

Alastair Crooke: Iran OBLITERATES US Air Base & HIMARS, Trump's War IMPLODING

Alastair Crooke discusses round 4 of war between the US and Iran as the two countries trade strikes. Iran has shown its strength with massive ballistic missile strikes against US bases from the UAE to Jordan, but the US is not relenting. What is really happening, and what comes next? Join us to find out. <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 #iranwar #trump

#Danny

Welcome back, everyone. As you can see, I am joined by Alistair Crooke, a retired diplomat and geopolitical analyst, to break down the latest news. First, we go to Iran's retaliation overnight in the last 24 hours, which has been massive, as CENTCOM reported, striking dozens of targets in Iran. Iran responded in a big way. These are the targets over the last 24 hours. Some of them that are incredibly notable are that, according to Iran, at least three U.S. troops have been killed in Kuwait by its strikes. Around three ballistic missiles hit a ATACMS missile system and a HIMARS missile system during these strikes. Fars News also reports that in Jordan, the Prince Hassan Air Base has been absolutely obliterated by ballistic missiles and drones. Fuel tanks, ammunition depots, and several large missile storage facilities were taken out of service.

And as CENTCOM reported, its own strikes. Now, Alistair, Donald Trump this morning responded to all of this by essentially putting back on the blockade. This is what he said: he said the Strait is open and will remain open with or without Iran. We are reinstating the Iranian blockade, saying that he is going to be the guardian—hold on one second—the guardian of the Strait of Hormuz. I'll put that up in a second because I have the wrong graphic up. But Alistair, how about you respond to these developments? What exactly has been happening? Why is it now that we are in the third straight night of strikes between the U.S. and Iran, and this doesn't seem like it's going to let up anytime soon?

#Alastair Crooke

I think it actually is a classic Trump exploit. During the funeral celebrations, commemorations, I think Trump decided that he could pull a fast one, that the leadership in Iran would be naturally

preoccupied with these huge, extraordinary commemoration marches and processions. And also, it was very complex, ranging across from one city to another and then to Iraq. And so I think he imagined that Iran was off the ball, and so he decided to try and slip through a fast one. So the U.S. Navy lined up a number of ships—one was a liquefied gas tanker, and others were ordinary oil tankers—and said that they were going to sail through the American channel, what they call the American channel, in other words, the Omani channel that was going to hug the territorial waters of Oman and through to the Sea of Oman.

And, of course, Iran didn't have its eye off the ball. It had its eye very much on the Hormuz ball, and so it struck all of these ships to different degrees. Some of them were just warned off, turned around, went back. A couple of them were hit. One was set on fire. I think that was the liquefied gas vessel that was set on fire. And the attempt to establish a channel free from Iran, run by the Americans, failed. And what we've been seeing since then is a series of escalations in retaliation for that event. Trump was clearly absolutely furious that his attempt had failed. It was to be one of those quick wins.

While the funeral was going on, we opened the straits, and they now remain open and under U.S. control. And of course, the Iranians showed that they weren't under U.S. control—they were under very clearly Iranian control. So first of all, then the U.S. struck Iranian targets. And look, without going into the details, which would, I think, you know, be too much for the audience anyway, I mean, they struck most of the usual targets. These were missile sites and radars around the edges of Hormuz, in an upgrading of the American strikes. There was an escalation of the American strikes—140 targets, I think, were struck on that night. So it was an upgrading.

But what then followed, I think, was a surprise to the Americans, because not only did the Iranians retaliate, they escalated up the ladder themselves and visibly took out key strategic assets of the Americans, the principal one being the Jordan Air Base. They seem to have struck this super drone that the Americans had there that cost something like \$430 million. It hasn't been seen since. Its hangar is smoldering. And they struck a number of other hangars there, which were probably housing American aircraft. But the main attacks by the Iranians were on Kuwait and Bahrain, and also on the UAE. But Kuwait and Bahrain were hammered—hammered, really, Bahrain particularly.

But Kuwait, because Kuwait was using surface-based attack missiles against Iran. And the Iranians seem to have taken out most of these attack missiles. It was a big attack on that. And so Trump is caught in his escalation trap, I think. Professor Pope keeps referring to this, but it is correct. I mean, it's nothing new. You know, generally in warfare, you try and stay in control of the escalatory ladder. Well, Iran is controlling the escalatory ladder, and Trump is simply reacting to it, and reacting to it seemingly more out of emotional anger than having thought things through.

Because for every escalation, the Iranians have been escalating and continuing to escalate over these last few days. So we're now, and, you know, within all of this, we had the rant at the G7 when Trump used really sort of playground language against Iran and denigrated them in every way he

could, not really befitting the leader of a great country. But nonetheless, that's what he did. So he was very, very angry, still very angry. And so now we have this sort of stupidity reaching new heights, because now Trump has declared, and CENTCOM put out a statement saying the Hormuz is open.

I think it was only a few hours ago they put out a statement saying Hormuz is fully open, although there are serious considerations about using the strait's security situation. But Hormuz is open, precisely at the same time that Iran has declared Hormuz is closed. Yes, one tanker has passed through. I think in the last 24 hours one tanker has passed through. But it was on the Iranian channel, and I think it was going to China. So it is closed. I mean, before, when I was asked the question, is it open or closed, I used to say it's both. It's both open and closed in the sense it was, to a certain extent, open to the allies of Iran, but it was very firmly closed to adversaries, either Gulf state adversaries or to European or American adversaries.

So it seems that Trump is now locking himself into further escalation. I mean, his statement—you didn't read the other one—said that, you know, I think, which has just come out, "We're going to take it. All the oil of Iran is ours. All its gas is ours. Everything of Iran is ours, and we are going to take it." I think he said this in the last couple of hours after that statement that it's open. Again, I mean... So what we're dealing with, I think it's important to say here, because we can't pretend we're dealing with strategy. We're talking about, you know, someone—you're asking me, well, what's America's strategy? There isn't a strategy. It's what Trump feels emotionally, and clearly he's very much on edge about this Iranian thing because he does read the polls.

He may not read much else, but he does read the polls, and he knows that trouble is looming very much. So he's very much on edge. And so the bottom line of these three days, I would say, is yes, the United States has struck targets—140 in this period—and I think some more later, 60 more or so. But largely they are targets they've already struck before. I mean, so they're doing, you know, yes, they're doing some damage, but the Iranians are doing far more serious and strategic damage to the United States in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan, particularly in Jordan now, and indeed off Oman, because they've also destroyed the United States refueling depot that served the two carriers that have been in position.

I think they've moved away now from standing off Iran, quite understandably, because I think the Iranians fired some missiles to tell them, "Back off. Go away. Otherwise, something more serious could happen." And so we've seen that, and we've also seen, you know, events taking place between Yemen and Saudi Arabia in this last period. You know, I don't want to sort of overcomplicate it, but this is important because, I mean, I think we see that Bab al-Mandab is closing. It's in the process. The Yemenis are in the process. I think already one tanker has been—I'm not quite sure—hit with what, or if it's confirmed. So let's leave it as problematic.

But I think we are moving towards plan B. You know, Hormuz is closed and Bab al-Mandab is moving towards being closed too. So Iran is clearly in control of the escalatory ladder—escalatory

ladder, say that correctly—and it is moving up. And it seems, and I think this is so, but not for reasons that are sort of geopolitical, but more sort of emotional-political reasons. He wants to appear tough, and he wants to appear that the United States is acting strongly because this is about the midterms and about his sense. And, you know, we have to put it in the wider context. Almost all of Trump's projects at the moment are in some sort of difficulty, some of them in quite serious difficulty.

The Russian project, which he thought he was going to turn to as a sort of, you know, to get away from Hormuz and to sort of have a diversion back to the Russia project, is going very much in the wrong direction. The economy is going. And this is of primordial importance to Trump. He has to keep the stock market up. He has to keep them happy because, as you know, you live there. And I think I've said that to you every morning. Americans look at their sort of retirement portfolios to see if it is up or if it is down. And it's crucial for them in those terms. But I mean, this whole thing is becoming much more and more fragile—the economy, and therefore the relationship with China as well as with Russia, in terms of, you know, yet more, if you like, sanctioning and more.

Europe is just doing its 21st round of sanctions on Russia, etc. But I think why it's so fragile and why this enters into the equation is really on two counts. Obviously, the first one is how long before the refineries in the United States start running short of sour crude, of sulfurized crude. I mean, I can't give the absolute answer to that, but the experts are suggesting it may be as little as nine days. The cost of sour crude—this is different from light crude—and the importance of sour crude is it's the only element, the sort of middle distillate, that can be transformed into diesel on the one hand, or on the other, kerosene, but not both at the same time.

Kerosene is what you need for aircraft fuel, and it's desperately short. America, of course, has oil, and it comes from the fracking, the Permian fracking fields. But that's light crude. It doesn't translate into diesel; it can't be refined into that. The sour crude either comes from Venezuela or it comes from the Middle East, but there isn't any of it. I've seen the cost and the difference. The huge cost of that sour crude that the refineries are having to pay means that producing diesel is not profitable anymore. I mean, the spread is huge. I think they're paying hundreds for sour crude, but they're not going to recoup that. And certainly, Trump is trying to keep the price of diesel and gasoline down artificially.

This is just one aspect. The other aspect is really that the whole financial system has been so heavily dependent on this huge investment into artificial intelligence. And 1.4 trillion, I think, is going to be invested into it if they can find the money. But the banks have been, recently in these last days, to just give you an idea, getting really scared about how much money they've got tied up in AI when there is, we've heard going around, a US Treasury report that hasn't been issued yet saying the AI situation is really bad. And it is reminiscent of the dot-com bust years ago and 2008. But worse, it is far more embedded throughout the economy than the dot-com boom.

And so there's anxiety, which is separate, about AI — the whole bubble of AI — with China quietly moving ahead to make cheaper and cheaper products, and more and more Western firms turning to Chinese open-source products, which are almost within a few percent as effective, if not the same effectiveness, as their very expensive Western counterparts. So that is sort of bubbling away. And then you have the question: when is the moment when this supply, I mean, when the strategic reserve simply hits rock bottom and Trump says there isn't going to be — we're going to have to ration diesel? And everything is being played down to try and keep this going.

You know, nobody sort of talks about it. The press doesn't refer to it. It's all, oh, the market, the market's fine. The economy is fine. It's going up. It's strong. Oil prices are going down. Oil prices are going down. Exactly. So all of this is, you know, I mean, this has become because it's all geared to financialized asset creation — asset creation that is then used to borrow and leverage more. And so you have a lot of people who are buying three-times-levered ETFs — those are exchange-traded funds — who are focusing on some part of the market, usually AI, but then they're borrowing to borrow for the leveraged funds, which are already three times leveraged over that asset value.

It is a sort of a Ponzi scheme. More and more money has to go in to keep it up. Banks are now taking money away and trying to spread it around. It's nicely put, but the banks — U.S. banks — say it very, very kindly, saying they're trying to diversify the risk from their big credit providers and sort of diffuse it among the smaller clients who might like to take a share in the AI credit. It's incredible. So how long is it going to go on, this escalation? I don't think that Trump has the wherewithal to do a full conflict with Iran. If he does, the U.S. will lose it. But if he goes on with these tit-for-tat operations, that too — how long can that last?

I would say there are sort of the severe limitations of, one, what we've discussed. I mean, how long before we suddenly find, you know, delivery trucks can't get diesel, farmers can't get diesel? How long is that? Well, you have to ask an oil market person who's expert in that. But what I hear is not long at all. The other thing is really, and this is much more difficult, I think, how long before the hurt of having to admit he was wrong on Iran, and that it's been a defeat and a failure — how long before the hurt that he's feeling from that is overcome by a sense that, you know, it's too late now, I've got to do something, it's got to change, we've got to do something. What can he do?

Well, the only thing that really will resolve the Hormuz question is to finally come to the realistic understanding that Iran controls Hormuz and intends to continue to control Hormuz, and it will derive revenue from the control of Hormuz. And that's the reality, and there is not going to be any great development in the MOU. It's comatose, also because the U.S. has now withdrawn the waivers that allowed Iran to sell its oil. Fortunately for Iran, it got many tankers through that had been sitting in Hormuz that week. So they will probably return empty and then sit in Hormuz to wait out this period. And so then, of course, there is Lebanon and there is Israel. And these are the black swans flying around that we don't quite know what form they'll take. Clearly, the whole thing with Lebanon has been a disaster — Trump again trying to play clever.

#Alastair Crooke

Trying to play cute while Vance was trying to organize a sort of coordination mechanism for Lebanon that included Iran and even, well, by Iran I mean the IRGC and Qatar and others. Then you had Rubio in Washington lining up the three ambassadors of Lebanon, the United States, and Israel to come up with a paper that completely contradicts the MOU and furthermore contradicts the Lebanese constitution, and is therefore unenforceable and has no real validity. But nonetheless, of course, Netanyahu has leapt on this as a sort of life jacket that's been thrown to him by Rubio, saying, yeah, we're never going to leave. The Defense Minister Katz says this all the time.

We didn't ask permission to go into Lebanon, and we're not going to ask permission from anyone to leave Lebanon, and we don't intend to leave anyway. We're going to be there for good. And they're putting settlers into Syria. There was a whole group of settlers that was transferred into Syria to settle outposts. Turkey is acting in a different way. It's putting in radar systems and infrastructure in the north of Syria. The Yemen-Saudi war has now started up again, with Iran breaking the siege, and now again an Iranian plane landed that was prevented from landing in the north but went down to Hodeidah airfield to land. So Netanyahu has every interest. He is in an escalatory trap too, because he knows that any sign of weakness will lose him the election.

He has not got a pardon, so losing the election could mean going to prison because he faces charges of corruption, long-standing charges. And the only reason he is not facing the verdict on these charges is as long as he serves as prime minister. So if he loses the election, it's very serious for him. So there's a huge crisis in Israel, a big, big crisis, because he's filling posts with his proxy people, his friends, mostly more moderate, easing out some of the more radical elements. His own party, the Likud, are not liking this one bit. But more importantly, he's been saying, well, or at least, you know, the party's been saying, well, we don't have to abide by the Supreme Court. And this is being understood by many serious figures in Israel.

They're saying what he's saying is he's going to gerrymander the result. He's not going to accept the election result. And if that's the case, then Israel could easily slip into civil war. In fact, we produced a report on that which was out, I think, yesterday on our Substack — a detailed account written and pulled together by Ashley of what people are saying. And you will get an understanding directly from the main intelligence and security leaders saying that we are on the verge of civil war. I mean, the way things are looking, it's very, very serious here. I don't think this is widely understood in the West. Perhaps I'm wrong, but that's what I sense. Anyway, I strongly recommend that you read it. It's out on the Substack. It's called "The Invitation to Civil War."

But I mean, you know, these are very serious documents that are just not getting any attention. I think in Washington or in Europe, everyone just sails on, not looking at the problems. So, you know, it's building up with Russia. It's building up here with Iran. They cannot see that, you know, Trump, because of his character traits, because of his emotional traits, may well continue to try and

escalate. And Netanyahu will try and do all sorts of things to pull Trump back into all-out war against Iran. And the Iranians will respond in a very major way with new ways of fighting the war, new weapons, and new tactics that we haven't yet seen. We don't know quite what they are. They hint at things, but it's only hints at the moment.

#Danny

Yeah, that's really important context, Alasdair, to understand what is going on now and why. And I wanted to ask you a question actually about Israel. You know, Al Jazeera published an explainer on what's different about this particular escalation. One point they made that I don't agree with is that they are claiming that both sides are being more restrained than in the initial period. But one question I had for you is that they cited that Israel has not been a target in this latest escalation. And on the other side, Israel or the United States is claiming, at least, that Israel is not involved in this latest escalation.

And, of course, we know that Iran has not been targeting Israel in this latest escalation. Why has this change occurred in this latest round, in your opinion? Because some people in the audience have actually been quite frustrated that Israel has not been a target by Iran, essentially in large part because Israel has been housing a lot of U.S. military assets in recent weeks, because the initial period of escalation of this war forced the United States to move a lot there, particularly to Ben-Gurion. What's your opinion on this?

#Alastair Crooke

Well, I can understand that there is frustration. There is, by the way, frustration within Iran. If you looked at the mood of the Iranians during the funeral, I mean, they are in a mood of real desire to see revenge, and against the United States principally, because they hold Trump responsible for the killing of the Supreme Leader of Iran. But I think what we're looking at is Iran has been thinking things through very carefully, just as it hasn't been involved with the Yemenis to try and close Bab al-Mandab yet. But they see the need, I think, to keep control. Iran wants to keep control of the escalatory ladder.

And so they want to have things that they can bring into play at the right moment to change the whole battlescape. And they are very ready to hit Israel, and your listeners should have absolutely no doubt about it. It's all prepared and it's all ready. And they have missiles and new weapons, as I understand it, that we haven't seen yet. And Israel understands that too. America, I think, is trying to sort of go not only into this sort of tit-for-tat game with Iran, hoping that it's going to force a change in position by Iran, even though I think everyone thinks this won't happen. I mean, by everyone, I mean even everyone in Washington doesn't believe that Iran is about to sort of capitulate to Trump as he demands.

#Alastair Crooke

What we're seeing really is a huge shift. America seems to be becoming rather frustrated with Netanyahu. I mean, they're saying that Netanyahu has misled them and blaming him for, if you like, the problems, the crisis that the United States is facing politically, internally. And so they're trying to think of a different way of putting pressure on Iran. And so one of the ways, of course, was to do it through Lebanon, and that was the reason for this agreement with one small faction of the Lebanese government who was only too ready to do business with Israel and to act on Israel's behalf to disarm Hezbollah. And also then there was an effort, as I say, to put settlements into Syria, to put settlements into the West Bank.

There's been a big increase in settlement activity, but the Palestinians are being slowly pushed towards, really, concentration camps. I mean, they call them something different, but fenced-off sort of secure communities. And then there's Iraq, and then there's Yemen. And Iraq is crucial. Very crucial. And I think this is where the incredible sort of display of Iranian—I don't use the word "power" because that's got too much of a military connotation—but this was civilizational strength being demonstrated, clear civilizational strength and depth and history. And it was on display in a size we've never seen before, however many million finally participated.

But that was not just the numbers, it was the fervor and the energy of the people that demonstrated and were part of it. And I think this is, you know, people talk about it as soft power. It's more than soft power. It is really hinting, going back to, you know, the 19th-century Islamic Renaissance, which failed. But here is a renaissance of a different sort. It's not clear what its contours are going to be exactly, but a new, if you like, force, a civilizational force. Not necessarily Shia, not necessarily Sunni, but Ummah, striking the chord of the Islamic community as a whole. And that resonates in Iraq. It may not resonate in bits of the Gulf, but it certainly resonates in Iraq and Pakistan and much of the rest of the world.

So I think that Iran is playing out this game with a great deal of foresight. I think they can see that the elections in Israel are fairly soon—October, I think, 10th or something like that. They have got to be held by the 11th. The elections are being held in Israel. The midterms are coming up in America. And I think that they can see that there are huge shifts taking place across the world and that the momentum of this change is moving Iran's way. And there's always a Chinese saying, which doesn't appeal to those of a Western way of mind—and I can't get it right, and you will, so you can correct me—is action through inaction. I don't know if you have the right Chinese terms for that, but it's a deep way of thinking that sometimes you can achieve things by not doing things rather than just doing things.

And I think, therefore, Iran is calculating this quite deeply about, you know, what could we achieve by action against Israel at this moment? I mean, first of all, it will extend us and other things. We have two principal points of leverage, which the Supreme Leader emphasizes all the time. One is Hormuz. Hormuz is our strength, as they keep saying, our atomic weapon. And then, of course, it is Lebanon. Because the Israelis are faring badly. They are losing in Lebanon. They have little

agreements by which they say they're going to only give up three pilot areas in Lebanon under this agreement signed in Washington. Actually, they hadn't even occupied two of them, so it wasn't too difficult to say they were not taking them on. And, I mean, they've been suffering heavy casualties, and the Israeli army is saying, we're not going to be able to keep this. It's not going to work.

We can't keep this going. So, I mean, the army is, I mean, really in trouble—deep trouble. Again, you'll see things, and we've been writing about this—the army themselves saying, you know, we'd need seven or eight times the IDF to manage what we're supposed to be managing now. Not just one of them, but eight of them. So morale, all of this, is facing difficulties. So how does this play? And then you had Rahm Emanuel go to Israel and say, well, I don't know if I'm going to run for president, but I can tell you, you're going to have to, Israel, you're going to have to change a lot, a lot, a lot if I become president. You can't go on like you're going on; you're going to have to go back to something like what you were.

So, you know, and that's coming from a possible Democratic candidate for 2028. So, I mean, I think they're carefully looking at this and thinking, you know, let us take action where it's effective, where we can see what we're trying to achieve. And sometimes non-action, you know, the old Napoleonic tradition: don't make noise when your enemy is committing a mistake. Don't disturb him when he is in the process of committing bad mistakes. I mean, the Chinese fit quite closely with that Napoleonic sort of sense that once you see your enemy making strategic mistakes, stay quiet and let it happen. And I think that's an element to it, too.

I know there are people who, and certainly, you know, I mean, the young people, you know, and a lot of them are hyped up and angry and revolutionary in spirit, which is great to see. But, you know, someone has got, at the same time, to turn these emotions and things into a future idea of what it is to be Iranian today, in 2026. I mean, how, you know, what that means—what is Iran about, what is its mission—and to find how to pull the history, the civilizational history of Iran, which goes beyond, you know, I mean, Shiism was formally adopted, I think, in the 15th or 16th centuries in Iran.

But before that, there were other expressions which may resonate powerfully too, because they're so embedded in Shiism—about the idea of light and darkness, of the Zoroastrian inheritance that the Iranians had and still have in parts. But it is a struggle between uplifting light, pursuing, going to it, against the dark elements that we see on display only too obviously in the West these days. I think that sort of pulling—the vectors pulling us down as opposed to looking up to a light—you know, it's something that transcends. I mean, it's in Shia Islam, but it transcends it too. It's something that even Westerners can understand and think this is something important, and the way out of our nihilistic trap that we are in, always going down, down—the sort of corruption, the sort of money-grabbing, materialist, lying establishment.

How does one rise above and look to values to find a society that represents not just human rights, but, you know, what it is to be human, what it is to have a civilization, these sorts of things? So I think—I'm sorry, that's rather a long explanation to your question of why isn't Iran attacking Israel

at this time. But I hope it makes some sense, and it's not in any way saying, you know, that they're pulling back from it, or they don't want to, or they can't. I'm not saying any of that. Quite the opposite. I'm saying it's absolutely there and may well happen at some stage, but the Iranians do think these things through very, very carefully.

#Danny

Yeah, you probably remember former Chinese President Jiang Zemin, who coined the phrase “hide your strength, bide your time.” And I feel like Iran reflects this quite well, you know, quite to a T in many ways, and then shows its strength when the time is right. And then we have Donald Trump, and I'll just play this. This was his reaction to the weekend's activities. I feel like the United States, especially under Donald Trump, especially the way that Trump approaches things, represents the opposite of this. And here is how he reacted to the developments this weekend.

#Speaker 1

Most of their equipment is gone. Their anti-aircraft weapons are gone. We hit them very hard last night. Every time they send a drone, we hit them very hard. We had a deal, but nobody knows. We had a deal. It was a done deal. And then they always break it. We've had 10 deals with these people. And so we're just going to hit them very hard. And we're going to keep the Strait line. And we'll probably run it. We'll become the guardian of the Strait. Maybe we'll call it the guardian angel of the Strait. And we should be reimbursed for that. When we do that, we're going to be reimbursed because the other nations are very wealthy that are on our side. And we can't be expected to do that for nothing, unlike we had for many years. So...

#Danny

Trump and the United States will become guardians of the Strait. Now, Dropsite News says that every single point—they just did a little analysis of the MOU—has essentially been reversed by the United States since the beginning up until now. And now there's talk, of course, of the blockade restarting, only on Iran, as I put up earlier at the beginning of the show. None of this appears, Alistair, to—how should I say—add up. Because if the blockade comes back on, and the United States says it's going to control the Strait, that means Iran is likely going to continue to take even more stringent measures to control it, which then leads to the Strait of Hormuz. It doesn't take much. It's not a huge waterway at all. Continue to react to that. So, your thoughts about this?

#Alistair Crooke

Well, a little bit about, as I said earlier, I think we're dealing with a man who is really on the edge. I think he thought he would get a deal quite easily because he completely misread Iran, and also because the Israelis provided him with their intelligence, which he assumed had some validity, when it turns out to have been a great error, a great mistake—one of the big intelligence failures of this

period—suggesting that Iran was a house of cards and it only needed one puff of wind and it would fall down. So I think... I think that he is heading into almost a sort of self-destruction.

We're not talking about the destruction of Iran or necessarily America, but I think we're talking about a man who has some psychological characteristics where he cannot bring himself to say he was wrong. He always has to blame someone else. It has to be either one of his colleagues or someone, but someone's to blame. Everything that goes wrong, he has to blame someone else. So he has this character and this personality that, with the Iranians having put him into a trap—into an escalatory trap deliberately—is now reaching this point really of self-destruction. Because, I mean, it is going to destroy him, probably politically and at the polls. And is he self-reflective enough to see that?

I think probably he must be seeing that. Perhaps the death of Lindsey Graham may have sort of brought home to him that, you know, mortality and everything else may be something more. But I do think that we need to look at this in terms of, um, and then think about it in a different way—think about it not only as a person, a figure, a tragic figure, truly tragic in the Greek sense of tragedy. I mean, the Greek sense of tragedy was always one in which you can see the events unfold, which are tragic, and that they will unfold not because you don't see them or don't understand them, but because of the nature of the participants in that tragedy.

And that their nature is such that the tragedy has to happen and will happen. And that is the nature of Greek tragedy. And I think what we're seeing is the tragedy of Donald Trump—his nature is such, the conditions that he has put himself into, for reasons we still don't quite understand. I mean, Tucker Carlson has said to us several times that he spoke to him and warned him that he was going to destroy himself publicly, destroy himself in many ways. And, you know, the danger to Trump is huge. I mean, when I'm talking about self-destruction, of course, if there is a big swing towards the Democrats in the House, of course, there are going to be all sorts of legal processes started against Trump.

I mean, he's experienced this once. This will be much more serious. There will be, you know, actions to remove him or to imprison him. Who knows? And I think he must be quite frightened. So I think we should see it really in those terms—that we're seeing a Greek tragedy play out where the person cannot help himself. It is his nature, and because of his nature, the tragedy will unfold, and he will destroy himself by that tragedy. Shakespeare had a number of examples of how that plays out. So the great danger is, of course, I mean, it's also wholly unpredictable.

I would say explosive, you know, when the sort of thing, when, you know, the king, the emperor, self-destructs. I mean, you have no idea what will be the forces and energies that will be unleashed by this. We have no idea what the consequences will be. We have no idea what it will do to the economy. And the economy is, as you gather, I mean, there'll be many people who disagree and say the economy is strong, it'll weather this and everything. Well, I disagree. I mean, I beg to differ. I think the economy is quite fragile, and certainly the European one is even more fragile. And so we

don't know what will come from this. So I see it in those terms rather than what will he do or what's going to happen. I think he's probably set the conditions for this to unfold now. And probably Netanyahu has also set the conditions for it to unfold too.

And what is that going to do to Israel? And what does the, if you like, the unfolding of the interlinked tragedy in Israel with that of America—how is that going to play out in American politics in the end? And how—and I find that so difficult to—I've listened to some of Tucker Carlson's comments and others too. I mean, you know, there are many views about this, but one thing he did say that struck me so much, he said, listen, you know, even if, you know, the two parties are Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee and, you know, there's never going to be a sort of result of this, but he said, even if we had a third party, is it really possible to undo the tendons and the muscles and the ligaments of technology and money that hold those two parties together and in unison as a uniparty?

How do you—is it really possible, against those sorts of forces, to do something that will change America from the course it's on? I'm not American, I'm miles away, but you're there, so you'll have a better chance of understanding it. But I thought what he was saying transcends whether, you know, Tucker is—whether people like him or dislike him. That is an important insight. You know, the system is so rigid and so bought and so... infected by the media holes and technology holes over the structure—can it change as circumstances change? I hope it will. I think, you know, one of the things I did say when I was interviewed by Tucker, I said, I think America and Europe are going to go through a process of catharsis. We're going to go through sort of a process of constructive destruction.

We need to destroy something that is outworn, it's time, it's not serving its purpose as maybe once it did, and we need to look to green shoots. Um, but you won't see them now because—sorry, there's a siren going by—yeah, yeah, well, it's very fitting, very fitting as you are speaking about this. Yeah, here in Rome they make it very, very loud, I'm afraid. The day is gone, it's gone. But, you know, even the green shoots, you won't see them now because if they were there, everyone would step on them quickly to make sure that they didn't grow anywhere. So we will probably see the worst bits of it coming up first before we can go through catharsis and a sort of proper constructive destruction to clear the way for what must be a new era, new civilizational sort of structures, perhaps. I don't know. Anyway, so I'm really, you know, in a sense, sort of optimistic about it. I think things are working out in that way.

#Danny

Yeah, I think that's very well said. You know, we have a couple of minutes or so here, but just in terms of, especially in the U.S. context where I am, certainly there are, of course, powerful forces that control the levers of government and especially the economy, who have this almost eschatological view of Iran as an existential threat and, of course, will always want to try to eliminate Iran as it currently is constituted. And therefore, and Trump maybe could be seen in this

light, given that he himself has taken quite a keen interest in Iran in particular. But nonetheless, I do see, Alistair, that with the current situation being what it is, there are so many crises that you outlined here throughout this program that are all mounting.

And there is no question that, unlike in prior periods—let's say the case of Syria—some people get really concerned that Iran could go that way because this war will be long, because there's so much impetus to keep the escalation going, regardless of its consequences, regardless of limitations even. But even so, the longer it goes, the more vulnerable the equation is, the more vulnerable Iran will become. I would say that this funeral that the Iranians participated in just this past week demonstrates something that I think is very important, which is the initiative and the energy and the resistance and the will—it really all exists with Iran.

Even if Iran ran out of everything tomorrow, had no way to defend itself, there would still be no pathway to a quote-unquote victory for the United States as it is currently looking right now, and into the very medium to long-term future. So for the United States, these mounting crises—whether it's the economic situation, you know, you have half the population who are under 35, they're all living with their parents—I mean, this is how bad it is in the United States economically. It's only going to get worse. And, you know, those numbers are from the Wall Street Journal, from the Federal Reserve of wherever—Cleveland, Philly, I forget—but nonetheless, that's where the initiative isn't.

It's in the United States. The population has told Trump. The military has told Trump. The media for a long time was telling Trump. Now, during the MOU, they were saying he was too soft, he was too soft. But much of the media before that was telling Trump this is a bad idea. Nonetheless, as you said, tragedy. It's still happening because there's obviously something bigger. And for Trump also, though, that mixture of something bigger behind it and the emotional part of it—the who he is, ego, prestige, all of this stuff that he takes so seriously—it all comes together to make, I guess, a perfect storm, so to speak. But your final comments on the situation, and then make sure to talk about your Substack.

#Alistair Crooke

Okay. Just, I would say one of the things that I don't really understand but I feel is very important is that, um, we talk about eschatological endings when we talk about Israel quite a lot because there was a sort of messianic element, and there is a messianic element present there. And it's assumed we in the West don't have that, that we are sort of Apollonian rationalists and we stick to reason, and that is how we work. But I detect, in a sense, you know, that there was a time when there was an element of messianism in America about, you know, it was the new Israel, it was the light to all nations, it was the Jerusalem on the hill—all that language was one of reformism, reforming—and it was messianic in a sense because it was trying to reach a certain mission. It had a mission, and it was trying to complete that in terms of a new society, a new life.

#Speaker 1

This was the new world taking shape.

#Alastair Crooke

And somehow in America that's changed into Manichaeism, in that, you know, it's not the language of the pre-Islamic world of Zoroastrianism, of a sort of interplay of light and dark, but has come straight, literally, down to good and evil, black and white. I think it was very striking at that time—I saw it when Biden spoke in Prague, I think it was Prague he was—and then he, against the Liberty Hall with that sort of deep red background, talked about, you know, Putin was evil, Russia was evil. You've just read out Trump saying exactly the same things about Iran. These people are evil. They are this, they are that. I mean, I don't know when that came into America.

Some people say it came in with 9/11. I don't know quite when it did, but there was a turn in that direction which makes the situation today very dangerous, I think, because we are not talking about it in terms of understanding the complexities of civilizations—that the components that make up civilizations mean we have different ways of thinking. We don't all think in that sort of literal, mechanistic way we do in the West. We try and think other civilizations introduce other components into their thinking that are already in the human, but are not as prominent as the sort of mechanical, mechanistic thinking is in the West.

But how that happened, I don't know, but I see this as the danger. But as I say, I still think that we're in a process of catharsis. We're going to have to go through it. It will be painful for all of us, but it's necessary, and at the end of it, it will come with a new, if you like, civilizational vision that will materialize, I hope, from it. So I'm quite optimistic, even though I see all the signs of imminent destruction or possible destruction around, I still feel one can see some sort of light—not yet perfectly illuminating us, but it's there.

#Danny

Alistair, always great to be with you. I'm pulling up your Conflicts Forum Substack now that you and Aisling curate, and I want to make sure that everybody goes to the video description and checks it out and supports it. Great publication with so much to offer there. So be sure to do that, everybody. Without further ado, I want to say thank you for watching the show. I want to make sure that you hit the like button—that helps boost the program. Of course, check out Alistair's work. All the places to support this channel are there as well: Patreon, Substack, and much more. I want to thank everyone who tuned in today. Thank you for the super chat, Cisco Farzana, name again, your daily contributor. Without further ado, Alistair, any final words to say to the audience before I hit end stream here?

#Alastair Crooke

Nothing more to add, probably said enough.