

Alastair Crooke: Iran DESTROYS THREE F-35s as US Attacks BACKFIRE, Trump in PANIC MODE

Alastair Crooke discusses renewed US bombing of Iran, Iran retaliating by destroying three fighter jets in Jordan, and Trump's panic as the US runs out of military options. <https://conflictsforum.substack.com/> PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #iranwar #trump

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. As you can see, I'm joined by Alistair Crooke of Conflicts Forum Substack to break down the latest developments. First, we are talking last night's strikes. The United States said they bombed Iran in a heavier manner, and Iran retaliated on Muwaffaq al-Salti Air Base in Jordan, saying that they destroyed three F-35 fighter jets, as well as injuring and killing multiple U.S. service members who were working on those jets, repairmen and the like. Now, here's the list of strikes by the United States: lots of HIMARS fired from Kuwait on these various towns and cities like Abadan, Ahvaz, and Qeshm Island. There were two civilians who were killed, two parents with their children now orphaned, at Chah Tangui neighborhood in Qeshm. Now, Donald Trump does not seem to be satisfied with this.

The results of the Iran war—in a recent meeting with top U.S. defense officials, he was exasperated, cursing and panicking over the Iran war strategy, with U.S. officials saying that there are very few options left on the table worth pursuing. Also, top Jordanian figures, legal, political, and otherwise, have signed an open letter saying that U.S. forces should withdraw from Jordanian territory lest the country be drawn into a catastrophic war on all levels, economic, political, and otherwise. Many might say, Alistair, that this has already occurred. Your reaction to the developments at hand here, Alistair? It appears the war is not only escalating, but it's also carrying now with it many fronts. And I wonder if you could comment on this, given developments last night and in recent days.

#Alastair Crooke

Well, on the attacks last night, I think they reflect pretty clearly that the United States does not have a clear objective. And this is what his team have been saying, officials in the U.S. We always have to be careful of this because we never know whether this is deceit or if it's real. But the fact is, it's very, very basic, and they're saying, well, what is the objective? Is it to destroy the nuclear

possibilities? Is it to destroy the ballistic missiles? What is the purpose of this attack? Because there seem to be various things that have been signaled. Is it to strike at all modes? All of these things are possibilities, but they don't, if you like, coordinate into a single target.

They're all diverse targets, and if you do one, you can't do the other, and so on. I think the bottom line is, militarily, the United States is defeated. It just—it can do what we saw last night, but essentially, it hasn't got the means to bring about the sort of change in posture in Iran that Trump has been looking for, and this is deeply frustrating to Trump and makes him very angry. As you said, there was probably quite a testy meeting with his team because he feels frustrated that there isn't some answer. But I think this is—I mean, let me just put it like this. You know, this is where it is. I mean, there are things—there are options, but none of them are really working.

The option to go on bombing around Hormuz, and the sort of bombing that was done last night—the admiral in charge of CENTCOM has said pretty clearly, you know, "This isn't achieving anything. We're just wasting our resources doing these operations. We're not achieving anything." With respect to attacking the missile program, I mean, you know, they have been bombing and bombing these mountain redoubts. Some of them—I think it's Taba—has been bombed 45 times by the United States. And the bombs just bounce off, and the Iranians start firing within half an hour from the tunnels in the mountain through openings. And so that is achieving really very little, literally nothing. And so what else? Attacking Pickaxe Mountain? Well, that I just think has gone into the realm of fantasy.

Pickaxe is a granite mountain, solid granite, big mountain. And the elements, the Iranian infrastructure is located a thousand meters down, a thousand meters down. And the only way they could get it, and they say, "Oh yes, it's technically possible. We could drill a two- to three-meter hole at the top of the mountain that would be then vertically driven further and further right down 1,000 meters, and then we could neatly drop a tactical nuclear weapon down there." Come on. You know, this is a steep granite slope. What happens when you drop a bomb on it? It bounces off. You know, you're not going to get a neat, tight, round sort of hole that you could drop a bomb in any way. I mean, you know, the Iranians have made Pickaxe pretty well bombproof.

#Danny

It is bombproof.

#Alastair Crooke

So, I mean, first of all, there are just no good targets. Okay. Militarily, they haven't got much choice. So what is there to try and do? Well, again, the hope was that now Trump could suddenly switch back and pivot back to the MOU and say, "They're begging for a ceasefire. They're asking for us to go back to the MOU." That was all lies. Again, of course, Iran are not begging him to go back to it. In fact, they're saying the opposite. They're saying, "No, we're not going back into this game of

ceasefires. We're going to dictate the shape and pace of this war." That's why we had what we had last night. This is Iran, if you like, dictating and imposing their control over the tempo, over the shape of the war, and not accepting that Trump can dictate the terms of it.

And really, they're not looking to come back at all. I mean, you know, I read, of course, the famous Barak Ravid every Monday or so comes back and says, you know, there's a new deal. I mean, the mediators are saying Iran's longing for a deal. It's just not true. The mediators, that's what they do, but it's not true. So there isn't really any solution for Trump. And he's finding this extremely frustrating. He's tried to put pressure on other means. And this is where I come to your second point, because you talked about, you know, the attacks last night. But actually, that wasn't the significant thing that happened in these days. This was really just a side joke.

What has really been significant is what happened with Saudi Arabia and the consequent reaction of Saudi Arabia and the United States. This is vastly more significant to the world economy, even than Hormuz, because what we've had—and of course it's disputed about who was responsible—both ends of Saudi's east-west pipeline being destroyed. The one on the Red Sea has been completely destroyed, and the one on the other side of Saudi Arabia that linked into it, the pumping station, has been destroyed. And that is, I mean, this is a large amount of oil that is now offline to the West. Now, who is responsible? Well, it seems like the Yemenis, the Houthis, Ansar, may have been responsible for at least the one on the Red Sea, the attack on the refinery. And it wasn't just any refinery.

#Danny

This is the refinery for Saudi Arabia, Aramco.

#Alastair Crooke

It is the all-singing, all-dancing refinery that we're told is supposed to be the most modern in the world, that can do anything. You know, we've been fed a diet from the sort of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which is, you know, every night or so a refinery is hit, and then within a few hours it's back into production. This is not like this. This refinery has been, in Trump's words, obliterated. So it's a major, major change. Now, what Saudi is saying is that the attack on the pipeline and the refineries were done by Iraqi militia, and they denied. But that prompted America and Saudi Arabia jointly to attack six cities in Iraq, killing many of the militia.

And also, it seems to have been an attack on the procession, which marks the end of 40 days' mourning, the Arbaeen, where pilgrims walk, literally walk all the way in this temperature to Karbala. I've seen them. I mean, it's incredible. They just come all the way from Iran, from Iraq, and they walk all the way to Karbala to go to the Hussein shrine in the mosque. So the Saudis say these

people were responsible. America says it was done with the consent of the Iraqi government. I'm not sure if that is true or not. I would be rather surprised if it was so. But what that has done, this attack on the Rashad, has opened another front in the war.

So we already had the fronts being opened. One front was the war between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, because the Yemenis have said—I could say the Yemenis, but I should say Ansar Allah more correctly—have said, “We are imposing a siege for siege on Saudi Arabia.” There has been a Saudi siege of Yemen on their airports and their ports for about 12 years now. There's a sort of ceasefire, but not long ago, an Iranian plane was going to land at Sana'a to take a delegation of the Houthis to the funeral commemorations taking place in Iran. And the Saudis bombed the airport so that the plane could not land. The plane ultimately landed at the airport of Tudela. But for the Yemenis, for the Ansar Allah, that was it. It's over. The ceasefire, tentative as it was, is finished.

And they declared war on Saudi Arabia, on its ports and its airports. And they are, if you like, imposing a blockade on the Red Sea of Saudi vessels, and Saudi vessels, tankers, are being attacked and set on fire. So it is blocking off, if you like, the Red Sea in addition. But that's only part of the story, because the other part is the Hashd who were injured, including four IRGC trainers that were with them. And, you know, the language in the West, you know, the rather sort of condescending language in the West regards the Hashd as evil Iranian proxies. I mean, you know, they're just sort of like those Chinese humanoid robots. You know, you send them an order and they go and do it. It's not like that at all. I have met the Hashd. I met them actually in Cuba.

#Danny

They are a very impressive people.

#Alastair Crooke

And they are not Iranian stooges, Washington. They are not stooges of Iran. These are fiercely nationalistic Iraqis. And yes, their interests and those of Iran coincide quite often. They are Shia, and Iran, of course, is Shia. And so they do have interests that coincide. But to paint them as somehow sort of robotic proxies of Iran is totally to misunderstand the situation again. And so they have promised there will be a reaction. Now, Washington is thinking, “Oh, well, you see, there's no reaction.” No, there is no reaction until Arbreen is finished. They won't attack during that. But I think the Arbreen is finished today or tomorrow. I'm not sure. You'll see an attack from the Hashd. They won't let this pass. And there's again, you know, a really major misunderstanding of the region, I think, intelligence failure to really grasp.

I mean, you know, I know that this was not understood at the time of the Iraq War, but Iraq is a majority Shia country, maybe 60% Shia. The rest is a mix between Kurds and Sunnis, maybe 20–25%. But the Shia are a very powerful majority. And these are the people that also follow the Supreme Leader of Iran as their marja, as their source of emulation, as their spiritual leader. And so

they are very angry. And the evidence of that was in front of the West, if only they had chosen to look, because look how many people turned out in Iraq to the funeral ceremonies. How many people turned out at Karbala? Something like, I think, four or five million. The same again when they went to the other cities, each of them, three cities, each four or five million people turned out.

The total was enormous. This was a huge sign of the strength of the Iranian civilization. I don't call it power; I call it civilization. It's the civilizational model and the religious model of the Shi'i. So I think there will certainly be a reaction, and I think the government will find themselves in a weakened position if it is really true that they gave the okay to America to attack what they call in Iraq the PMU. These are the protection units, military units, which are officially part of the state, in fact. So we will see. So that was major fronts opening: Iraq, Saudi—Saudi and Iraq, America, because America was also part of this—and also then the front that opened between Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

#Danny

And all of these are quite serious.

#Alastair Crooke

I mean, it shows, you know, the fragility of the region, and how, when you open something like this, I mean, everything begins to catch fire. And so you have all of these sort of bushfires, you know, slowly, slowly igniting across the region, not just the ones I mentioned, but also in Lebanon. The defense minister in Lebanon has announced with somewhat great glee how many houses the Israelis have completely destroyed, whole villages destroyed, as he underlines, and 20,000 people being homeless. And he says 70% of Gaza has been flattened, has been completely leveled.

#Alastair Crooke

And at the same time, again, largely unnoticed in this equation, Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, two of the sort of more messianic elements of Netanyahu's government, both ministers, have made it plain that they would like to see the settlers in the West Bank go to war with the Palestinians to such a degree that it will force them to leave the West Bank—in other words, to be expelled from the West Bank. So that is also another friction point that is stirring up. And on top of that, you have another one, which is in Syria, where Trump has asked Sharaa to intervene in Lebanon. Maybe at the borders of Lebanon, there are a number of Shia villages to attack those.

It seems the message we've heard is that Erdogan is not opposed to this, but he's quite cautious about it. And what has happened? Well, of course, when they said they might go and intervene and go into Lebanon to attack Hezbollah, which is what Trump wants—he wants Hezbollah disarmed.

What has been the response? Well, the Iraqis have said to the Syrian government, Sharaa, they said, "If you go into Lebanon, we come into Syria." So it is going to be incursion for incursion. You incur into Lebanon, we'll incur into Syria. So the whole thing is slowly sort of catching fire.

And then there's the final, rather bizarre part of this, if I could call it a sort of landscape of smoking embers, which is the announced attack by Ukraine on an Iranian vessel in the Caspian Sea, killing one Iranian sailor, after an attack that the Americans did on the port in the Caspian Sea, in the Iranian part of the Caspian Sea, in their territorial waters. So is that a coincidence, or is this the start of something more? I mean, when you have the Americans attacking on the Caspian coast and then a ship attacked by Ukraine on the Caspian Sea, maybe this is concerted. Maybe this is coordinated with the US, and another front is opening. Well, we'll have to see.

#Danny

Wow, Alistair, that was an incredible rundown of the regional and now global situation that has been sparked by the U.S.'s and Israeli aggression on Iran and, of course, now Saudi getting into the mix. I wanted to add to your point on running out of targets. Well, in this report on the F-35s being hit by Iran last night, according to Iran, it was a retaliation to a bunker buster attack on residential homes in Keshav Island, which killed three civilians—not just two parents, but two children were orphaned from this. And then I wanted to pull this up, that the Saudi economy—so this is having an impact already.

Yemen's siege, counter-siege to Saudi Arabia's longstanding blockade, as well as what's happening in the Strait of Hormuz. So both the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz being under firm control of the Axis of Resistance now has led to Saudi Arabia's economy collapsing, contracting 4.8% in the second quarter of this year. So impact is being had, Alistair. But yet the markets, the oil markets, are not showing this impact necessarily—only slight raises in this. We know that you mentioned Barak Ravid. We know our favorite \$8,200 reporter at Axios plays a bit of a role in the Trump administration's market manipulation.

But what do you make of this? There seems to be—I've been calling it like whistling past the graveyard—but it seems like eventually, you know, shit is going to hit the fan here. And maybe any comments you have on this amid these developments: bunker-buster attacks on residential homes. That seems crazy. Well, not surprising from the U.S.'s standpoint and record of targeting, killing civilians in wars. It also seems very desperate and indicative of where this war is.

#Alastair Crooke

Oh, well, it's desperate, I think, in the sense that they just don't have any targets, and this is what, you know, the Pentagon is scraping around. You know, they get orders to hit Iran hard. But, I mean, there aren't any. As I've described, there aren't any suitable targets. And so inevitably they end up, you know, striking at civilian targets. That's always been the way of this American way of war, the

Israeli way of war. I remember in 2006, when I was in Lebanon during that war, I mean, after a few days, the Israelis ran out of targets. They expended their target base. And after that, they started attacking civilian targets because they couldn't just stop. They saw it. They had to keep going.

So, you know, then they just scramble around for things to attack. So I think that element is very important, is clear. I think the wider thing that we're looking at about Saudi Arabia and the oil price and so on, I mean, it's just bizarre. On Monday morning, this last Monday, I mean, the oil price dropped 7.7%. What? You know, at a time when, you know, Saudi Arabia was attacking Iraq and Saudi Arabia just had its two refineries destroyed. Why would, you know, the oil price go down instead of going up? Well, it went down because overnight a huge whale of shorts—that is, people selling oil—struck the market. And so it dropped dramatically and then started rising.

And now it's risen much higher because people are beginning to assimilate the realities. And I don't know. I mean, even the Financial Times is suggesting this is probably the author, that this is the Treasury dumping short sales into the market to manipulate the market. Having said that, I underline that is illegal under American law, to manipulate markets, subject to 25 years' imprisonment, I think, even, as a maximum. But obviously, huge manipulation. In fact, and I just want to go back because maybe people haven't seen the picture so clearly, is that actually how Iran looks at this, is that it is all about manipulating markets.

That this pattern is so regular, that the conflict goes on during the week, and then come Friday, you know, it gets worse, and then on Monday, Trump announces they're longing for a deal, and it goes down. So, you know, it's conflict, ceasefire, conflict, ceasefire. And this is why the Iranians have said, listen, you know, this has got nothing to do with the MOU, nothing to do with negotiations with us. You're totally doing this to manipulate markets. So why should we bother? So that's why they attacked last night. I mean, you know, we're not going to just go and play this game of going on ceasefire every time, especially when you just attacked Assad forces in Iraq. So we hit back.

#Danny

That's how it is. It's all the Axis.

#Alastair Crooke

It's one. It's all or none. So if you attack any one of the Axis, we will attack infrastructure and tactical forces in the Gulf. They're taking a tough position on this. But this whole thing has become not about, you know, the MOU or a likely deal coming out of this. It's all about, you know, preparing the ground for, you know, Axios to come out with its regular stories that, oh yes, we're about to see an increase in conflict, and then we're going to see a deal, and then...

#Alastair Crooke

And managing the markets that way.

#Alastair Crooke

And the markets seem to be ready to be managed in this way. And I think the reason for this is because so much of this trading is now managed by algorithms, the familiar algorithms that rule our lives. And I think that what's happened is the algorithms have been primed, given a variable that is, because they read the headlines, these algorithms that can read news ticker tapes coming in on Wall Street. Deal? Okay, right. You know, we sell oil, buy oil, and then they do this all automatically. And then, I imagine—this is just speculative—they think they've been programmed, you know, to say that, well, since America has sort of escalatory dominance in most wars, you pay more attention, you give a higher variable to what America says than to what the IRGC says.

And therefore, you know, if Trump says something, you react. The algos go up, and the markets respond accordingly, buying or selling. And if the IRGC says something, it's largely ignored by the algos because that's not in the settings on the algo. So, I mean, this is just totally detached from reality. Totally. And one day, very shortly, this is going to strike home. And it's going to be much more painful because no one is ready for it. There's been no preparation, no psychological preparation. What have you seen in America? Because I don't read much American press, but in Europe, nothing, really nothing about the Saudis. I mean, barely mentioned what's happened to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is out of the market almost.

Isn't that, you know, something that, you know, a little while ago, top news, everyone would have said, "Oh my God, oil will be at \$150 tomorrow." And nothing, just quiet. They don't actually even mention here in Europe the prospect that very soon we're already at the edge of the inventory level of the strategic reserve, and beyond it we're at sort of cavern-collapsing level of the strategic reserve. We're at that level. Is it mentioned that this actually will have consequences? Prices are going to go up. Oil is probably—I mean, diesel is going to become scarce. Kerosene is going to go up in price or vanish, and you won't be able to fly so easily. Is it being discussed in Europe? Barely mentioned, hardly at all.

#Danny

Yeah, it's incredible. Well, I wanted to ask you about, with regard especially to Saudi Arabia, what I find very striking—and I saw a friend say this on X—they said something to the effect of Iran's retaliation to U.S. and Israeli aggression throughout this five-month period hasn't killed a single Muslim civilian in the region, while Saudi Arabia, with, of course, U.S. support, killed dozens of them in their strikes on Iraq, which was also quite strange because the Popular Mobilization Forces, Alastair, did not take credit for any of the strikes on Saudi oil facilities and on the airport, et cetera.

So I think that's just a striking contrast. You know, Saudi Arabia stayed out of this for as long as it could since the initial wave starting on February 28th between the United States and Iran. But now,

I mean, this is, as you said earlier, this is quite something, very significant, with Saudi Arabia now going from trying to hide away from conflict while being a party to it, of course, but now being directly in it on multiple fronts, opening up more than a few in such a rapid period of time.

#Alastair Crooke

I think you, I mean, and this highlights, you know, the whole sort of seeming miscalculation taking place. Because, you know, the question is, why didn't Saudi Arabia retaliate at the Houthis? Instead of which they struck at Kataib Hezbollah, who, as you rightly said, have denied that they attacked Saudi Arabia, their refineries, the Aramco refineries. They've denied it, formally denied it, and said now they're going to return it. And then other stories have emerged. I can't say how credible they are, but I've seen Iraqi security officials say that actually they believe that some of the drones fired at Saudi Arabia were initiated by Ukrainian special intelligence forces working with Mossad and the Kurds in the south in order to provide a false flag for Saudi Arabia to strike Iraq.

Well, I think Saudi Arabia just chose to strike in Iraq because they knew that if they struck at the Houthis, the Houthis would use missiles, would destroy the rest of their infrastructure. In the end, I mean, they've achieved neither. They've both lost their infrastructure and they've got an enemy of the Hashd and the Iraqis on their border, which will be very threatening to Kuwait and to Bahrain. So, you know, the whole thing is just slowly sort of—the temperature, the hot plate is getting hotter and hotter and hotter. And then we have the story that the attack by Ukraine was to try and merge the Ukrainian war with the war on Iran. And is this vaguely true?

Well, as I pointed out, I mean, I never really believe in coincidence. And, you know, how come the American forces suddenly attacked a port in a Caspian port of Iran out of the blue? Because the Caspian has got, I mean, yes, it's got vessels flying it, but it's mostly about commodities. I mean, this is the route in which Iran imports food and supplies through the Caspian and also through Pakistan, through the corridors in Pakistan. So that happens, and then an Iranian vessel gets struck, I think it's something like one, by a missile from Ukraine over a distance of something like 1,500 kilometers. I mean, isn't that just what's going on? What's happening?

Well, we don't have a complete answer, but the IRGC say, "We're going to respond to this." And parts of the American press, as you'll have noticed, are talking about, you know, a merging of the war and a new vibe in America about that Ukraine is doing so well, and that this is, you know, Trump will be impressed by this. And that what Zelensky was doing by attacking the Iranian vessel was, you know, rather like a small child saying, "Hey, look at me, I'm here. Don't give me more attention. You know, too much attention is going to the Middle East, and you're not paying enough attention to my war against Russia." That's one possibility, but it looks as if it could even be something more substantial because we have this strange story.

I'm sure you've seen it, that Laura Loomer, who is someone that Trump liked in his circle, who traveled with him on campaign planes and things like that, who he speaks to on the telephone

regularly, and is considered to be an important influencer in the States, supposedly with the MAGA, but that is not really credible, especially the young MAGA. But she suddenly had this sort of conversion, and she's gone out very publicly. She's been to Kyiv and come back and said, you know, "I'm all for Ukraine. I used to be indifferent, and I've done 180 degrees, and I now support Zelensky completely." She had a meeting with him and said, "I'm going to come back and brief Trump about my meeting and how well and how great Ukraine is going." Well, you know, first of all, Loomer doesn't have any standing with young MAGA. I mean, they're not influenced by her at all. She's faded from that, but probably she has influence with a 55-, 65-year-old who watch Fox News in the evening.

She will have some weight with those people. It sounds as though, and people are suggesting it, it sounds as though a new psychological operation is being contrived for the midterms. And what is this? I think it's an attempt, because of what we see in the polls. Trump's standing has really been dropping in terms of the war on Iran. The war on Iran gets less and less popular in the United States. And so I think they're trying to project this story that it's okay to be interventionist, and it's not necessarily at odds with America First. To be interventionist is compatible with America First. So they are sort of really challenging—it's a sort of new meme that has been invented to challenge the old book, if you remember, that was written some time ago by a presidential candidate, which is, you know, "America the Republic," and America is not an empire.

And the American people must decide on this. And this has always had a theme. This is a theme that has always had quite a lot of influence, particularly amongst the young in the Republican Party. So I think they're trying to challenge that, the growing sense that, you know, the war in Iran, you know, conflicts with that idea. You know, America is a republic. It is not an empire and should not be an empire. This needs to recalibrate away from it, which was the subject of a book that was very prominent some years ago. And there is a good following for that. Now, is this going to catch on? Well, yes, but this is precisely the hidden danger in all of this. Are they really going to use Zelensky to try and sort of promote this idea that, you know, it's okay to be interventionist against Iran.

It's okay to be interventionist, military interventionist against Russia. You know, all this is consistent with, you know, America First somehow, if you can get to the logic. But is this to be the new sort of saving meme for the midterms? I don't know. It may just collapse because MAGA may not just, you know, bite on it at all. And Laura Loomer is not, you know, a huge influencer in the United States, to put it mildly. But nonetheless, Zelensky did fire on an Iranian vessel. America fired on the Caspian. So something is going on to try and link these two conflicts. And I think that this is what it is, is to try and muddy the water between the two conflicts, to say, well, you know, I mean, what's happening in Ukraine?

As Loomer says, you know, it's all changed. They're on the front foot now. They're winning. They're winning. You know, there was a time when Zelensky was a loser. Now he's a winner. Now we all have to get behind it and support it. And if then we see further attacks on Iranian assets, then this whole thing can become very dangerous because Iran has already said that it is ready to warn

Britain about the use of RAF Fairford military airport for the B-1 bombers that are flying to Iran. He said, you know, you are in the same position as Gulf states. You're providing support for attacks on Iran, which is exactly what's happening. The B-1 bombers are based in Fairford, RAF Fairford, and are flying to Iran now in these days.

And Cyprus is used as a base. So the Iranians have said, well, you know, if we get attacked by sort of a non-, you know, other than the usual suspects, i.e. through the UK or by Ukraine, we will react. And, you know, this comes at a time when the war with Russia, between Russia, the NATO states, and Russia, is heating up. These missiles have changed. The deep-penetrating missiles are no longer attacking sort of refineries with great plumes of smoke because they put kerosene into the warheads. They are now attacking, you know, the Amazon type—it's called Wildberries, but it's just basically Amazon—you know, consumer empires that you, you know, go on the internet and you order whatever it is, a soap of your choice or something like this.

So they're attacking these—they've been attacked by several of them—and they've attacked a resort, a summer resort, you know, with a swimming pool and the beds around it and everything else. Out in the middle of nowhere, they've attacked it and killed, I think, 22 people, or I don't know the exact figure exactly. But the Russians are furious. And they're furious because they know that these missiles are made and built and designed in Europe, in Germany, France, and Britain. Then they are disassembled and sent to Ukraine for reassembly and then fired from Ukraine as if it was a Ukrainian missile. And so the Russians have come out and produced a paper showing the locations of all of the manufacturers in Europe where these missiles that are striking Russia are being constructed before they are sent to Ukraine, and said, "These are targets now."

These are targets. And so we are getting into quite deep water because of circularity. Everything is interlinked, but everything has separate agendas. So it is almost impossible to have a diplomatic solution to these things. So they're all, if you like, there. And so if we see them fused or meshed together, then it's very hard not to see that there will be something that will escalate this. And as they are interlinked and sort of somehow coagulated together, then we could see something very serious take place. And I don't think there will be any tools, diplomatic tools, available to the White House to deal with such a wide and complex problem.

#Danny

It's not just like, you know, let's do a deal with Iran.

#Alastair Crooke

No, because we're talking now about Saudi Arabia, Iraq now involved in it. And so it's a very dangerous situation that is being constructed. And I'm not sure how much this is by careful determination, or is it just people doing things and not really sort of thinking and linking them together. I think probably it's determined. You know, sat down and thought about it, I think that's

unlikely. But I do think someone has, you know, put this together. It's really, you know, in a sense, someone has seen this Laura Loomer who's sort of pushed her off into this. So let's piggyback off the Lindsey Graham funeral and then suggest, you know, that what the MAGA should be, should be a sort of Lindsey Graham Trumpish interventionist force.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. Well, I pulled up earlier, while you were talking, Alistair, Laura Loomer meeting with the founder of the Azov Battalion, neo-Nazi, one of the chief neo-Nazi groups operating in Ukraine since as early as the coup in 2014. It has been one of the main fighting forces there. She met with them, and as you said, she said she was going to report on her findings all across Kyiv and other areas she traveled to across the country. And yeah, I mean, you know, I feel like one of the big problems with this attempt and the Trump administration, I think the Trump wing of the ruling establishment, they do rely a lot. You know, when people say culture war, they do try to really harness and hone in on any opportunity in the realm of culture, like a Laura Loomer influencer, to boost their stock, to boost their image.

But the problem with Laura Loomer is that she's such a craven pro-Israel figure that her brand is actually a lot less—if anybody looks at Laura Loomer's X, for example, you can find on most of her posts, you have just as many people who despise her across all sides of the political spectrum because of her sympathy and her outright offensive support for Israel. This kind of, I think, feels indicative of the big problem for, I think, the Trump wing of the ruling establishment, is that, as you said, they want to appeal to more people because they're worried about the lack of appeal of things like the war on Iran. But the figures that they need to harness in order to regain that appeal have also made very stringent and harsh turns, for example, like what Laura Loomer has done since October 7th, 2023, which is be a champion for Israel, which now is unpopular across the board. So, your comments on this? We have about eight minutes left, so anything else you would like to point out?

#Alastair Crooke

Just to say, of course, I mean, you know, a sort of new narrative, a new theme and jive for saying, you know, it's okay to be interventionist. It's okay to militarily intervene. I mean, that's not inconsistent with America First. I'm sure Israel will not stand in the way of that campaign. It would be entirely in line with how they see it, or the Republicans, how they see that the Republicans should be acting. I don't think Laura Loomer will have any influence on the young at all. I agree with you completely. But I think, you know, I'm bringing it up not to look at the, you know, the actual mechanics of it, but to say, you know, that all of this smells of escalation. You know, that if Trump is stymied in Iran, are we about to see escalation taking place against Russia to sort of compensate for the fact that he's frustrated in Iran?

So that's what I'm really saying, is not how good she will be and how effective, or if she has any influence, so much. This is just a canary in the coal mine for me. It says, you know, everything is starting to sort of catch fire in the Middle East and become, you know, impossible to resolve. So, you know, merge the two, find new pressure on Putin, how to push Putin into a ceasefire, which he will not do. Actually, the result of this is going to be escalation by Russia, escalation by Iran, escalation in Iraq, escalation by the Yemenis. We're going to see a very fragile period ahead. And if the White House decides to start escalating in order to push Putin into a ceasefire, which is completely against the interests of Russia as perceived by Russians, well, you know, it will be a very unpleasant consequence.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. You know, it does almost feel like full circle since October 7, 2023, which began with Gaza. That quickly ignited into a regional war. And now the, I guess, the bigger fish, according to the U.S. and Israelis, Iran, now that has morphed into an Israel-Iran regional war. And possibly, as many have noted on this show, possibly a global war, because it brings in, now we're bringing in the Ukraine conflict and Russia. Also, there are reports after reports almost every week about China and Iran's support.

I think there are many in the masters of war, if we're to call them that, that are looking at this with the aim and the eyes toward even the bigger powers, which to some might come as a surprise, since Iran has not gone so well. But maybe that isn't the point to a lot of those who are continuing this war. Maybe the point isn't even to seek total victory against a country like Iran, but to create the conditions for a bigger war to be possible, for whatever reasons. And I'm curious if you have comments on that as we close out here.

#Alastair Crooke

Well, very quickly, there are no military solutions available to Trump, either in the Russia-Ukraine sphere or the Iranian sphere. The economic consequences of the blockades in Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab are knocking at the door, and the midterm elections are looking bleaker than ever for him. So what is he going to do in these circumstances to try and change the whole equation? We don't know, but it is quite a dangerous predicament to find ourselves in.

#Danny

Well, I want to make sure everybody knows that in the video description, they can find Conflicts Forum Substack, which is a great resource that you help put together on all of these matters and issues. We also have all the places to support this channel in the video description as well. Alex, do you want to say anything about Conflicts Forum Substack before we head out here?

#Alastair Crooke

Yeah, just, I would strongly recommend people look at the almost once- or twice-a-week reports we do of what's happening in Israel, because Israel is going through its own crisis, leadership crisis. It may be that Netanyahu will lose the election, and then he's preparing the ground for not accepting the results of an election, just like we see in the United States. He's doing the same. The Likud have already passed a motion to say that if there's any security anxiety, he can cancel elections. And even if it does go ahead, then Netanyahu will choose all the candidates for the Likud for the upcoming elections. So it's really important what's happening. We try and set it out every week from the Hebrew press, not the English-language press, because you get a different story in the Hebrew press. But I would say this is becoming very important, and it's hardly being looked at or understood at the moment.

#Danny

Yeah, so everyone, do support Conflicts Forum Substack in the video description below. Thanks, Jeremiah, for becoming a new member. And thanks to everyone at The Most High for your very kind words about Alistair and my work together. Everybody, hit the like button before you go. That helps boost the show. Some more people here. Alistair, our mutual friend Pepe Escobar is joining the program tomorrow, July 31st, at 1 p.m. Eastern time. So do check us out then. That is the next show. Without further ado, everybody, that closes out today's program. Thanks so much for watching. I'll see you tomorrow. Until next time, bye-bye.