations and regional developments, including the latest diplomatic efforts aimed at ending the war with the United States. I can assume that there could be some sort of changes in the nature of the relationship between Iran and Qatar as an outcome of this war. But when it comes to Iran and the United States, there is nothing there for Qatar to play. They don't have anything. The two sides were trying to talk directly in Islamabad—two delegations. One of them, the head of the delegation, was J.D. Vance, the Vice President of the United States. The other one was the head of Iran's Parliament. They couldn't do anything with those negotiations.

How can we believe that the Qatari delegation, or I would say even the guy from Islamabad, Munir, the chief of staff, the head of Islamabad, of Pakistan, is going to do something about it? There is nothing there to be worked on, in my opinion. Nothing. Literally nothing. Donald Trump is trying to force terms on Iranians, and Iranians say no. This is the reality of the war. This is the battleground. And everything is going to be the reflection of the reality on the battleground. We're not going to change our policy, our strategy. That's why they're not reaching a deal. That's why Donald Trump today tweeted that they're not bending. They're not, you know, backing down. How do you see the role of these GCC countries like Qatar? Are we going to see some sort of shift, a little shift from these countries?

#Patrick

You're already seeing a little shift with Qatar. They've absolutely reconsidered their position in the last three months. Much, much different position right now. I think the difference is Qatar is probably the least of the Gulf countries that is under Israeli influence. So the Abraham Accords are a disaster for the Gulf states. But the UAE is being absorbed by Israel on every conceivable front. Their intelligence services are in there. Mossad has an untold number of, you know, working stations within the UAE. They've intermingled everything from their cloud computing to their security services to cyber, military, commercial. There's, I don't know, hundreds of thousands of Israelis working, quote, "tourists," running around the UAE as we speak.

So it's effectively taking it over. And that means there's going to be no hope for the UAE in terms of having a reasonable position with Iran. And if I was Iran, I wouldn't entertain until they formally renounce the Abraham Accords. But that's not going to happen. Saudi Arabia, halfway in between. Maybe veering towards independence, still tethered to the U.S. The problem with all of the Gulf states, Nima, they're too exposed to the U.S. dollar. This is the problem. And you know what? This is also the problem with Iraq. Listen, the U.S. has Iraq by the neck. And they've done that structurally by design after the war. So much of Iraqi oil revenue has to run through U.S. banks in New York.

I even believe that it's my understanding, I could be wrong, that the Iraqi sovereign wealth fund is in dollars in U.S. banks. So if they go too far off the reservation, they could find themselves being sanctioned. So they've got that leverage over it. And, you know, all that would take probably would—this all would end tomorrow, Nima, if Iraq declared their airspace off-limits for the U.S. and Israel. It's really that simple. That's the key. That's the key. Yeah, it's that simple. And so the U.S. have quietly got Iraq by the balls financially. That's a huge sword over their neck, and a lot of people aren't speaking—they don't speak about this. So yeah, that's strategically—there's no doubt about it.

The legacy of the Iraq war remains. It remains, but less and less so. The political influence is certainly not there with the U.S., but the financial influence and control is. Qatar is very exposed to the U.S. dollar and U.S. institutions. Saudi Arabia, massively, massively. Saudi Arabia and Qatar also have their own leverage as well. They do have some leverage financially and politically in how they've intermingled institutions with the West—like academic, civil society, business. There's a lot.

They've done a lot of work to gain influence in the U.S. and more broadly in the West. Bahrain is extremely weak. The royal family there is in an extremely weak position. They're totally reliant on Saudi Arabian security.

And Kuwait, which is really relying on U.S. protection, is just becoming more and more exposed through Iranian strikes. And I even think that... I'm not convinced that the attack on the Kuwaiti airport was actually from Iranian missiles, and it could very well have been something else or even a false flag for that matter, because after that attack, you saw them ramping up the sales pitch for a new anti-drone system there that's going to cost billions of dollars. And so everybody's got their economic incentives within the whole chaos of the region right now. But Qatar, with the least amount of Israeli influence, has the best chance of being independent. And I think it would be smart for them to ally with Iran because they share the biggest gas field in the world, arguably.

So they need to have some kind of dependable, stable working relationship with absolutely no problems or questions. That, to me... So while it's a small country, Qatar, it depends which way it goes in terms of its orientation with Iran. It can be very prosperous, very beneficial for Qatar, but it's going to have to have a very clear, deliberate orientation with Iran. It's very clear, and everyone can see that's different from what the other Gulf states are doing or confused about, because they're all exposed. Kuwait's hugely exposed to U.S. dollars, as is probably Bahrain as well. And Bahrain's militarily occupied. It's an occupied country. The U.S. occupies it. Bahrain's not very big, but it's occupied by the U.S. military. So they're not sovereign. They can't make any decisions on their own. They don't have any foreign policy.

The majority of the country is Shiite. So it's a typical British ex-colonial minority-in-power, a minority despot monarch in charge of a different religious majority. Typical. So—yeah, so, I mean, Saudi Arabia is, to me, the one that swings the balance. They maintain very good relations with a number of other superpowers, including Russia. They were there at the St. Petersburg Economic Forum. They had the VIP position of prominence at that event, which is one of Russia's main geopolitical salons on the calendar, and also China and others. So Saudi Arabia could swing the balance, but it's also bad for them because they sit between Israel and Iran. And so Saudi Arabia has to also be very careful strategically for their own protection and their own sort of viability if they don't lean too far to any particular side.

So that's one thing. In that sense, Saudi Arabia is like Turkey in that sense. They have to dance with multiple partners all the time. And that's becoming evident. That wasn't necessarily the case before. They were really the regional hegemon, Saudi Arabia. Not anymore. Not anymore. No, Iran is the regional hegemon. It's very clear. Turkey could have been the regional hegemon, but unfortunately they're tied at the hip to NATO, and there's not much they can do, and they can't seem to extricate themselves from their economic relationships with Israel or Azerbaijan. That's for other reasons, by the way. But Turkey has its own agenda, its own ethno-Turkish agenda, and its own Islamist transition as well.

#Nima

Which, by the way, is going to fail. I think that's delusional on their part.

#Patrick

Well, which part's going to fail? The Islamic transition?

#Nima

Central Asia. I think the way that the—Central Asia, yeah. Pan-Turkish. That's not going to happen.

#Patrick

Pan-Turkic movement, yeah. And so they did a lot of terrible things, Turkey. They brought in Uyghurs, who they recognize as part of the Turkic ethno-family, as it were, historically. Brought them into Syria, and they were the most vicious terrorists, the most vicious terrorists. They brought in the Uyghurs and other people from Central Asia, and that was all facilitated through Turkey and the MIT, their Turkish intelligence. And what they did in Syria is horrible, you know, really horrible. The most violent—the most vicious ISIS fighters—in many cases were from there. And so Turkey's done many horrible things in the name of, you know, their sort of neo-Ottomanism, or I call it, it's like Turkish MAGA, you know, make Turkey great again.

That's the 30-year project of Erdogan. That began in the early 90s. So the AKP party, this is a real project, and they've transformed institutions in the country to make it more Islamic and to move away from the Mustafa Atatürk secular society and political economy and transform it to an Islamist one. But that's also having some problems as well. And so I think he's failed. Turkey has really failed in the eyes of the Ummah because he talks a big game with Netanyahu, but he has done nothing materially to stop the genocide in Gaza, which is a huge betrayal of the Muslim community globally. It really showed how superficial and fake the Erdogan sort of—and Turkey as champion of the Islamic world—they could never be a custodian of Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Unless they're willing to step up and actually do something to restrain Israel, then they're worthy. But the only country that stepped up to actually do something for the Palestinians has been Iran, and Hezbollah as well, but Iran especially. Iran has taken the fiercest blow of the empire as punishment for what they've done. It's as simple as that. The biggest conventional military in the world, as the Americans say—the most powerful military in history, in the human race—Iran has stood toe-to-toe with them. And not only are they still standing, but they've now flipped the dynamic, the balance of power, in their favor. And the U.S. is on its heels. And that's extraordinary. And really, it started with defense of the Palestinians, because that's always what Israel's problem with Iran has been.

Because they defend the Palestinians. Iran's not any sort of physical threat. They're quite far away, but they're the only country that would not let go of the Palestinian issue. And that made them the enemy, and that's why they've had this fake campaign against non-existent Iranian nukes for 40-plus years now. And all of this to demonize Iran. Why? Because they were a potential resistance to the Israeli Zionist project in the region. And they would defend the native Palestinian population, which is the thing that's in the way of total Israeli expansion. It's the natives. It's the Palestinians.

And the only people willing to put their life on the line is Iran, to put it all on the line for the Palestinians. It's the only country willing to take the beating from the United States and Israel and sanctions from every single other Western ally. Why? To defend the Palestinians and also now to defend the people of South Lebanon as well. And they're taking that punishment. Why? Because that's what great powers do. That's how history will look at it. So beyond today's propaganda, beyond all the lies, all the sort of fake talking points that we get thrown at every minute in the West, history will look back at this as what great powers do.

Great powers can draw moral red lines. And great powers will fight for their principles. They're not going to give up on their principles. So Iran has established itself as a great power, historically speaking. And the United States is a great power, formerly a great power, now in rapid decline. And Israel is probably a fast-disappearing wannabe great power that has embarked on the ultimate Faustian journey, which ends in complete disaster, biblically speaking as well. So... hopefully we make it long enough to look back in history and be able to evaluate it in those terms. That's the big question, if we can survive.

#Nima

Patrick, in the case of Turkey, today Erdoğan said that Turkey's security begins not only in Hatay. Hatay is the southern province of Turkey.

#Patrick

Which they stole from Syria. Yes. Yeah, in the early 20th century, that's Syria, Hatay.

#Nima

Anyway, go ahead. But also, he says, not only in Hatay, but also in Aleppo, Damascus, and Beirut, we will not turn a blind eye to aggression against them. And he said that the whole agenda of Greater Israel, we know their agenda. We are prepared to go against it today. Then we had the Israeli reaction. Benjamin Netanyahu came out and said, Turkey or Erdoğan is the most anti-Semitic on this planet. And he said, we know in terms of talking points, Turkey goes too far, but when it comes to actions, you don't see anything happening. And they have the full support of the Turkish people. The recent polls show that something like 97% of Turkish people are supporting the policy to go against Israel.

#Patrick

Absolutely.

#Nima

And that has not been translated into the foreign policy of Turkey.

#Patrick

Yeah. If Erdoğan was serious, which he's not, he's a good talker. He's like Trump. He's a great politician, arguably the most successful Turkish politician in the modern era. And he's a great talker. If he was genuine, if he was sincere, he would be calling Aliyev in Baku, in Azerbaijan, saying, no more of your oil for the Israelis. Finished. Finished. Sanctions. We're going to sanction the Israelis, and you're going to go with us, Azerbaijan, and you're going to sanction alongside us, and we're going to create a united front because we need to put pressure on to save our fellow Muslims, Sunni Muslims in Gaza. You see, this is why Iran, the West wants to frame them as Shiite, and they want to separate them from the rest of the Ummah. But the world is now beginning to see, not to view Iran as a Shiite Muslim country, but as a Muslim country.

And that means Iran has ascended to the leader of the Islamic world. That's the position Turkey wanted, wanted. That's a position that the Ottoman Empire may have had previously but no longer has and will never have for the very reasons we've just discussed. Iran is now the de facto leader of the Islamic world globally. That's who everyone's looking up to. Not even the Russians have gone toe-to-toe with the U.S. militarily. Not even Russia. There is no country on this planet that has gone toe-to-toe with the United States and Israel simultaneously and is not only standing on its two feet but has managed to completely wreck the U.S.'s multiple bases and have taken out 75, at least if you count Yemen and Iran, 75 in those two conflicts, which I consider to be one—uh, 75 fixed-wing aircraft, at least, maybe 80 by the end of this week.

Um, that's what the U.S. lost out of the first and second Iraq wars. That's, you know, over 12 years of conflict—75 fixed-wing aircraft. They've lost that many in the last 12 months, or a bit more than 12 months. And all the bases, you know, that would be like in the Vietnam War, Nima, if the Viet Cong—I mean, the U.S. lost a lot of men and aircraft in the eight years in Vietnam, eight years of combat operations, official combat operations—that would be like if the Viet Cong reached out and took out the U.S. bases in the Philippines, Guam, Okinawa, and like the Solomon Islands and Northern Australia, like wiped all that out at the beginning of the Vietnam War.

They didn't. They couldn't. They didn't have the capability or the technology to do that. Iran did. Iran did that. So, you know, it's historic. It just hasn't sunk in yet in America, in the West. They're still pretending the U.S. is a dominant power in West Asia or the Middle East. They're still believing this is true, and Trump is messing around with this stupid blockade like this is putting America's foot

down in the region. "We're going to be dictating terms to these Iranians, and we've dismantled and destroyed them. They have no leadership left." That's what he said the other day. "They're down to the third tier of leadership." No, they're not.

Iran is a fully functioning society, government, and military, and they're forcing, just with a few missile barrages, they've now forced the United States and Israel to have to completely retool and reconfigure their position vis-à-vis Lebanon. That's not a defeated country. Sorry. And if the U.S. is so powerful, how come you can't use all of your military bases anymore in the Persian Gulf? How come Saudi Arabia is on pins and needles about how much or to what degree they're going to allow the U.S. to not only use their bases but even allow their airspace to be used? That's because they're afraid of Iran, because Iran has backed up their threats. Simple. Why? Because Iran is now a normative regional superpower. That's why. And the GCC countries are secondary powers now.

#Nima

Yeah. Thank you so much, Patrick, for being with us today. Great pleasure, as always. And please, before wrapping up, go to 21st Century Wire, and you can follow Patrick on patrickhenningson.substack.com. I'm going to put all of the links in the description of this video. You can go there and find it. And here in the comment section, our friend is putting the YouTube channel of Patrick. And I'm going to put all the links in the description right after this podcast is done. Thank you so much, Patrick. See you soon.

#Patrick

Take care. Thanks, Nima Alkhorshid.

#Nima

Take care.

#Patrick

Bye-bye.