

Iran Checkmate: US War-Regime COLLAPSING Fast | Danny Haiphong

American journalist Danny Haiphong joins Pascal Lottaz to discuss the Iran war, US power, public anger in the United States, and the rise of a multipolar world. They examine Iran's military and media strategy, China's growing appeal, Russia's role, economic sovereignty, and what a post-imperial West could contribute to a more balanced global system. Links: Danny Haiphong YouTube: <https://youtube.com/@geopoliticsshaiphong> The Chronicles of Haiphong Substack: <https://chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com> Danny Haiphong on X: <https://x.com/GeopoliticsDH> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Merch: <https://neutralitystudies.com/shop> Donation: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Introduction 00:00:30 The state of the US empire 00:09:42 US public anger and elite interests 00:20:16 Iran, Russia and China's soft power 00:35:20 Economic sovereignty and Western decline 00:43:36 What the West can still contribute

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies, today again with the wonderful American journalist Danny Haiphong. Danny, welcome back. It's great to be back. Thank you very much for saying yes to this. You have one of the wonderful YouTube channels that constantly provides very important updates on the wars, on the U.S. empire, on what's happening inside and outside. And I recommend to everybody to check out your YouTube channel under your name, Danny Haiphong, of course. But today I wanted to ask you a little bit more about the macro picture. What do you make of the position the U.S. empire is in at the moment? Especially now—we're talking on July 17th, your 16th in the evening—and it seems to me that this Iran war business is getting worse and worse for the United States, but that they somehow run out of ideas. Therefore, just bomb a little bit more until you can't anymore.

#Danny Haiphong

Well, thanks again, Pascal. It's a good question, what state the U.S. empire is in, because I believe many are confused, especially because it appeared with the MOU, which many prominent analysts and commentators called a surrender document. Many had rightfully said that the United States was defeated by Iran during those 40 days of hostilities that spanned from February 28th to early April. And then we had this MOU document, which was supposed to be exactly what it said it was—a memorandum of understanding, really the basis for talks to end the war, not an end to the war, as many people wrongfully assumed. Now that's completely torn up. And so a lot of people are asking, well, how could this be?

Many have said that the United States is running out of ammunition, running out of key stockpiles of ammunition, major weaponry. It is running out of air defenses, and this is particularly clear now as we see Iran's retaliation—its drone strikes, its missile strikes—essentially get wherever they want and hit very key targets in Kuwait, in Bahrain, for example. And so the question is, well, how would the United States keep doing this? Well, the thing about dwindling stockpiles, the thing about surrender, the thing about all the various factors that we could analyze about why the United States lost this war, don't really matter to an empire that is not only rapidly in decline but controlled by an elite that sees this war as existential for its future, for its very existence.

Many, I believe now, there are many who said that the United States has no interest in being in this war, and that would apply to the majority of the population. But it does not apply to the ruling class that actually believes that sacrificing everything—the global economy, the military apparatus, the military infrastructure of the United States—essentially risking maybe the future of the U.S. as a hegemon itself, is all worth it if one of the major pillars, and maybe the most important gateway to the multipolar world, is taken out, and that is Iran.

So it appears what's happening actually is that the United States elites, they are making a calculation that they will actually draw down all of their stockpiles. They will risk the global economy going to \$200 a barrel per oil, a major worldwide depression. I mean, a worldwide depression is built into the system itself. That's going to come eventually. Eventually, there will be an economic crisis. The question is whether the Iran war will be the spark of that, and that would be historically unprecedented in many ways.

A war directly causing a worldwide economic crash hasn't really been seen before, even though wars have always contributed, or at least in many instances have contributed, to economic crashes. But to be the reason, the core, the fundamental root of it, that's a lot different. And so I believe that's what's happening right now. It is a gamble. It is a calculation. And I actually do think, and this is going to be something that we are going to talk about a lot over the next months to years, that the U.S. empire has been stymied by Russia, by Iran. Now we see the news about China. China is now favored worldwide far more than the United States. We see China cutting its import of oil, in large part because it already is energy independent for 80% of its oil energy usage.

And it is willing to play with the oil markets for itself and its own interests, and also for the interests of the world. Its exports are surging internationally, its global exports. So all of these countries have stymied the United States. And so what the U.S., I believe, has calculated—the elites have calculated—is that they need to be in a long war. They started one with Iran, and they don't want to end it, no matter what the result is. So this defeat actually now risks just piling up more and more, because nothing that the United States is doing right now is going to institute regime change in Iran. It's not going to get Iran to capitulate. It's only making the population in Iran angrier. As we speak, the United States is hitting bridges along the southwest, the southern coast of Iran, along the Strait of Hormuz, and now entering the realm of infrastructure strikes.

And that's only going to make the population even more hungry for what some call revenge, but really justice is what the Iranian people are calling for. And so no matter what Iranian leaders may think, they're going to have to follow the will and the interests of the people. And that means this war will not only continue, but Iran has already said that they haven't even scratched the surface of what they are capable of doing in a war that is existential for them as well. So it's not really even about survival anymore. This is really about Iran's existence and its consolidation of the stature that it's been able to develop on the global stage now, with even prominent mainstream development—academics, intellectuals, experts—calling Iran a fourth power, but that might be misleading.

I think the reality is that Iran has kind of demonstrated what it means to exert power through sovereignty, and so it joins countries like Russia and China that are able to do the same thing, and maybe serves as a model—maybe a really dangerous model—for the United States, where you have perhaps a middle-development country, a country that has been starved by sanctions, but yet one that refuses to give up and has a population that is ferociously independent. It serves as a model for other countries that find themselves in maybe similar but somewhat different circumstances. So this, I believe, is what's happening. I don't believe we're going to see a major shift in the outcome of this war.

Really, what the United States is doing—the leaders are always trying to prolong it so they can continue to gamble on various scenarios that they've been playing out, which are likely to either backfire or some combination of the two. It's not looking great for the United States in this war, but a lot of the time, especially in the last several decades, the U.S. empire—it doesn't really matter to the elites whether they win or lose. They just want to see that the final outcome of the war will be in their interest, and then in the short term, which is really the immediate part of their minds, is to profit as much as possible from this for as long as possible. So there's this short-term goal of just continuing to, um, create the justification for, let's say, big contracts for the military-industrial complex, because they'll need them now that they've depleted so much of the U.S. stockpiles.

And then, of course, in the long term, well, I wouldn't call this a strategy. It's really just a reality. The reality is that the United States needs to prolong wars in order to have any chance to affect an outcome. It's almost like going in blind. You know that right now China, Russia, and, include Iran in there, are not nations that are capable of being destroyed, capable of being overturned and overthrown, capable of being controlled or dictated to. So the decision is to, for as long as possible, be at war with them and experiment with any kind of possibilities that could sustain damage and leave you in a better position. That's the calculation. It's not a great one, but that's where we are.

#Pascal

Hey, just a very quick note. The best way to support this channel is by signing up for my free Substack. You can also help with a paid subscription there, or you can get some of our new merch on neutralitystudies.com. Links below. See you there. Yeah, I completely agree with that kind of assessment, which is why I wonder about the state of empire itself. Because, you know, the one

thing that surprised me the most with this war is how strategic Iran is approaching it and how Iran is willing to absorb the attacks that it can stop, but at the same time then assert that it can hit anything it likes in its own vicinity. The one thing Iran hasn't done is it hasn't built A, a nuclear weapon, B, long-range missiles. So it doesn't threaten actually the heartland of the United States, right? There's no way it can fire at New York, period.

And it seems to me that this is also part of it. It's not trying to do that. It's trying to threaten the U.S. bases in the immediate environment. But the one thing that they found out, and that is now kind of changing the calculation, is that it can impose real economic hurt on the U.S. through the Strait of Hormuz, which is, by the way, something that the Russians have never achieved. In four and a half years of war against the NATO alliance, they never managed to somehow impact the economic interests of the U.S. elites. So the U.S. elites, even when they are engaged in a forever war, the elites profit off that, right? They get more money, they get wealthier. Congratulations, by the way, to the United States for having the first U.S. dollar trillionaire in the world. I mean, what an achievement.

The whole population must be really glad that the average wealth has risen without anyone getting an extra dollar from other people. But this is the problem of the empire, isn't it? The empire shields the elites, who then, even when they are engaged in a war that is hurtful to everybody else, still get more money out of it. And we see how this is awesome for Palantir. We see how this is awesome for Donald Trump. Another billion just by sitting there, right, and manipulating the markets. But this game, I think, is becoming more transparent, especially to China, Iran, Russia, and so on. Do you see any kind of changes in the way that common folks in the United States start looking at their own leadership and these kinds of people who are really contributing to the worsening of everybody's livelihood, the standard of living inside the U.S.?

#Danny Haiphong

Well, the poll numbers are showing that there is deep opposition to what the U.S. is doing in Iran. Of course, some of this is partisan, in the sense that you might find polls where GOP voters, for example, support what Donald Trump is doing in Iran by perhaps slightly more than a majority. But everybody else—and we have to remember that voting blocs in the United States are not necessarily representative of the entire population—because in the United States, actually, you have far more independents. I believe we have about 100 million people who don't identify with either party or are not registered with either party. So essentially, what you have is a third of the country that is not counted. And what we are seeing when the broad general population is polled is that they oppose what's going on.

And it's really important that you brought up the Strait of Hormuz and the economic control and leverage that Iran has been able to exercise. Because I think now, with the war having restarted, there's a lot of confusion about this, both in the United States and around the world, even among people who oppose what the United States is doing. I think that a lot of people saw the MOU as a

concession made by Iran. I believe there was actually a document that was a list of demands that Iran tried to extract from the United States for as long as possible, and as many as possible, that it could get. And it eventually was torn up. But I don't believe what some claim, which is that the Strait of Hormuz is just not important to the United States.

They're willing to blockade it as well. I think, again, that this is really all about the U.S. ruling elite making a calculation. Some could call it a dangerous gamble, which is to try to go back and forth with Iran for as long as it can, hoping that Iran will be the first to fall, when in fact what we've already seen is that the United States had to stop. It had to stop the blockade for a period and only restarted it when, again, the calculation was made that Iran's control was unacceptable. There was no possibility for the United States to accept Iran's control of the Strait of Hormuz, especially when Iran demonstrated that it was going to, when the United States tried to, you know, enact some funny business and push tankers through an alternative corridor.

And Iran said, no, you're not going to do that. We are just going to keep striking these tankers until you stop. And so that's what supposedly precipitated this next phase of war that we currently find ourselves in. But ultimately, we already have the majority of people in the United States unhappy with this war. It's likely going to have political consequences. We see some political consequences to what the status quo has been over the last few years and some of these more local races in the United States. But truthfully, in the United States, I think it's almost a guarantee that there's going to be a shakeup politically in Washington because of how badly the Trump administration has performed, whether it's a defeat in the Iran war, the risks of global economic catastrophe, and then the fact that the economic reality of people in general is very bad.

It's only gotten worse. Inflation has not gotten better. They keep trying to sell that it has, but it has only gotten worse over the course of tariffs, the trade war with China, and then, of course, what's happening with Iran and on and on and on. Right, on and on. There are so many. It's basically every single policy of the Trump administration has been bad for the majority and very good for his rich friends and militarists and the like. That's who Trump is, sir. Trump has done what all U.S. presidents have done. He just, again, similar to his first term, happened to come in under a certain set of circumstances that opened up room for framing the campaign differently, framing the trajectory differently, but ultimately the framing is just a framing.

It is not what actually is reality, which is that he is serving the same people that all of his predecessors have served before him. So ultimately, in terms of a change here in the United States, that's hard to say, because ultimately what the U.S. is actually exceptional at is not just propaganda and telling people that things are not what they are. They're lying to people and misleading people, spreading misinformation and narratives that frame the United States as strong and powerful and stable, and Iran being the enemy, and all of these countries—Russia, China—being the enemy and all of this. While some of that is effective to a degree, I think the biggest problem for the United States is that it has perhaps the most disorganized, the most stressed out, overworked, underpaid population for the level of development that it is.

It's supposed to be the richest economy in the world, but the vast majority of people make under \$30,000 a year, which in 99% of the United States is far too little to live and meet needs. So when you have the majority of the population struggling in debt and unable to think about anything other than what's on the food table the next day, whether they're going to be able to live in the place that they're staying, whether they're going to be homeless, whether they can pay off the debt before their house gets taken or their car gets taken by the banks or whatever it is, then it's hard for people in the United States to focus on something like stopping the United States government from waging a catastrophic and perhaps absolutely dangerous, and perhaps nuclear, conflict with these rising powers to the east. So I think that's the big impediment in the way.

But nonetheless, the U.S. empire is creating all of the conditions for people in the United States and around the world to quickly seek something different. Because ultimately, you know, regardless of whether people in the United States get activated or not, the trend is where the trend is going. So eventually, the United States is going to have to reckon with itself because the rest of the world is looking at China. They're saying China is a far more favorable place and country to do business with, have relations with, to trust in the multipolar world. These pillars of Russia and Iran have solidified and are continuing to solidify military victories, which are going to inspire people all around the world and are already having major impacts, especially when it comes to, let's say, the fall from grace that Israel has had in terms of global public opinion.

There's going to be massive changes, not just in how people think, but in how countries relate to each other. And I think that's really the big shakeup that is coming for the U.S. empire. It might look slow, but it's happening actually quite rapidly. And eventually, people in the United States are going to have to reckon with that and call for something better for themselves when they realize that, yeah, the same elite that is destroying or attempting to destroy the planet and attempting to destroy anybody that's trying to do something better or create a different system that will actually meet the needs of people and the planet—when people start realizing that, hey, actually, that's the same elite that's destroying their lives—then we will have, I think, a far different situation than we're in now.

#Pascal

Yeah, the question is a bit how long it will take for this to really trickle down. But it's quite fascinating to me that at the moment, despite the wars that are going on, we are seeing these kinds of shifts that seem not to be going away. On the one hand, the BRIC wall that the U.S. is meeting in the Russia war—Russia refused to break up, Russia refused to surrender even after four and a half years, since they have their own military strategy. On the other hand, Russia has been extremely poor at selling its narrative, something that the Iranians, of all people, managed to do much more, at least in the West. I mean, the Iranians didn't give up the narrative in the West, right? The Russians never tried to compete on that level.

I guess they said, like, we can't win anyhow, so why should we even try? And that's why they still look like, you know, the Soviet face of the past. But the Iranians turned it around. They used Lego movies. They used Twitter like there's no tomorrow. They're trolling the U.S., and at least to me, I see this constantly. And I think also in the United States, it's being perceived that the Iranians are trying to change their image. And China now has a very natural kind of appeal—C-drama, C-pop, the way in which these cities are developing. And I think even in the U.S. and Europe, it's kind of now breaking through that China is a really, really modern society in large parts of the country, right?

So, isn't this going to change the whole calculation, that suddenly, even within the West, we now have this appearance of, well, another very modern world? It used to be the only country that had that kind of cultural place of, like, oh, modern but foreign, was kind of Japan. They did it first, but they did it under the umbrella, of course, of the extended collective West. And now we have one outside of the collective West, and several ones. I think nobody at this point in the West would really want to go and live in Iran and whatnot. It's not popular enough for that. But it's kind of breaking through that there's an alternative. What do you make out of this soft power aspect of the new rivals? Hmm.

#Danny Haiphong

It's a really good question. Well, we can begin with Iran. I think this all began with the first initiation of Operation True Promise, when Israel was really the instigator in forcing Iran to show off its missile capabilities. And Iran held back in many ways. The entirety of the multipolar world has a posture of self-defense and non-interventionism and, you know, truly in opposition to war and wanting to see war cease altogether.

The problem is, of course, that Israel and the United States have consistently, especially when it comes to Iran, pushed the envelope, whether it's through attempting to bury and destroy the entirety of the resistance that Iran supports, as well as, of course, including people not involved in any resistance at all—just civilian populations—and wreaking absolutely devastating havoc on ordinary people and people who have just been genocided, like in Palestine. But ultimately, from Operation True Promise 1 all the way into this—I think they're calling it Operation Nasser or something like that—what they're doing now in response to this latest U.S. attack regime, the fact that Iran, and I think soft power always comes after or is in conjunction with hard power.

So when it comes to Iran, the fact that it was able to stand tall multiple times now—not just, you know, two times, three times, four times in the last year or so, a little over a year now since the 12-Day War—but all the way back to Operation True Promise, back in, what was that, 2024. So this period now, culminating in these two major wars—the 40 days with the United States and Israel, and then of course the 12-Day War in June 2025—showed the world that Iran has the capability to stand up to the United States and Israel, who claim that they are the most powerful forces not just in the region, but the U.S. claims it's the most powerful military in the world. How Trump will tell you

every single day that the United States is the most powerful military force in the world, but they can't seem to do anything with it. They can't seem to topple Iran.

And that left room. It left so much room for Iran, which now has a massively motivated population. It's always been an incredibly educated population since the revolution onward. That was one of the things that the revolution after 1979 focused so dramatically on. And so the level of intellectual capacity in Iran, so many Iranians—it's so great. And the fact that it is considered the gateway between the West and the East for a reason. This is a big impetus for the United States to destroy Iran—to cut off the Belt and Road Initiative—because it literally lies right in the middle of it. And so Iran has always had this history of having relationships with the West and relationships with the East. And therefore, it has drawn a lot from both culturally. And that means that there are a lot of Iranians who actually do know or have some desire to actually appeal to Westerners.

And they have done a really good job with all this room, all this motivation, all this morale, all this energy that comes with being under attack and needing to do everything possible to win this war. Yeah, we have seen a massive increase in the capacity of ordinary Iranians to send a message to the rest of the world that, look, this is what the reality is. This is what we have to do. And also, this is what we are able to deal to the United States and to Israel when they try to destroy us. And that has had a massive effect on people's perception of Iran. And now Iran—because so many people hate Israel, I mean, Israel is the most unpopular entity in the entire world at this point—and the fact that the United States is attached to Israel has made the U.S. even more of an untrustworthy actor on the world stage.

Really, that's always latent on the surface. It's only because the U.S. is an empire and is able to sell this idea that it provides opportunities to the world, blah, blah, blah, right? Propaganda, as you said—soft power, cultural soft power, imperial cultural soft power—all of this. But that's all been waning, especially over the last 25 years or so since the fall of the Soviet Union. That's all been reducing. It's all been withering away. And now Iran is in this place.

2026 happens to be the perfect moment for a country like Iran to be able to both hit back at the United States successfully and show the world that it can hit back against the United States successfully. And so that's one thing. And then Russia and China now—those are two very interesting cases, because in the case of Russia and the United States, we have this huge history and worldwide legacy of the Cold War and all the horrible things that were said about the Soviet Union and Russia in general. And there's a massive propaganda apparatus that has been taken advantage of even recently, like, for example, Russiagate. That was really a Cold War attack on independent thinkers, on activists, on basically any people attempting to create independent media, as well as an attack on Russia itself.

That is very much the case. So, the fact that Russia, without even focusing at all—because all of its attention has been on the conflict, has been on the war, has been on stabilizing the economy—it has not been on creating some kind of propaganda apparatus to convince Westerners and to convince

the rest of the world that it's winning the conflict. Most people in the East, most people in the Global South, as some call it, most people outside of the West, they know that Russia is winning the conflict. I mean, a lot of countries have experience with sanctions. A lot of countries have experience with being meddled with and rendered unstable because of U.S. interference and interventionism.

So, they know—people watching this know—what it looks like when the U.S. and NATO succeed, or quote-unquote “succeed,” in a war, like actually destroy a country and destabilize it, when it's failing. And so most see that it's failing. And so Russia, again, hard power for Russia has, one, rendered sanctions completely and utterly humiliated in many ways, and militarily humiliated, completely drained NATO. Europe is looking worse than a paper tiger. It's looking like a shriveled-up piece of paper, really, when it comes to its military capacity and its economic development. And Russia's done all of this. Russia's exposed all of this. And there's nothing the United States and the West can do about it.

And then China, lastly—I find China to be the most fascinating case, because China is, out of these three countries, the one that is not actively at war. The United States has been trying to build up to a war with China, but that now has been set back a lot. Short of a nuclear confrontation, there is no possibility for the United States to wage anything that looks like a war in the next 10 to 20 years. And by that time, China will have the biggest economy in GDP terms, and that will be unacceptable to the United States. So it's a really big brick wall the U.S. is facing toward China. But China has been at peace. China has not actively been fighting a war.

China hasn't even made any moves on Taiwan or the surrounding region, which is militarized with U. S. weapons aimed at China. China has succeeded, especially in the last 50-plus years, in achieving an economic miracle. Its development has now surpassed the United States in terms of most of the key areas, though not all, in high technology. And this is even admitted by anti-China institutions like the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, which is committed to regime change in China and is funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. military contractors, and the Australian Department of Defense.

This entity has said that China leads in 90-plus percent of all high technology. And with that lead in high tech, with the ability to develop infrastructure to a level unseen by the collective West and the United States in particular, to be able to alleviate poverty is—and to be able to, then the soft power comes for China—not also in the information realm, because China does not really focus on that at all. China keeps all of that completely public and state-owned. It does not have any interest in having some kind of flourishing private media sphere where people just say and do whatever they want. And maybe that would have some benefits to China.

But China sees that maybe as more of a threat because of the attacks themselves that it has received propaganda-wise from the United States and the West. It doesn't want to see anything internal like that pop up. So the soft power for China has been... And now people in the United States and in the West who, as I said earlier, are deprived of any kind of standard of living that's

worthy of the so-called development model that is touted to them and sold to them as so exceptional. Now that there is a complete and steep decline of the standard of living of people in Europe, Western Europe, and the United States, now we see people finding China.

It's kind of ironic, but it is partly blowback for the fact that we've only heard "China's bad, China's evil, China's..." You know, today I believe Trump is going to say something like "China stole the 2020 election for Biden." You know, like constantly, right? China is doing everything bad. China is a militarily aggressive power. It's debt-trap diplomacy to the Global South, on and on and on, right? Just "China is bad." So we've been told that over and over and over again, Pascal. And now people are like, oh, that's interesting. But we're also hearing that China is growing economically and it's rivaling the United States. Now people want to see it, and they're going. And they are seeing that actually China is kind of a peaceful place.

It's kind of a nice place. And not only does it have all these advancements, but it's a lot more affordable to live in. So people are actually going there. They're long-stay living. I know multiple people now who—some of them are Chinese-American, some of them are bilingual people—that have said, I don't want to be here no more, and they're going to China to live. So this is a new reality that I think is part of the soft power for China—its success in showing that, yeah, you can have a rich society, but that society can actually provide for people and make advancements that the world hasn't seen. So, all in all, that's China's soft power, and it's working quite well.

#Pascal

That's true. That's a very good thing to point out. It's not trying to actively compete. It's just trying to be better and actually provide for the people, and that kind of then radiates out anyhow. I mean, it's going to be quite interesting to see what the reaction will be from the U.S. and Europe once people come back from Shanghai and say, "Listen, you've been telling us that our system is so much better than theirs. You've been telling us that ours is so much more prosperous and so much more humane and everything, yet they have social insurance, they have health coverage, they have electric cars, they have Shanghai. Could we have a Shanghai?"

#Danny Haiphong

Why can't we have one?

#Pascal

It's like, can you—I mean, at some point people might want a little bit of explanation. Of course, the answer then will be, because China is evil, they are suppressing everybody, and it's built on the blood of the Uyghurs. And then, well, I mean, you've been reporting on Xinjiang. And I mean, it's just this entire fantasy world that has been successful for at least 50, if not 100 years in the West—this Western model of success and prosperity, white man's burden, all of these racist stereotypes

against the others. They're now coming down because the rest is catching up with the West and even advancing. This is probably one of the largest threats that I think the collective West cannot actually—it's already lost that battle.

#Danny Haiphong

Yeah, I mean, one of the interesting things about what we've seen with the arc of U.S. hegemony in particular, many people trace, you know, the end of World War II—U.S. becomes the unquestionable empire, the unquestionable superpower, right? Then suddenly, in 1991, the United States is not just supposedly the unquestionable superpower, but now it supposedly has zero challengers, right? Because the end of the Soviet Union happened. China's still considered relatively poor. Actually, industry was just... This is how incredible China's development is—that in 1991, China's industry was considered incredibly backward. It had essentially just begun. Essentially, people were just starting to get telephones into their homes in 1991. So, this is how fast China has developed—from zero industry when the Soviet Union fell almost to now the industrial superpower by far in the world.

But anyway, really, I think the big point that needs to be made in this situation is that the US empire has no cards left to play with these countries. I mean, we are seeing China in particular, but even Russia, even Iran—they are able to do what essentially globalization made inevitable. When the United States and the West saw that, in order for their elites, in order for capital to be able to reap the whirlwinds of profits from the fall of the Soviet Union and the destruction of the so-called socialist bloc and all of this, it was going to have to export industry all around the world and make a far cheaper and more efficient global supply chain for these corporations—and then, of course, the banks—to run home with as much money as possible. That's essentially the world that they built.

The problem is they always underestimate the fact that people are eventually going to want to benefit from their own productive capacity. Eventually, people are going to say, well, wait, we should be the ones who actually—not just control this process, but benefit from it. And the big mistake, and one that was inevitable because the United States wanted to normalize with China to try to drive a wedge between China and the Soviet Union—but nevertheless, it ultimately became a big mistake. And it wasn't so much U.S. investment, but it was the precedent that normalizing with China set at that point in history in the 1970s, which then allowed for the rest of the world to invest in China without consequences and fears of, you know, U.S. bullyism.

And that led to Europe and Japan and so many other countries investing in China. And then China already had a model that said, no, no, no, we're not just going to let you take advantage of our cheaper labor because we've been poor for so long. We're going to reap benefits from this. We're going to demand that we're able to learn how to do this ourselves. And we are going to not only learn how to do this ourselves, but perhaps do it better with our own money, development, and our own companies and our own state and private entities. And that's exactly what has happened.

And now I think a precedent has been set where the world wants more of this. The world wants more control over their own resources and their own development. And they now have China as a model for not only can you succeed, but you could potentially become a major player on the world stage by asserting this very important economic sovereignty. This is where a lot of analysis on sovereignty actually falls short, which is they look at the politics, they look at the military, but really it's economics that lie at the root of all of this. If a country is not economically sovereign, then eventually it will become subservient to whatever dominant force is dictating terms in the global economy.

And that's what we've seen in so many of the nominal, so-called independent countries across the formerly colonized world — most of them ended up just becoming compliant countries, vassal states, compliant neocolonies. We see that all across the Gulf region. That's what is leading to Iran's retaliation. They are essentially just military bases for the U.S. And in Latin America, Africa, a good chunk of Asia has this very problem — the problem of how do they make themselves more independent when they have for so long been strangled economically by the U.S.-dominated world financial system.

And so this is a struggle that lies at the heart of all of it. But the multipolar world — China at the economic front, and on the hard power front, Russia and Iran — has set quite a number of examples of what it means to move away from this. And I think that's a huge game changer for the entire world. And this is why the United States can't — this is why we aren't going to see an end to the Iran war anytime soon. Because, hell, what happens when the Iran war ends? We've already seen that Iran — I didn't even know it had this capacity — you know, repair these bombed infrastructures, the railways, for example, that were recently bombed.

I mean, this is a very organized society that is going to repair itself far quicker than, let's say, Afghanistan or Iraq after all the damage that was done to it from the U.S. war. This sovereignty thing is really important, and to allow Iran to just get out of this war with all of this space to rebuild and new leverage over the Strait of Hormuz, and its military arsenal intact, which has proven to push back the United States and Israel from their objectives, that's quite an example. We always say "threat of a good example." It's like, well, that's quite a good example of what a lot of people around the world are going to look at and say, maybe we need to do some of that. What did they do? And it will teach, I think, resistance forces all over the world that if we can sniff at power and learn from this, just maybe we can also defend ourselves too. And I think that's a big lesson that's hard to swallow for the U.S.

#Pascal

Yeah, and probably also, you know, learn from each other — Russia from Iran, Iran from Russia, everybody from China, China again also from Iran, right? I mean, this is the multipolar world figuring out how to deal with the decaying empire. But just in closing, there are still a couple of things that I

think the West still has going for itself. And just also maybe on a positive note, you know, if we imagine a future in which we actually have a proper multipolar peace in one way or another, what is it that, in your view, the West still excels at that it could actually contribute to the system?

I mean, for instance, we still see massive numbers of Chinese, also Iranians and Russians, flock to the United States for education, and to the West for education. Let's face it, these institutions of higher learning are still excellent, even though they come with problems. Also, the level of freedom of speech that you and I benefit from in order to criticize the systems that we're living in is still something that I think overall is valuable. Also, Chinese and Russian voices actually do try to discuss things because it helps us. What do you think it is, just in the last one or two minutes, that the West still has going for itself that it could contribute?

#Danny Haiphong

Well, I think the interesting contradiction that is always at the heart, and a very difficult one to reconcile too, is that the West as a project — I guess some people call it a civilizational project. A lot of times, the civilizational project has been anti-civilization.

#Pascal

Very uncivilized, yeah.

#Danny Haiphong

Yeah, very uncivilized. But the level of development that the United States and the West have achieved — I think a lot of it is decaying now, but it still has some of that intact — which does leave for, you know, it's an age-old question, right? What happens after the empire is defeated? We've had this question every single year. Movements for independence, every single... China, everyone has debated this question. What do you do with what the U.S. and what the West have left us? For the case of the world, the United States and the West are still there.

And I think it would be a mistake to reject everything about it without understanding that if there was a system — I even spoke about this in a recent article I wrote — if there was a system in place that could actually enact justice around a lot of these questions that we talk about here in the United States, for example, then the United States would owe the world an enormous debt. It wouldn't just owe the people whose land has been stolen in the United States, the labor that was stolen, all of these questions of reparation. There wouldn't just be burning questions about that, but the entire world has suffered enormous damage from what the U.S. has wrought on it and what the U.S. empire has wrought.

But the U.S., its development has the capability to pay that debt, actually, if people were mobilized and organized to do such a thing. And then it could benefit, actually, the greater good of the U.S.

and the West, too. So really, there is an infrastructure here in large part because empires tend to take, and then they tend to build off of that. Industry, of course, is gone, and the decay of the empire and the West in general is a foregone conclusion at this point. That decay even extends to these questions of free speech, suppression. All of this is getting worse and worse and worse. It always existed to some extent.

But the energy, the—uh, what drove people in the United States and the West to, as you said, become educated, to improve their livelihoods—all of that can be redirected into something a lot better. And I think that is really where the hope lies: the fact that if we can drop the imperial hubris and this idea that we're better than everybody, and we can understand that actually we have to live in a world together with everyone else, regardless of what kind of system and model they want to build, then we can focus on ourselves and actually build upon, improve, and enact justice in areas where contradictions are irreconcilable.

So that is, I think, where the hope is. Yes, the U.S. has decrepit infrastructure, declining infrastructure, but it has the wealth that has been taken from all over the world to actually improve the situation if we had a different model. And then we actually, because the international financial system literally hoards, steals, and then hoards the wealth from the rest of the world, it has the ability. Like tomorrow, the United States could pay back Venezuela for all the damage it has caused, literally as gold in, I believe, British reserves. So British banks—this goes on and on and on. There are so many examples of these just immediate things. And truthfully, with the wealth that exists, all this fictitious money—you said earlier, trillionaire Elon Musk.

Oh, this is built on very little. I mean, it's built on a lot of speculation, a lot of money laundering, a lot of gambling and Wall Street financing, and all of this stuff. But we can redirect that and turn that into productive capacity really quick if we had a system that was amenable to that and that allowed us to do that. Right now, in the United States, in the West, we don't have that. Right now, we have plunderers and parasites and people who just want to get as rich as possible and as powerful as possible at the expense of everybody else. And so that is really where things need to change. Truthfully, a lot of the history, a lot of—you know, it's hard for the U.S. It's hard.

Culture is a tricky thing in the U.S. since it's stolen a lot of cultures. But because of that, there actually is quite a diverse culture in the United States. It's just many cultures. And there's a lot of interesting things that could be done with that. And there's a lot of people in the United States who might actually just identify more with people around the world than they might with, let's say, their ruling elite. In the U.S., for example. So again, I think there's a lot of reason to hope, and I do think that there's a lot for the United States and the West to contribute. It just won't be—it probably can only happen if the United States and the West are completely reconceptualized as the system in and of itself.

#Pascal

Yeah, but the reconceptualization is coming. It's kind of inevitable. And honestly, I'm looking forward to the post-colonial and post-imperial West, the entire thing, and maybe a West embedded with the East, the North, and the South. Wouldn't it be nice? I think we're headed toward this. And your channel, Beny Haiphong, on YouTube, also in various languages, is helping us with that. So thank you for your work, Beny. Any other place where people should go to find your work?

#Danny Haiphong

Sure. You know, you can follow me. You can find me on Substack. I've been writing a few articles here and there. That's Chronicles of Haiphong. You can just search Danny Haiphong Substack. I'm on X. You can just search my name there. Geopolitics Haiphong, I believe, is the handle. But really, YouTube is the best place, and you can find all the other ones there on YouTube. So, yeah, thanks so much. And thanks for the work that you do, Pascal. Neutrality Studies is such a key pillar in alternative independent media on these pressing global matters.

#Pascal

Thank you for that. We keep plowing on. Everybody check out Danny Haiphong. Google him and subscribe to him. Danny, thank you so much for your time today.

#Danny Haiphong

Thank you.