

Nima R. Alkhorshid: Why America's Middle East Strategy Is Collapsing?

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I was talking with Larry Johnson last night, and it was all about the American attack on Iran. And if you remember, the main attack, basically the attack on Iran, was in two parts in the southern part of Iran. One of them was in the Sirik area. Again, the same thing happened the night before, and again they attacked telecommunication, you know, radars in that area. Then we had an attack on Qeshm Island. We had two other...

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Okay. We had... Let me just, yeah, I don't know. Yeah, it seems that my mic was off. So we had two minor attacks on two other islands, which were not significant when it came to the impacts of those attacks. Then the Iranian attacks came after the live last night. And what we've learned so far from the Iranian sources is that they said, basically, in response to what the United States has done, they attacked two air bases — one air base in Kuwait, which is Ali Al-Salem Air Base, and the Fifth Fleet in Bahrain. And I was expecting that they were going to attack some parts of Jordan. It didn't happen. It seems that after assessing the American attacks on Iran, that wasn't significant in their eyes, it seems to me.

That's why they didn't respond. They didn't attack Jordan. So based on what we've learned so far, it says that the IRGC targeted 88 U.S. military infrastructures, including strategic and highly populated shelters, a marine control and data processing center, and the radar communication systems at the Ali Al-Salem Air Base in Kuwait and the Fifth Fleet in Bahrain. This is the outcome of what we've learned from the Iranian sources. So the reason that we are having these sorts of attacks between Iran and the United States basically is because the United States is trying to use the Strait of Hormuz. And you have to remember what the concept of Project Freedom was.

Before Donald Trump announced the ceasefire, he tried to do some sort of operation in the Persian Gulf, which he called Project Freedom — basically sending as many of these tankers, ships, vessels in that area to pass through the Strait of Hormuz in order to reduce the Iranian control, the Iranian dominance on the Strait of Hormuz, and basically using the routes that were not designated by

Iranian forces, by the IRGC. That was the whole project, supported by the military power of the United States. So that project failed in less than 12 hours. And he said, the project is done.

We're done with that because Saudi Arabia, if you remember, Saudi Arabia with other countries together said, we're not going to be part of this Project Freedom because that would again make them the targets, the main targets of the Iranian military, for Iranian missiles and drones. That was the decision in those days. Then we had an MOU, a sort of document between the two sides, a document to deescalate. Basically, look at the points, look at the clauses in this document. It's all about how to deescalate the situation in the Middle East, in the Persian Gulf, and in the whole region, going not only from the Persian Gulf to Lebanon. I would say somehow it was in the mind of the Iranian delegation that they were going to talk about Gaza and Palestine as well.

That was the whole plan on the part of the Iranians. On the part of the United States, the objectives were different. Donald Trump was desperate because he tried each and every solution he could. After the attacks, he saw they were running out of targets in Iran. That's why we saw how they attacked hospitals, bridges, all those civilian infrastructures in Iran, which weren't that much of a burden or pressure on the military, because the military was somehow capable of protecting itself and fighting back, hitting back on American bases in GCC countries and even going beyond GCC countries to targets in Israel. So then he came up with Project Freedom.

Project Freedom didn't work. Then Donald Trump came with the concept of a blockade. "I'm going to put a blockade on Iran, and they're going to, you know, they're going to capitulate." Then what happened later on was he said that with the blockade, all their oil facilities were going to explode because they had to export oil and gas, and without exporting, everything was going to blow up and explode. That didn't happen, which I told you, because we know the history of Iran. You know, there were years, even during the first Trump administration, when Iran was not able to export a single barrel of oil out of Iran. So they knew how to deal with these sorts of problems. That wasn't a big issue for Iranians.

Then Donald Trump came back and said, okay, everything, let's sign a document, an MOU. And the MOU, basically what they're trying to do, based on what we've seen so far, is that he's trying to do Project Freedom under the new document, Project Freedom, right now using the tankers, you know, the vessels, and convincing them that they can use the routes close to the Omani border or the Omani part of the Strait of Hormuz. So that's why you see Marco Rubio going to the region, talking with countries like Bahrain, Kuwait, and the UAE, and trying to put pressure. I assume that he tried to do that with Saudi Arabia and Qatar and other countries as well, to put pressure on the Omani government, because right after the negotiations between Iran and the United States in Switzerland, the Iranian delegation, once they got back home, went to Oman and talked with the head of the Iranian parliament together with the Iranian foreign minister.

They went to Oman, talking with the Omani government to define the new mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz. And based on the MOU and what has been documented in the MOU, they have to define

a new mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz within the first 30 days after signing the document. So basically, they were not wasting time. They went there to talk with the Omani government, and they had a joint statement after the meeting saying that the new mechanism is in the process of being defined. And during the 60 days after signing the MOU, basically all these vessels, tankers, and ships can pass through the Strait of Hormuz without paying any sort of toll or fee.

And in the mind of Iranians, there are two arguments in Iran. One argument says they have to pay tolls, and we have to have some sort of toll system. But the other side, you know, wants to do it more legally, based on international law. So they're trying to define it as a fee, as an environmental fee, service fee, something like that, and basically legalize the whole system based on international law. And this is the fight somehow between the different parts of the government, basically two factions in Iran that are not that much different when it comes to foreign policy, but when it comes to how to implement that, they have their differences, and the differences are significant, in my opinion.

So what is happening right now is that the new fee system is being defined, in my opinion, in the process of being defined by the two sides, while the United States is trying to use those routes that are close to the Omani border, to the Omani side, to pass through the Strait of Hormuz and make the movement without, you know, ignoring the dominance or the routes designated by Iran or the IRGC in the region. That's why you see Iran is firing at those tankers that are not following the rules of the Strait. This is the problem in that region. So we had an attack on a Singaporean-flagged tanker the night before last night or the day before yesterday. And the night before last night, we had the American attack on Iran in the southern part. It wasn't significant. That's why Iran attacked with two or five drones on Bahrain, because the impact was not that much.

It wasn't of importance for Iran. Then last night, again, because Iran is trying to do the same—controlling all the ships and tankers in the strait, dominating the region—they have to use the routes designated by Iranian authorities in that industry. And then you see the United States attacking Iran. The attack was somehow intensified on Iran. That's why Iran decided to hit eight targets in these two bases: Ariel Salem Air Base in Kuwait and the Fifth Fleet in Bahrain. So this is one part of what is going on. I think what is so important, which is my understanding of the Strait of Hormuz, is that it doesn't matter what the United States is trying to do.

This is a war of attrition. What the United States is trying to do is this hit for that. They're not going to stay there forever because they have to use... Last night I was talking, I was... We don't know where... We don't have the intelligence. We don't know these fighter jets. Where is the location of these fighters? Where do they come from when they come to the Iranian border to attack Iran? I assume they're not using Saudi Arabian airspace, because if that was the case, Iran would hit Saudi Arabia. That's my understanding.

And it seems that they're using their aircraft carriers in the region, which, you know, getting close to the Iranian borders and then going back, is a significant distance. And they have to be refueled in

this sort of attack at least two times, to my understanding. And then, is that sustainable for the United States? I don't think so. And I don't think that the GCC countries are prepared to provide the United States with that sort of help that they had been receiving during the war, the 39 days of war. So they have to stay out of the airspace of GCC countries.

If they're using that, Iran would know that, and they're going to attack all those countries that are participating and cooperating with the United States. That's why I think that in the long run, this is a desperate move on the part of the Trump administration. And I don't know why they are doing this. Because when we're talking about the Trump administration and their behavior and their decisions, we're basically trying to find some sort of logic behind what's going on. Nothing is logical. Nothing is rational. They basically decide on maybe, I don't know, who's behind all these decisions. Is that Pete Hegseth, Marco Rubio, or Donald Trump himself?

It seems that Donald Trump knows everything. And because last night, again, he tweeted that, "I'm going to wipe Iran off the map." This is basically against what's written in the first clause of the MOU between Iran and the United States. The first clause—let me read the first clause word by word—it says: "The United States and Iran and their allies in the current war declare the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon, and undertake from now on not to initiate any war or any military operation against each other." Against each other. It's not between Iran and Singapore or the Singaporeans. This is the other concept. It's about Iran and the United States and their allies. Basically, they're talking about Lebanon and Iran on one side, and the United States and Israel on the other side.

And to refrain from the threat or use of force against each other and ensure the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon. You know, for such a long time, you remember when Iran started negotiating or sending messages to the United States, even with the first negotiations between Iran and the United States in Islamabad. As Iran calls this MOU Islamabad 3D, or sometimes the Islamabad MOU, because they reached that agreement in Islamabad. Then J.D. Vance got back and said, oh, we're not going to do this and that, and all of those difficulties they had. But basically, it's based on a 10-point plan, then a 14-point plan, then it was discussed in Islamabad. Later on, in Switzerland, it was signed. So what the United States is trying to do—two issues for the United States.

Because of the Strait of Hormuz, Iran had the leverage to put Lebanon in the MOU. So what is the reaction? Donald Trump, on one side, tries to reduce the Iranian dominance, to diminish the Iranian influence in the region in order to somehow free the Strait of Hormuz. But by putting pressure, by the way, on the Omani government—they're under tremendous pressure. Nobody's talking about it, but they're putting a lot of pressure. If you remember, Donald Trump once said he's going to bomb Oman. And if they don't behave, I'm going to bomb them. This is the reality. This is on the surface when he's talking about it. I would assume behind the scenes they're putting a lot of pressure on the Omani government. But the problem is, Omanis are not in charge of the Strait of Hormuz. They're not in charge. They're not controlling the Strait of Hormuz.

The Strait of Hormuz is totally dominated and controlled by the IRGC. Not only the IRGC—it's basically separated into two parts, the western part and the eastern part. One part is controlled by the IRGC, and the other part is controlled by the Iranian army, with complete cooperation between the two parts of the Iranian military. So they call it the Iranian army—they call it Artesh in Iran. We have Sepah, or IRGC—they call it IRGC in English, but its name in Persian is Sepah. And the other part is the army of Iran, you know, it existed before the revolution, and after the revolution it was reformed, and, you know, the new structure came to the Iranian army, which is called Artesh right now. Both of them are cooperating right now in the Strait of Hormuz control district.

So the other point is the case of Lebanon. It's so important to understand what they're doing. This is a play. This is a game. It's all about a game. Nothing of importance is happening under the MOU, Memorandum of Understanding. What has happened so far? They're talking about Iranian frozen assets, to release Iranian frozen assets. Nothing has happened so far. Nothing significant has happened so far. And letting Iran lift the sanctions on the Iranian energy sector—it didn't happen so far. It's in the process of happening, but it didn't happen. The blockade, withdrawing the blockade on Iran, then the Iranian blockade on the Strait of Hormuz, and letting Iran sell its oil, which was the case before this war started—Iran didn't have any sort of difficulties exporting its oil.

So basically nothing is happening with the case. Iran is gaining nothing, and the United States is trying to play around and somehow manipulate the whole situation with the Strait of Hormuz. My understanding is, if the United States continues with these sorts of attacks, which would be a war—some sort of war of attrition—they're not going to be able to continue that war unless they try to do something significant, a full-out war, which would be devastating for both sides. I would say Iran is totally prepared, their stockpile is full, and they've managed to replace all those missiles and drones that have been used before. They're improving significantly their air defense system in the southern part of Iran.

If something happens, if the United States decides to get closer with the fighter jets to the Iranian borders, then they're gonna see how significantly the air defense system of Iran has improved. And in the coming days, we have some reports within the Iranian media that there will be a huge sort of improvement happening in the coming days, not in the coming weeks. And it's all about the air defense system of Iran. They have the system called Bavar, and they have the new system, Arash the Archer. This is the new one, which is very capable. You remember the latest American attack when they wanted to hit the oil facility, the gas facility in Assalouyeh, and they tried to hit that with cruise missiles. Two of those cruise missiles that were targeting the facility there in Assalouyeh, in the southern part of Iran, were intercepted by Iranian air defense, which was significant. Iran didn't have those capabilities before the war started.