

Iran TAKES OUT Oil Tanker — Trump CAVES on Kharg Island Invasion | Alastair Crooke

Renowned former diplomat and analyst Alastair Crooke discusses why Trump has backed down on resuming strikes after suffering much graver losses to Iran than CENTCOM has been willing to admit. This show will reveal the truth being hidden by power elites in Washington, Tel Aviv and Brussels. Alastair Crooke's Conflicts Forum Substack: <https://conflictsforum.substack.com/> 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> #iran #trump #iranwar

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's Danny Haiphong. Please hit the like button as you come on. As you can see, I am joined by renowned diplomat, author, and geopolitical analyst, Alastair Crooke. Alastair, great to be with you today.

#Alastair Crooke

Thank you. It's a pleasure to join you.

#Danny

Yes. Well, how about we get started with this, Alastair? So it's been quite a busy last 24 hours. We've had, of course, before this, strikes between the United States and Iran — the U.S. engaging in multiple days of bombing in Iran, multiple days of retaliation. Now, following this, Trump was threatening once again to invade Kharg Island. He said the U.S. could walk in there at any moment and take it. And then suddenly Donald Trump and his administration announced — CENTCOM announced — that strikes were canceled and that the war was effectively over. A deal was ready to be signed, possibly in Geneva at the G7 coming up. Now, as this is all happening, Iran announced that it closed the Strait of Hormuz fully and completely and has gone overnight into a confrontation with various tankers that the U.S. was trying to guide out of the Strait of Hormuz and has fired on them, taken them out, has forced them to reverse their path.

Now, Alastair, can you help us understand what exactly is happening right now? Iran denies that there's any agreement that's close. And what Iranian media has leaked is that this deal essentially goes back to the memorandum of understanding — the 14 points that Iran had submitted so long ago, all the way back to the initial ceasefire. Now, Donald Trump is saying, no, no, no, this is unacceptable. Iran does not negotiate in good faith. Why is Donald Trump doing this? And I can pull up some of the information as you are talking about what exactly is happening here in the war. It feels like a very chaotic last 24 hours.

#Alastair Crooke

Well, I think you're right. I mean, it is chaotic. And it's chaotic largely because of President Trump. But no one actually can tell you, I think, exactly why he pulled out. What I do hear, and it's a sort of—well, it may be wrong, so no guarantees. But what I do hear is that, well, first of all, you know, there have been talks between Araqchi and the Omani foreign minister that were on the Memorandum of Understanding. You know, Iran's preference has always been for the Omanis as mediators. They much prefer the Omanis to the other mediators who put themselves into this process. But last night, apparently, I think it's quoted in the New York Times, it says that the Pakistanis rang Trump last night and said, we've got a deal.

We have a deal. And Trump called off the attacks. Now, I don't know if he had other pressures too. I mean, because, you know, he was all for the attack, as you say, Cargill, you know, we could even put boots on the ground. I mean, and, you know, there'd been a succession of sort of military hawks on Fox News. There was General Kellogg and Kagan Kane saying, you know, oh yes, you know, it's time to go through. You can't trust anything. You need to go and attack the Iranians. So did someone whisper in his ear, and then someone else different whisper in his ear later on towards the evening? Or did the Pakistanis come in and say, no, there's a deal?

Now, I have to say that, you know, I have experience with these mediations—not this one, but before, with hostages between Israel and Hamas and other organizations. And really, you know, the mediators, you know, they play it for their own interests, and they play things, and they put a gloss on things which shouldn't be glossed. And I have a feeling that this is the case here. It's not the first time the Pakistanis have said that a deal is here and it's there and we've negotiated. They want to be at the forefront, the center of this process, for good Pakistani reasons, because Pakistan wants to sort of establish its position as a sort of future pivot in the region.

And this is one way to do it, but also because Pakistan at the moment really is in quite an uncertain state. It has a Baluchi uprising taking place in the environs of Quetta and elsewhere. Baluchis are a separate ethnic group, and there's been trouble with the Baluchis for a long time. Even when I was in Pakistan, there were problems. And then the Baluchis were also sort of co-opted by America to be

a sort of insurgent force on the eastern border of Iran, which they were. So the Baluchistan province has always been quite unsettled and difficult. So I don't know what more than Pakistani motives, but, you know, the military leader has no political base.

He's the man who put Imran Khan into prison at the behest of the Americans, you know, made sure that he was out of the way. The Americans didn't like what he was saying about Ukraine and Russia, and so they asked for a no-confidence vote against him, and then eventually, now he's in prison. So, I mean, you know, it's a state that has a very fragile base, if you like, in the region. And so, not surprisingly, they've turned to the Americans. I mean, the American connections with Rawalpindi, the military leadership in Pakistan, are as close as anything. I mean, they are really an offshoot of the U.S. military, not like India at all. So it seems they probably said something last night. I don't know what. Anyway, was that the trigger?

You know, with Trump, you can never tell. As I say, maybe it was, you know, Kellogg whispered one thing to him and he was all for bombing them and taking Caracal Island, because that's been a theme of both those sort of Fox military correspondents saying that they wanted Trump—Caracal Island to be taken. "It's easy, we've got control over the airspace of Hormuz," which is not true, but they say that on the television. Maybe he got fired up, then he got the news that from Pakistan there was a deal. Maybe someone else whispered and said, "Listen, you know, the World Cup has started. Do you really want to have a war in the middle of the World Cup?" And before we go on, you know, after the World Cup, we go on to America celebrating its 250th anniversary.

So all in all, who knows? But, I mean, this has been the pattern throughout this period. Trump says one thing, he says another thing, he changes his mind. And this has had a huge impact on Iran, by the way. So this is why Iran have opted for this approach where they say, we believe nothing that the mediators tell us—I mean, all mediators. We believe nothing that comes to us purporting to be the American position. We don't believe it at all, and we don't believe it because America changes its position every day. And so what they have been saying during this period is, okay, we want definite evidence of something. We want either you to withdraw, then blockade. We want to see it—not pulled back 500 kilometers, but gone, really gone.

And we want half of our frozen assets—24 billion—half of them. We want to see it in our bank account. We'll believe you that you're going to give it to us when we see it. Because Trump has said, no, no, they're not going to get their assets. And then Blinken comes in and says, no, no, those assets, we're going to give them to the Gulf states to rebuild so they won't ever see them. And what's more, we'll take all the money they get from Hormuz and we'll give that to the Gulf states too. So this is what the problem is in the negotiations. I mean, you know, Iran has learned not to believe a word that it is told, you know, by mediators—only what they see written clearly in writing. And so, you know, we've had these sort of games of, you know, whispers going on, you know, oh yes, there's an agreement or something.

So the Iranians are understandably completely, if you like, skeptical about what they're told until they see it, and then they'll consider it, and they'll take their time considering it. But something else has changed, something important, and it's received very little publicity as far as I can see. But you ought to be aware of it because there was this letter written from the Supreme Leader's office. The letter is from the office of Iran's Supreme Leader, and it came out a couple of days ago. We got a link to the original copy, and it says some very important things in it. It says the leader presents the results of the war, i.e. the Iranian successes in the war, as a basis for a new security order in the Middle East.

Then listen to this. Quote: "Iran and the axis of resistance seek to dictate the rules." Wow, that's quite a demand. Then it goes on: "The U.S. is no longer capable of achieving its goals through continued warfare and has lost its primary leverage against Iran. Iran emerged from this war with new bargaining chips." And here, listen to these: control over the Strait of Hormuz, the ability to suspend or renew contacts with Washington, and the ability to influence the Lebanese arena. The halt of the attack on Beirut following the Iranian threat—that was their threat, that they would put missiles into Israel, into the northern territories of Israel, if Israel went ahead with the attack on Beirut.

They promised to attack Beirut, to flatten it, and they had called for evacuation. The article's central innovation is its approach to Hezbollah. It's no longer presented as merely a regional ally, but as part of Iran's own national security equation. Therefore, according to the piece, the letter, Iran will not return to the pre-war situation—not in Hormuz, not in the face of American presence in the region, and not in its relations with the axis of resistance. This is, as you can hear, quite a tough message that was coming out of the Supreme Leader's office. And that's why I read out those little snippets from it, because it's a message of confidence and a message that this is a new phase of the war. That's the real thing that's important.

You know, this is not just going back, and it's not going back to the Islamabad talks and more deals and things like this. So I think we should listen to some of these things that I've said that, as I say, were just issued last week, this week, and put into context what we're hearing. Because we hear, you know, oh, according to American officials, Iran has to open Hormuz now, immediately, with no tolls, absolutely free, and it's got to be within a short period of time—a return to the situation beforehand. Well, that doesn't jibe with what I've just read about, you know, saying this from the Iranian perspective, that Hormuz is one of its principal points of leverage. In fact, the principal point of leverage, which they will not surrender.

So, and they have already set up the administration to collect—not tolls, I mean, we can call it whatever we want—call it, you know, fees for environmental needs and the care of the waterway or whatever. This is what Turkey does in the Bosphorus, where Turkey charges fees for vessels passing through the Bosphorus, and they're called environmental fees. But it's much the same thing. You have to pay per tonnage for passing through. So, I mean, I think that part of it strikes me as

unlikely—that Iran has suddenly backed down and is likely to accept a complete opening of Hormuz and giving up their leverage completely. And I don't think also the idea that, as Trump has said, no, the blockade continues.

It's going to continue as long as necessary. Again, does that sound to you sort of likely from the document from the Supreme Leader? I think it's quite unlikely that Iran is going to open the thing and have the U.S. Navy sitting at the entrance to Hormuz threatening them. And I think the other thing that makes it seem to me quite unlikely is that a deal is reached and that it's going to be celebrated in the next day or two, day after tomorrow, whatever it is, in Geneva or in Islamabad. You heard what they said about the axis of resistance. And the war is going on in Lebanon. I mean, there are attacks today in Lebanon.

The Israelis are still there. There is no ceasefire in Lebanon. There is no ceasefire that can possibly conform to the word "ceasefire." It is not a ceasefire there. And the Iranian position has been consistent during this period, saying it's a ceasefire for all—that is, for all the Axis and Iran—or there's no ceasefire. And I think that, you know, there is no sign that Israel is about to withdraw its troops from Lebanon and observe a ceasefire. None at all. So these are the things. I mean, you know, I just don't know the inside story, the inside details. Personally, I don't believe anyone does.

Many people claim to know what's being agreed. But this is what I hear, and this is what I hear from Iran: no deal has been agreed. You know, it has to go up to the Supreme Leader, and he'll hold discussions and listen to advice. And I suspect he'll come back with a counterpoint or something like that. But we'll see. And what will Trump do? Will you tell me? Who knows? Maybe it depends on how he wakes up tomorrow morning or tonight or whatever it is. What will happen? But the point I would make about it is Iran expects war and is ready for war. So as far as they're concerned, you know, okay, America, if that's your choice, bring it on. We're ready.

#Danny

Yeah, they demonstrated that pretty solidly in the responses on, I believe that was June 9th and 10th, or overnight, more accurately, on those days. But let's then get your comments, because there is kind of almost a segue of events happening that have occurred around this, and I definitely want your comment on what is being leaked out, quote-unquote, that Iranian media are saying. I wouldn't even call it a leak; I would say it's what Iran has been asking for and demanding for a very long time. But you mentioned that there was a bit of a scramble to stop the U.S. from attacking again. And indeed, that's exactly what happened. Trump started to talk about Kharg Island again. He was basically sounding like he was during the open hostilities, and CENTCOM was sounding very similar. "Well, we're going to bomb this."

We're going to bomb that. We're going to invade Kharg Island. And then it was Qatar, the UAE, and, as you said, Pakistan that rang Trump as he was threatening to strike Iran very hard. Their assurance of a deal in reach convinced him to pull back. That's what is being told in Politico. But

here is the point that Iran is saying they will agree to if an actual deal can be signed: that they maintain their enrichment rights, no nuclear commitment before any talks, the U.S. would have no future role in managing the Strait of Hormuz, a permanent end to all fighting, including Lebanon, frozen assets would be released in phases, compensation for war damage to be negotiated, and future talks would cover the nuclear program, sanctions relief, and compensation, excluding Iran's missile program and support for regional allies.

And Donald Trump was not happy about this, Alistair. This is what he said. He wrote today, right before we got on here, "The terms that Iran leaked out to the fake news have nothing to do with the terms we've agreed to in writing. What they said, including their weak and pathetic statement on having a deal, bears no relation to the truth. Very dishonorable people to deal with. With them, there is no such thing as dealing in good faith. Amazing. Also, they totally rebuffed the drone attack last night against Indian ships leaving the Strait of Hormuz. It is totally unacceptable. They better get their act together, and fast." So, as you said, Alistair, from one moment to the next, the narrative that the Trump administration, Donald Trump himself, paints is quite different. Mm-hmm.

#Alastair Crooke

Yeah, you know, I mean, essentially, you know, you can put a little bit of gloss here and there, and I'm sure Araqchi does, but basically nothing has changed from the 12-point principles that Iran put out at the beginning of the Islamabad talks. And it said, this is our basis, which Trump said seemed to me a reasonable basis for talking. And, I mean, Iran really hasn't moved on that. And so what we're talking about now is not a deal. It's not a settlement. It is really how to get into place some form of ceasefire, however temporary or whatever, and what will be the preconditions for stopping the war, at least on a ceasefire basis.

And it's not a final settlement. But we can't get to those at the moment. It's proving too difficult to get to the basis for a ceasefire, let alone to tackle some of the other points. I mean, the Iranians have been absolutely clear the nuclear issue is not being discussed and won't be discussed until there is a ceasefire, until the blockade is lifted, until they've got some return of their frozen assets. And all of this, and therefore the ceasefire in Lebanon, is in place. Only then, and if there is a further agreement, might they talk about the nuclear issue. There's no suggestion they're going to talk about other things, missiles, or relations with other movements.

None at all. So, you know, I go back to what I said at the outset from the leader's office. Iran and the Axis of Resistance seek to dictate the terms. They intend to try and dictate the terms. So, I mean, effectively, you've got this disparity. You know, Trump is saying, oh yes, the Iranians are about to capitulate and give us all that we want. And Iran, more quietly and in a rather more measured voice, is saying, I'm sorry, no, we are sticking by the preconditions that we've set out from the very beginning, and we haven't changed our position. Mr. Trump, if you want to agree with that, then perhaps we can have a ceasefire.

#Danny

Alistair, now, with all that's going on with the so-called deal, I'm curious if there's anything that happened during Iran's actual retaliation that you believe has triggered the United States to once again scramble for some kind of deal. We went from Trump saying Iran should surrender, they should wave the white flag, that's what's best for them, and then now we are back to, well, we're so close to a deal, strikes are canceled. Was there anything about how Iran responded that you believe could have made the United States think twice about making this a longer-term kinetic escalation?

#Alastair Crooke

I think there are two things that could have. But as I say, you know, all of these things, I mean, there's no... You know, the Americans are trying to control the flow of information on these things, and so you can't confirm it. But I think there's pretty good evidence from videos and others that a major radar site in Bahrain was destroyed, sitting up on a hill. And this was one of these billion-dollar radar projects, and that's been destroyed utterly. I think that will have likely had a big impact, because still America doesn't overfly. They make the impression all the time that they are overflying it and they have open airspace, but actually they don't practice that.

And we saw that, if you like, also when Israel attacked Iran after the, you know, exchange with Trump, and Netanyahu said, no, we're going in and we're attacking Iran. All of this was standoff munitions fired out of Iraq. They didn't go into the airspace of Iran. And if you've been watching, I mean, the number of, you know, sophisticated drones that have been shot down during this period, it's something like, I don't know the exact numbers and no one will confirm them, but I think sort of between 33% and 40% of the total stock of American drones have been shot down. So there are air defenses that are quite effective around, and we know that. And we know that the Americans are worried because Iran seems to be using a new form of radar.

Now, I'm not a technical person, but I think instead of being an electromagnetic type of radar, the old-fashioned type that has been the standard, they're using an infrared, if you like, type of radar. I don't know the details, I may have misdescribed it, but there's certainly concern in the Pentagon that they have a system of radar which is able to lock onto stealth aircraft and to identify them, lock onto them, and therefore to target them. So I think that's another thing that has got much more pronounced. I don't know what happened to the Apache helicopter. There are many possibilities, and we just don't know. But the other thing was the attack on Jordan, on the airfield in Jordan. Now, it seems that this struck some aircraft — Jordanian perhaps, but also key American aircraft.

Figures float around of about 12, whatever it is, F-35s or F-16s or whatever it is, that were supposed to be destroyed in it. That would make a big impact in Washington, on the Pentagon. So I think it's possible that those things, but with Trump, you can't say for certain that this was crucial in his decision to call off this major attack that was going to really damage Iran. So I can't be sure. I think these things contributed. I think if the Pakistanis rang up and said, we've got a deal, we've got a

deal — I mean, he's so desperate for good news that I can imagine him grabbing at that and quickly sort of ringing up everyone and saying, no, it's off, it's off, we're not going to do anything tonight. But it may be on again by tonight or tomorrow morning. Who knows? And that's the basis.

My point is, it's very important for people to understand, you know, this sort of just floats over the head of the Iranian leadership. They are so used to this now that, you know, they don't feel pressured when Trump announces what he did, you know, that there's going to be a massive attack on Iran. It doesn't pressure them. They don't change their positions because of this. I mean, he's lost his credibility completely as a negotiator, not only with Iran, but in Russia and other places too. I mean, his flip-flops and his confabulations about, you know, what America has achieved — that it has escorted huge numbers of tankers through the Hormuz and 100 million barrels of oil have gone out — it's just, you know, I don't know where he gets these ideas from, but they're not based in reality.

So it's very difficult. So Iran, you know, just goes on. Their default expectation is war. They expect that America will attack. The Russians tend to concur with them on this and say they believe the same. So they expect one way or another it will come. And I think it's inevitable for two reasons. I think the escalation is inevitable, firstly, because the Iranians are practicing escalatory deterrence. So every time the U.S. Navy does something near Hormuz, sort of attacks an Iranian vessel or some other vessel or whatever, or attacks a radar site along the Hormuz coastline or a missile site, the Iranians do not just respond tit for tat.

They escalate and they attack something more damaging. So every time that America attacks, they go up one step at a time on the, if you like, military ladder. And what I'm saying is that I think anyone who looks at this and sees these skirmishes that are taking place more and more frequently in Hormuz between the American naval forces there and tankers and others passing through, or against radar positions of Iran and others — I mean, you know, sooner or later, Iran will probably shoot and damage a U.S. naval vessel. I mean, I think it's likely because they are firing Hellfire missiles from a helicopter at the engine rooms of some of the Iranian vessels, crippling them.

And so maybe they will decide to cripple a naval vessel or maybe do more. But I think that is an area where escalation is very probable. Because, you know, those sort of skirmish instances have this tendency. You know, everyone says, well, we'll keep it just at the sort of roughly measured level. But they have their own momentum, which takes them into a bigger escalation, perhaps because something goes wrong or it doesn't work out quite as expected and it goes up. And the other reason for thinking that escalation is likely is Israel and Lebanon. And Lebanon is somewhere where the Israelis are in deep trouble at the moment. They are losing men. They're having to withdraw from parts of the places that they've occupied.

They're suffering casualties. I don't know how many, but I suspect it's probably around 8 or 10 casualties a day. Not deaths, casualties altogether. Some will be deaths, some will be injuries. They're losing tanks, and it's not going well. And for Israel, it's impossible to leave this alone. You

know, they can't just walk away from it because half of the towns in that belt from the Lebanese border down to Galilee are half empty. I mean, the inhabitants have fled, are gone. And they're complaining bitterly in Tel Aviv and in Jerusalem, saying, you know, we're Israeli citizens, and these are our townships, so why aren't you protecting them better?

And so the Israelis don't have an answer to that because, you know, the only thing that they've answered with is saying, well, we'll establish a buffer zone and we'll destroy everything in the buffer zone and we'll have a buffer zone. And even the Israeli military commanders are saying to them, oh, grow up, come on. You know, we tried the buffer zone 20 years ago. But that was at the time Hezbollah only had Katyusha rockets with a range of 20 kilometers, and so you could push it away and the northern territory towns would be, you know, largely immune from the rocket bombardment. But now Hezbollah has these fiber-optic drones, which it is using into the northern territories of Israel, attacking military targets inside Israel.

And Israel has moved to a new sort of security doctrine, which doesn't allow that to continue. They have this doctrine called permanent security. I've written about it. And it's 180 degrees different doctrine of security from that which Ben-Gurion established. Ben-Gurion was quite careful when he established the state, and he said, we're a small state. We have a limited population, a small economy. And so we can't have a big army. We can't have a big army at all. We can have a small professional army, and we'll bolster that by reservists. And he also took a Clausewitzian position, saying Israeli military forces are there in furtherance of political ends, not as an end in itself.

Well, now we have something quite different, 180 degrees, where the aim is preventive security, i.e. to destroy any potential threat to Israel that can be identified, including to the root. And by "to the root," it means children and mothers and people who might grow up and be a threat to Israel when they're adults. So this is preventive security—permanent security, excuse me—doctrine, which is completely different. And it is about using pure military force to seize, control, and manage Israel, the Middle East of Greater Israel, the Greater Israel ambition of the Middle East. The only problem is, the chief of defense staff says to the cabinet, he said, "But you want us to do this."

You know, we need six or seven IDFs, not just the one that we have. We would need huge forces to be able to cope with all of this. And, you know, they're still expanding it. Trump is talking with Jolani in Syria and trying to encourage him—Jolani, with the backing of Israel—to attack into Lebanon, to attack Hezbollah, wanting ISIS, the former ISIS leader and his cohorts, to work with the United States. Again, the United States working with former or present, if you like, extreme jihadist groups to attack Hezbollah and to cooperate with the Christians and some of the Sunni elements there to try and crush Hezbollah. So they are moving in that direction.

And Turkey is very concerned about this. And he said, well, even though he sponsored Jolani, if you recall, against Assad, because he's always had a real difference with Assad. That's another story. But he's had a long enmity with Assad. And so he sponsored, if you like, these groups that were in Idlib. But now he's saying, you know, he cannot guarantee that he will not get involved if Israel and

America try to use these forces in Syria to invade Lebanon, because he fears this is going to end up in a much wider war. So that's my second reason why I think, you know, escalation is sort of baked into the framework as it is now.

#Danny

Well, your reasoning, Alistair, seems to be confirmed, or at least being confirmed, in real time. Speaking of Israel, we have here that Israel is saying that Trump has assured Netanyahu that any Iran deal would meet hardline Israeli demands. Israel says President Trump spoke with Benjamin Netanyahu earlier on Thursday, June 11th, about the emerging U.S.-Iran memorandum of understanding that would open formal negotiations. The prime minister's office claimed—Israel's did—that Trump gave Netanyahu a commitment that any final agreement would include these.

It would require the removal of Iran's enriched nuclear material, the dismantling of its enrichment infrastructure, limits on missile production, and an end to Iranian support for allied armed groups across the region. So, Alistair, essentially a non-deal, something that Iran would never, in any conception of reality as it stands today, accept. What do you make of this? I mean, this almost feels like a game that's consistently played by the U.S. administration and the Israeli regime. They go back and forth on articulating this non-deal every time there is a leak or, as you said, information management going on that says, oh no, a deal is close.

#Alastair Crooke

I think there are two things here which are important. I mean, clearly, you know, there's coordination. I mean, look, there are U.S. forces in the Kirya, which is the equivalent of the Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv, as there are in CENTCOM in Florida. So there's continuous coordination on military issues. It's not as if it has to wait on a telephone call to Trump. So they are actually there. CENTCOM is in Tel Aviv, in the Defense Department, and they have their representatives in Florida at the CENTCOM headquarters. So everything is being, if you like, coordinated to a certain extent. So that's true. That is right. But then there's a separate dimension to this.

And that separate dimension is that, for the first time, Netanyahu looks in serious trouble. There is enormous pushback. There was a huge reaction when he stopped the attack on Dahieh, the suburb of Beirut. Across the board, not just from the right but from the opposition groups and secular, all of them said, you know, we have to be able to go in and kill whoever we want in Lebanon. We need to assassinate people as we decide to in Lebanon. And we don't need America's permission or anyone else's permission to do this. And so there was a huge pushback. But generally, there's been big criticism saying that, you know, the entire strategy of Netanyahu has collapsed. It's failed in Iran.

Iran was supposed to be this house of cards that would fold at the first bomb that was dropped on it, and that, you know, there would be an uprising, and then there would be some pliant Dulce Rodriguez-type person installed. And that was what they expected. The Kurds would move in. The

Baluchis would move in. And so it would be, if you like, dismembered into sectarian, ethno-sectarian states. And that hasn't happened, Mr. Netanyahu, at all. On the contrary, as we all know—and I'm referring to what the Israelis are saying and what their intelligence is saying—Iran is emerging stronger and is defiant and has the cause. So this has been a complete failure on your part.

And what's more, there's a complete failure in Lebanon. What is the strategy in Lebanon? How are you going to manage this? In the context that Trump has agreed, there's a ceasefire in Lebanon and across the region, in Iran at the same time. How are you going to manage this? What are you going to do? What are you going to do about Syria? Are you going to widen the war to Syria? And of course, we don't even mention, if you like, Gaza and the Green Zone, which is again boiling up. And what's the solution there? They're partially occupying Gaza. The peace plan of Trump has sort of vanished into thin air. Apparently, it has no money left after all this time. So, you know, everything is crashing.

And so for the first time, the polls showed that Netanyahu could lose the election. Don't forget, if he loses the election, he could go to prison because there are corruption court cases still underway that have not reached a final verdict at this stage. But he continues on the understanding that he's prime minister. So he's really in quite a tight trap and wants to, if you like, try and get out of this. He was hoping that Trump would persuade President Herzog to give Netanyahu a *laissez-passer*, a pardon. But that hasn't been forthcoming. There are legal problems with that, too. So the polls show he wouldn't win.

And Likud, his own party, is getting restless and talking about, you know, maybe coalescing with other groups and all these things that happen unless... And there's a lot of ill feeling because Netanyahu's responding to all of this by carefully putting all his key trustworthy people around into the key positions so that even if he loses the election, he will still be controlling events through all his proxies put into positions in Mossad, in Shin Bet, in security, other security positions, in the judiciary, etc. So, I mean, he's doing this, and this is causing huge anger and pushback and threats. I mean, this is what is in there.

If you look at our Substack, you'll see we cover this very closely, very carefully, about what they're saying about this. But there are these senior Israelis, not all of them, but senior Israelis saying, Israel is sliding towards civil war. If you try and steal the election, then we will have civil war. You've been a failure. You've got it all wrong. And if you try and steal the election, then we'll go on the streets and we'll fight. So, I mean, it's in a very tense state. So to a certain extent, let me put it very clearly in a different way. It is Netanyahu's prime interest to be able to continue to attack Lebanon. Without that, he will look weak, and his opponents will be able to remove him from office.

This is his, if you like, litmus test. And at the same time, for Trump, it's the opposite. The last thing Trump wants now, because of the markets, because of interest rates, because of the economy and inflation, the last thing that he really wants now is for the thing to explode into a wide war across the region with worse impact on the energy situation. Now, he may be totally an ally and, if you like,

a companion of Israel in every meaningful way. But also, I think self-preservation comes into it. But not only for him, but for many Republicans who realize that, you know, they're not going to have a hope in the primaries when it comes up to the midterm elections, because things are looking very, very grim.

And so when all the Republican, you know, prospective, you know, the existing Congress want to go back to get the second term and everything, they're finding they've got to fight primary elections. And it's not so simple. It's not going that easily for them. So I think although there is an overall commonality clearly between Congress, Israel, and the Trump administration, a commonality of vision, of objective — their objective is the destruction of Iran — there is that commonality. But then there are other tactical concerns that do enter into the picture too. Like I've just said, Trump has concerns. Most of what he says, which is nonsense, is to get the market up and to keep the market high, high. He's got to keep it high now, really, until the midterms in November by saying things that will keep the market happy.

And the market seems ready to believe what he tells them. So that's fine if he can keep it up as far as he's concerned. The one thing that would be really disastrous for them is if the Americans wake up every morning, as they are prone to doing, to check their markets. 401(k) — you'll probably correct me and tell me I've got the wrong number — but anyway, that pension fund, to see how the stocks in it are faring. So these are the sort of inwardnesses in the situation. But I agree overall, you know, that Trump understands entirely the Israeli ambition to destroy Iran and agrees with it. And he agrees with the proposition that America should take its oil, because taking its oil will hurt China and will hurt other non-compliant states. Hmm.

#Danny

Well, you know, what's been interesting is that this war has become so unpopular. And as you said, there are big tactical differences. There's always, of course, unity. The United States, Israel — they don't care about Palestinians. They don't care about Lebanese people. They have a huge appetite and tolerance for destruction in many ways. When it comes to the Iran war, these tactical differences have really made an impact, I think, on even the mainstream media in the United States, where, because there is a massive, I think, underbelly of people in the United States and really in the entire world that are pretty sick and tired of this war, you see things like this.

This is CNN. And mind you, CNN is not a peace media organization or a friendly media organization. They have supported every single war the United States has conducted for as long as I can remember, before I was born and onward. But here is what they published. Every time Trump says he's about to come to a deal, we've been noting how he reverses it all. And CNN took the time to actually compile all of these times, and it's only 40 seconds, but it's a staggering number. Here we go.

#Donald Trump

We have major points of agreement. They want to make a deal, and we are very willing to make a deal. I think we're going to end it. I can't tell you for sure when. They want to make a deal so badly — you have no idea how badly they want to make a deal. They want to make a deal so badly. I do see a deal in Iran. We were very close to a deal.

#Donald Trump

I think it's almost over.

#Alastair Crooke

I mean, I view it as very close to being over.

#Donald Trump

It's looking very good that we're going to make a deal with Iran, and it's going to be a good deal. This process should go very quickly. We're going to end that war very quickly. They want to make a deal so badly. We think we're close to a deal. That's OK. We're in the final throes of what will be a very, very good deal.

#CNN News

Today makes 39 times that he's said something like that.

#Danny

So, Alistair, I mean, this is CNN. I mean, truly, I've noticed the shift, you know, over time with all mainstream media organizations and publications, supportive and not supportive of Donald Trump, shifting on their tolerance of this war continuing. What do you think explains this?

#Alastair Crooke

What, that he's doing this to manage markets? Of course, manipulate markets, as I've just said. But I think what is missing from this analysis is really also the impact the Iran conflict is having on the world outside of America and Europe. It's having a huge impact. I mean, the first and most obvious one is to question the whole rationale for trying to negotiate with the United States. I mean, you know, that affects Russia and China directly. You know, I mean, when they watch what's happening in Iran, they say, well, why should we be getting involved in negotiations at all? This obviously is impossible. The second thing is, it's become very apparent to everyone that the aim of the war on Iran, I mean, and admitted publicly, was not to have a sort of Venezuelan regime change in Iran.

It was to destroy Iran, to make it incapable of remaining as a state. And so that's had an impact. It affects China's view about military action and the relationship with the United States, but also Russia. And we see the Russians very clearly changing their defense structures because of this. And there have been a number of articles and statements saying, you know, we have to completely change it. You know, we'd always thought—I mean, I'm paraphrasing—but many there are saying, you know, we had thought that really the West's objective in Russia was to push out Putin and to replace him with one of the oligarch-type figures from the 90s. Not that they exist there anymore, but, I mean, they thought that they could do something like this. You know, the 90s were the model for it.

Now Russia understands that the objective, or they believe that the objective, has been clarified. It is the destruction of Russia completely as a military force, as a state, and its breakup, rather like Iran, into little ethno-sectarian components, weakened and with its resources available for taking, as was nearly achieved in the 90s. But it also questions, opens this whole thing—the attempt to get oil dominance, the attempt to get technology dominance, the attempt to get financial dominance through the dollar hegemony. All of these aspects of trying to keep American power and to impose dominance over states through tariffs, through sanctions, through threats, direct threats, are producing a reaction from Russians who are saying, we need to rethink our whole defense strategy about how we deal and how we come to terms with America.

We need to rethink and recast our economic structure. We need to rethink the whole question of the financial trading system. All these things are now up in the air. So it's a pivotal moment, and Iran is the pivot around which change is coming. It's not going to be just a decline of the United States. This is going to be an abrupt change that is going to take place in the world. And if you want to see the signs of it, look to what was being said at the St. Petersburg Forum or in these other articles that are coming out and what people are saying on Russian television. And it's not very different from what China and the Global South are thinking, even if they don't say it quite as loudly.

#Danny

Yeah, well, we only had one audience question. I think those are great points. And one of them, I think, is the one you can answer in the shorter time you want. They said, will sanctions ever come off of Iran? Why would the U.S.-Israel-GCC countries allow Iran to realize its potential? Good question. Alistair, any final thoughts on this?

#Alastair Crooke

Yes, never. The intent was, for 40 years now, to put Iran in a cage—a cage of sanctions, of tariffs, of UN resolutions, of IAEA inspections, of board decisions by the IAEA, and of total monitoring. And it's breaking out. It's broken out of this cage. And it intends to, as I said to you from the Supreme Leader, no longer just submit to this, but now to dictate the rules of the coming era.

#Danny

I want to thank everyone for watching and for the super chat question, as well as Joshua 4362, who gifted a bunch of memberships. Thanks so much. Make sure you show your appreciation to Alistair for spending his time out here today. You can go to Conflicts Forum Substack in the video description below. That is where you can find all of Alistair's work and what he and his team are following, especially around these regional developments. Everyone, I'll be back tomorrow. Hit the like button. I'll be back tomorrow, I believe at 1 p.m. Eastern time. I'll let you know what is going on. Alistair, any final words before we head out? No, expect the unexpected. Yep, I think that's the only consistency here we can expect. So, everyone, hit the like button. Please support this channel. In the video description, do check it out. And I will be back tomorrow. Bye-bye.