

Iran Closes Strait of Hormuz, Again

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Dimitri Lascaris: Good day, this is Dimitri Lascaris coming to you for Reason2Resist from Kalamata, Greece on April 18th, 2026. Today, less than 24 hours after Iran's foreign minister announced that the Strait of Hormuz was completely open, Iran's military announced that this Strait of Hormuz was closed. Here is the initial statement from the foreign minister of Iran issued yesterday, April 17th. His name, of course, is Abbas Araghchi, and this was posted on X a little more than 24 hours ago. He wrote: "In line with the ceasefire in Lebanon, the passage for all commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz is declared completely open for the remaining period of the ceasefire, on the coordinated route as already announced by Ports and Maritime Organisation of the Islamic Republic of Iran".

He's referring here to an agreement that was struck yesterday between Israel and Lebanon for a ceasefire. I'll come back to that in a moment. This is what prompted the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, but it was done on a qualified basis. As you can see from the statement, it was limited to commercial vessels. Surely it would exclude military vessels, intelligence gathering vessels, and probably commercial vessels from nations deemed unfriendly to the Islamic Republic. But nonetheless, it was an important step towards the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. He also specified this had to be done on the coordinated route, passage through the Strait, clearly signifying that Iran intended to continue to regulate who could pass through the Strait and on what terms.

Now, the foreign minister's statement, as I indicated, resulted from Trump's announcement yesterday of a 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. Iran, it appears, succeeded in pressuring the Donald to require a ceasefire in Lebanon from the Netanyahu regime and the statement or the announcement of that ceasefire was made by Donald Trump on Truth Social yesterday, just before the Iranian announcement that the strait had been reopened. And here's what Donald Trump wrote. I'm going to ignore the first part of the statement for now. It's the second half. You'll see at the bottom it says: "The USA will separately work with Lebanon and deal with the Hezbollah situation in an appropriate manner. Israel will not be bombing Lebanon any longer. They are prohibited from doing so by the USA. Enough is enough!!!", with three exclamation marks for good measure, "Thank you! President DJT".

The Iran-US ceasefire went into effect, this is the original ceasefire mediated by Pakistan on April 8th, and it clearly was intended to include Lebanon as was confirmed explicitly by the government of Pakistan on social media, Pakistan, of course, being the mediator of that original cease-fire agreement. But as we've reported here, and as I covered extensively when I was in Lebanon a few days ago, Israel immediately violated that ceasefire by bombing civilian targets relentlessly, killing over 350 civilians in one day, actually in a few minutes – the highest one-day death toll in Lebanon since the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990.

Now, because Trump has no real interest in a just and durable peace and remains hell bent on destroying Iran, more on that later, he did not react graciously to put it mildly, to the Iranian foreign minister's gesture of announcing the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. Au contraire, Trump loudly declared that the illegal US blockade on Iranian ports would continue. This was shortly after the announcement of the reopening of the strait. He stated: "The Strait of Hromuz is completely open and ready for business and full passage but the naval blockade will remain in full force and effect as it pertains to Iran only until such time as our transaction with Iran is 100% complete". What transaction is he talking about? "This process should go very quickly in that most of the points are already negotiated". There's absolutely no evidence that any of the points have been negotiated. "Thank you for your attention to this matter".

One hour approximately after posting this highly provocative message, because as I say, the blockade is a violation of international law, it is in fact an act of war, and as such a grievous violation of the ceasefire agreement with Iran. But Trump had to up the ante even more with another audacious lie, claiming that Iran had agreed to never close the Strait of Hormuz again. And here you see that statement. It came out about an hour after Trump announced that the blockade would remain in effect. He wrote on Truth Social: "Iran has agreed to never close the Strait of Hormuz again. It will no longer be used as a weapon against the world. President Donald J. Trump". So we now find ourselves in a rather comical situation that within 24 hours of Donald Trump saying that Iran had agreed to never close the Strait of Hormuz again, Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz again.

Trump's braggadocio did not stop there. After announcing that his illegal blockade would continue and falsely claiming that Iran had agreed to never close the Strait of Hormuz again, Trump claimed that the USA would get all of Iran's nuclear dust, and that the USA would pay no compensation to Iran. This was part of that post, which I just showed you a moment ago, where Trump demanded that Israel stop bombing Lebanon. You'll see that he made that demand in the second half of this post. But in the first half, he said, "The USA will get all Nuclear 'Dust' created by our great B2 Bombers –" What in the hell is he talking about? Is he talking about the enriched uranium, which was not actually destroyed, as his administration has admitted and in fact complained, by his B2 bombers? I would imagine that that's what he's talking about.

But then he goes on to say: "No money will exchange hands in any way shape or form." And he's disconnecting this deal completely from Lebanon. So all of this is anathema to Iran. Iran

has given no indication that it is willing to give to the United States the enriched uranium. He says "the USA will get it". He doesn't say it will go to some third party for safekeeping, he says "the USA will get it". That is surely a non-starter. Iran's not going to turn over the enriched uranium to the United States. And he's explicitly rejecting here any notion, or at least implicitly, of the United States paying reparations to the Islamic Republic, which is a key part of the Iranian 10-point peace plan, which Donald Trump said last week was a workable basis for negotiation.

And by the way, this is not a gift. This would not be a gift to Iran. Iran is entitled to reparations under international law for the tens of billions of dollars of damage that Israel and the United States have done to Iran because that war was a naked war of aggression which blatantly violated the United Nations Charter. So by explicitly ruling out any reparations from the United States to Iran, or at least implicitly, and asserting that the United States is going to demand that all of the enriched uranium be returned over to it, rather than perhaps held by some third party as a custodian, Donald Trump is essentially ensuring that there isn't going to be a peace deal, just by virtue of these statements alone, if in fact he's being serious here. And admittedly, one can never be sure about whether Trump is being serious. Bear in mind that last week, as I said, Trump said that the Iranian 10-point peace plan was a workable basis of negotiation. There has been no statement since then by the Trump regime, not publicly, and based on the little we've been able to glean from what happened during the 21 hours of intense negotiations between J.D. Vance and the Iranian delegation in Islamabad, none of the information which has leaked out causes us to believe or substantiates that any element of that 10-point peace plan has been agreed to by the United States. In fact, all indications are that the United States has rejected all 10 points of the 10-point peace plan.

Now, there's two other posts that Trump put out within the past 24 hours, which may also have added to the Iranians' irritation. There's this one where Trump claimed that "Iran, with the help of the USA, has removed or is removing all sea mines". Now this is important for shippers to know whether they have removed them or they are removing them because you don't want to go through the strait if there's any mines left there, especially if you don't know where they are. And if they have not all been removed or and are being removed, what is the timeline for removing them? Of course, these are all key pieces of information which Donald Trump leaves out of his statement, which just is adding to the mountain of confusion that this lunatic is creating in the insurance markets and in the global shipping industry and in oil and gas markets.

But I would ask, by the way, why would Iran remove the mines – they are helping Iran to maintain control over the strait. There's been no peace deal struck yet, and it is possible for ships to pass safely through at least part of the Strait of Hormuz, the part that hasn't been mined, because ships have been doing just that during this war of aggression on Iran. Iran really has no reason to remove any mines it has yet. And I would imagine that it doesn't need the help of the United States in order to do that. So this is too likely to be false and also an irritation to Iran.

And then there's this statement where Trump was gloating that according to him, President Xi of China is very happy that the Strait of Hormuz is open and or rapidly opening. Which is it, Donald? Is it open or rapidly opening? And if it's rapidly opening, when will it be open? Presumably the President of the United States would know these things. He then goes on to say in this post that "Our meeting in China will be a special one and potentially historic. I look forward to being with President Xi". China, of course, is a strategic partner of Iran and although this kind of a statement from Donald Trump isn't going to be particularly important to the Iranian government. Nonetheless, the suggestion that Donald Trump is somehow having backdoor conversations with a strategic ally of Iran about getting the Strait of Hormuz open is not likely to add to the warm and fuzzy feelings between the Iranian government and the Trump regime.

Now, after Trump went hog wild, on Truth Social during the past 24 hours, it was only then that Iran reached the limit of its patience and issued the statement that it was going to be closing the Strait of Hormuz again. And this actually came from the Iranian military, not from the Iranian foreign minister. And here you can see the statement from the now world famous spokesperson for the Khatam al-Anbiya headquarters of the Iranian military. It states: "Following the continued US Naval blockade, the Strait of Hormuz has been closed again". And then it goes on to state, or this I think may actually be a separate post, it's a thread, from a little earlier in the day. It says: "Over the past few days, only three Iranian ships out of the many that have left the Strait of Hormuz have returned to Iranian ports after receiving warnings from the US. These three ships also left the strait today and are on their way to their destinations". So they are saying that effectively we continue to operate our commercial shipping, Iran, notwithstanding the blockade, although clearly there is some impediment being imposed because the Iranian military acknowledged that three of its ships did return after being warned by the US not to proceed. And then he says, the spokesperson, that those three ships left the strait today and are on the way to their destinations. So they're going to try again to break the blockade. And the Iranian Military goes on to say, second post from the bottom: "Despite the US media hype, CENTCOM has not been able to impose any kind of blockade on Iran in practice". And finally: "The only achievement the American regime can claim from this war is shutting down Iranian social media accounts", which is, by the way, something that X has been doing with increasing vigor as we get deeper into this war.

For good measure, Iran's military mocked Trump's cascade of lies. It shared comments from Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the speaker of Iran's parliament, and he was quoted as having written on his official Twitter account: "The President of the US made seven claims within one hour, every single one of them is false. With such falsehoods, they did not succeed in war and they will certainly not achieve results in negotiations either". And then he continued, the speaker of the parliament: "If the blockade continues, the Strait of Hormuz will not remain open, passage through the strait will take place according to a designated route and only with Iran's authorization. Whether the strait remains open or closed and the regulations governing it will be determined on the ground, not on social media". And finally: "Media warfare and engineering of public opinion are a significant part of the conflict, but Iranian people will not

be influenced by such tactics. For accurate and reliable updates on negotiations, refer to a recent interview with our spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs".

Interestingly, they're referring to the spokesperson of a foreign ministry in a recent interview – I'm not sure which interview the speaker of Iran's parliament is referring to, but I do note that the statement by the Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi that the Strait of Hormuz is open, and which was published about 24 hours ago, has not been taken down or corrected as yet on the foreign minister's X-profile. But whatever these circumstances may be, I can assure you, my friends, that the mere statement by the Iranian military that the Strait of Hormuz is closed – and I understand that the military has gone further than this, it's actually published a recording of a conversation with what purportedly is a ship's captain of the commercial vessel that was trying to go through the Strait of Hormuz and the ship's captain was instructed to turn around, and he agreed that he would do so. There has also been some imagery published which shows a map of the Strait of Hormuz, which appears to show ships that were heading into the strait turning around shortly after the announcement.

So exactly what the situation on the ground is remains quite unclear, but the mere announcement that Iran's military has closed the Strait of Hormuz again, coupled with the other confusing statements out of Donald Trump, for example, not clarifying whether the mines had been removed or were in the process of being removed – this is just going to engender so much confusion that effectively there will be almost no traffic through the Strait of Hormuz for the remainder of this ceasefire. And I believe there's something in the range of five or six days remaining in the original ceasefire. And that's just going to increase pressure on the global economy and increase pressure on Donald Trump to do one of two things, either to make the concessions that are necessary to Iran to gain the cooperation of the Iranian government and military in the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, or resume the war and try, if he might, to achieve the opening of the Strait of Hromuz by military means. Again, I'm going to come back to that later. The situation remains that a huge proportion of the oil and gas supply of the world is being held back from global markets because of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and that is going to have dramatically adverse consequences for the global economy.

Trump's antics during the past 24 hours in my submission to you are radically inconsistent with the genuine desire for peace. And this is the main message of my report today. Overwhelmingly, I say, the available evidence points to a resumption of the US-Israeli war of aggression on Iran. Trump's provocations and lies on social media are not, by any means, the only evidence on which I rely in asserting that a resummation of the war is inevitable. Now, before I share with you that other evidence, or at least some of it, I'd like to remind you all, if you find this video to be informative, please like and share it. And if you're not already a subscriber to Reason2Resist, please become one and help us to expand the reach of our unapologetic resistance journalism. Yesterday, we passed through the threshold of 170,000 subscribers. We're very gratified to have reached that level after launching this channel in mid 2024. We greatly appreciate all the support we receive from our wonderful audience members.

So let's get into the evidence that the war will be revived, and of course I very much hope that my prediction turns out to be horribly wrong. First there's the massive US military buildup in West Asia, something that I talked about in the last couple of episodes, and this was something that in fact was the subject of a warning issued by the powerful Russian Security Council. I'm not going to take you through the entire warning, but I think the key a paragraph is here up on the screen, the third paragraph: "There were about 500 units of US Air Force aircraft on airfields in the Middle East, including more than 250 tactical aircraft, as well as over 220 US Navy ships. As stated by Trump, these forces will remain in their positions near Iran until Tehran fulfills the conditions set by Washington. The deployment of units from the 82nd Airborne Division to the Middle East continues, an amphibious assault group led by Universal Amphibious Assault Ship USS Boxer with 2,500 Marines and an aircraft carrier strike group led by nuclear-powered multipurpose aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush is moving into the conflict zone." And here's the money shot, quote: "The expected arrival time in the Arabian Sea is just in time for the expiration of the two-week truce", close quote.

Now, it was brought to my attention by our friend and frequent guest on Reason2Resist, John Helmer, a keen, astute, and highly knowledgeable observer of all things Russian, that it doesn't appear that these comments were actually put out in an official statement of the Russian Security Council. John brought to my attention that he couldn't find any such statement on the Russian security council's website. He did find, and this is where I obtained this information, an article from TASS, the state media organization. And presumably TASS wouldn't be publishing this article if it hadn't been authorized by the Russian Security Council to do so. And what you're seeing here up on the screen is a screenshot from the TASS article. Why the Security Council would communicate this message through TASS without putting out an official statement is an interesting question. I think John may have more to say about that when we interview him next on Monday. But I just wanted to alert you about this interesting development and leave it to you to contemplate what if anything it means.

So in any case, and this is the critical point, there is a massive US military buildup going on during this truce. And what is Donald Trump going to do with all of those military assets, having expended the time, energy, and money to bring them into the region? Is he really going to send them home after making serious concessions to Iran without any further warfare? Once they are in the region and poised to be used in a resumption of the war on Iran, I think the pressure on Trump to do just that, to use the weaponry and the military personnel who have assembled there at great cost and at great effort, it will be enormous and that is precisely what he's going to do.

That's not the only evidence on which I rely. There's the all too predictable fact also that Israel continues to violate the new ceasefire. This alert was issued just a few hours ago by Al Jazeera English: Israeli troops are blowing up homes in border towns that they continue to control, according to several Lebanese news outlets despite the ceasefire. There's not just that, it's also in the early hours of the ceasefire after it came into effect at midnight local time

two nights ago, the Lebanese military reported that there had been numerous ceasefire violations by Israel in south Lebanon including the artillery shelling of several Lebanese villages. This of course should come as no surprise – never has there been a ceasefire that Israel respected in the entire history of Israel.

But there's more, folks. Within the past 24 hours, Netanyahu declared that despite the ceasefire, his criminal regime intends to keep up its attacks on the Lebanese resistance. Here you see an article published by Israeli media. Israel has not yet finished the job on Hezbollah, Netanyahu says after the ceasefire. "Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared", this was yesterday, "that operations against Hezbollah are far from over, even as a 10-day ceasefire with Lebanon takes hold under US pressure. Speaking hours after the truce began on Friday, Netanyahu said Israel intends to keep pursuing the group's dismantling, warning that the process will require sustained effort rather than a quick resolution". There is no way in hell, in my opinion, that the Islamic Republic of Iran is going to throw Hezbollah under the bus.

And if the Netanyahu entity, the criminal Israeli entity, continues to wage war on Hezbollah, whether in the next few days or weeks or months, this will inevitably draw Iran back into conflict with Israel and undoubtedly the Trump regime as well. So this 10-day ceasefire, nobody should think that this is indicative of a durable peace or a real impetus towards one because Netanyahu himself and the Israeli military are behaving as though the war is far from over, and in fact, are continuing to engage in acts of war on occupied territory in South Lebanon. And I'm referring, of course, particularly to the shelling of villages and the blowing up of houses, civilian infrastructure, in the South. And believe me, folks, I've been there several times in the past two years, including just a few days ago in Nabatieh. There already aren't too many houses left standing in the south of Lebanon due to the savagery of the genocidal Israeli entity.

And there's even more, and I've talked about this in some of our most recent episodes, the head of the Mossad, David Barnea, said after the original Iran-US ceasefire came into effect, this was on April 14th, that the Mossad's mission is "incomplete until it results in regime change in Iran". So any further efforts by the Mossad to destabilize the country, whether by means of fomenting riots, attempting a coup, overt military attacks, cyber warfare, terrorism, you name it, that is not going to be conducive to peace and will undermine any attempt at a durable peace deal. And it's undoubtedly the case that the Trump regime is fully aware of Barnea's commentary and to my knowledge has done nothing to rein him in or even to chastise him publicly for making statements that will surely eliminate any possibility of a durable peace in the region.

So, the Trump regime, I would put to you, has demonstrated that it is incapable of accepting defeat and is pathologically committed to brute force as a means of maintaining what remains of US global hegemony. I think the most compelling evidence that Donald Trump is going to resume this war on the Islamic Republic probably quite soon, is Donald Trump's record. It is a record of warmongering, a record of violence, barbarism, brutality, lawlessness, and this

goes all the way back to the first Trump administration, when, for example, Trump ordered the assassination and murder of Iran's top general. Trump was the first president to provide lethal weaponry to Ukraine. Not even Obama had been willing to do that. Trump expanded the US military budget dramatically. Trump increased the sanctions on Iran, withdrew his country from the joint comprehensive plan of action, the Obama era nuclear deal, which Iran was respecting and which imposed very strict limits on Iranian enrichment of uranium, and he also withdrew the United States from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, a key pillar of nuclear disarmament and nuclear arms control, a deal that had been in place for a number of years with the Russian Federation. I could go on and on.

Now, when Trump came back into the White House in January of last year, and those of you who've been following our reporting for more than a year will probably recall this because I talked about it many times, I expressed deep, deep skepticism that Donald Trump had any desire to end any of the wars in which the United States was embroiled, particularly the Ukraine war. And as he was about to enter office, I did a couple of episodes in which I went through his record in greater detail than I did just now and said, you know, you are what your record says you are, I don't believe Donald Trump is serious about bringing an end to the Ukraine war, nor do I think he's serious about bringing an end to genocide in Gaza. And then something surprising happened, and that is that the day before Donald Trump entered office in January of last year, returned to the White House, the Israelis entered into a ceasefire agreement with the resistance in Gaza.

Now at that point, I, again, and I said this publicly at the time, I decided to suspend my judgment about whether or not Donald Trump was going to make serious efforts to bring the Gaza genocide and the war in Ukraine to an end. And for me, the proof would be in the pudding, and particularly whether he was going to force the Netanyahu regime to comply with the terms of the ceasefire deal struck in January of last year. Of course that didn't happen. Not only did Israel immediately start and continue to violate that ceasefire agreement, but in March of last year it refused to withdraw its troops from Rafah as it had agreed to do in the ceasefire agreement and began to starve the civilian population of Gaza and to inflict even more death and destruction on it than it had been doing during the Biden administration. So at that point, I returned to my initial assessment without any hesitation that Donald Trump is a warmonger and that all of this talk about peace was nothing but Kabuki theater.

Now you may ask, well, why? Why would Donald Trump lie about wanting peace when in fact, he intends to pursue war? It's not complicated, my friends. The fact of the matter is that most Americans want peace. And during the 2024 election, the Biden administration, which had become completely and utterly obsessively committed to the Ukraine war and had been supporting openly the Israeli genocide, it effectively ceded to the Republicans the argument about being the party of peace. The Democrats in the 2024 election weren't even pretending to be the party of peace. And so Donald Trump, having astute advisors, as I'm sure he did and continues to have, they told him, "listen, tell people that you wanna be the peace president, whatever your intentions may be, because you're gonna win a lot of votes that way". And so

Donald Trump did what American political candidates have been doing since the founding of the Republic. They lie to win votes. It's as simple as that. And having lied to win votes, Donald Trump now has a political problem, particularly because the midterms are approaching and the polls show that the Republicans are in real trouble.

And the problem is that people think he lied. More and more people are coming to the conclusion that that was just a cheap trick to get them to vote for Donald Trump. And so Donald Trump feels, I have no doubt, a lot of pressure to create the aura of being a president who is genuinely trying to achieve peace. I think that is one of the major reasons why he wanted the ceasefire. He saw that the economic shit was hitting the fan and he didn't want to be blamed for it. He wanted to be able to say, "look, I tried to achieve peace with Iran, but those unreasonable extremist mullahs simply refused to do any kind of a decent deal with me and therefore it's all their fault". Or perhaps he'll say it was the Europeans fault because they refused to send their naval vessels in a suicide mission to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a task that would almost certainly fail. Who knows. He just wants to be in a position to blame somebody else when the economic disaster befalls the American people and so this negotiation is Kabuki theater designed to enable him to do just that.

And I think that there's another reason why Donald Trump is engaging in this spectacle which is not at all designed to achieve a durable peace, and that is that he's trying to calm down the oil and gas markets. And it's actually succeeded. I'm going to come back to that in a moment. If he convinces them that he is very serious about bringing an end to this war and getting the Strait of Hormuz open as quickly as possible by whatever means necessary, then that is likely to restrain to some degree escalations in the price of oil and gas, which is absolutely critical, not only to the stability of the global economy, but to the future of the Trump regime. So that is undoubtedly a reason as well for which he is engaging in the spectacle.

And finally, they're probably hastily putting together some plan B in terms of their military operations against Iran, because plan A went horribly wrong. And I think culminating in that ridiculous debacle near Isfahan, where they sent a couple of hundreds of special operations troops into the Iranian heartland with C-130 transport planes and helicopters and A-10s and F-15s and things were getting shot down left and right, blown up left and right – all ostensibly for the purpose of saving one pilot. As many people who have a lot more military expertise than I do have commented, that was probably a cover story and that was intended to be a major ground operation in Iran. I saw a recent report by Brian Berletić of the New Atlas where he talked about lots of evidence that the United States over the years has trained for that kind of a mission where they send C-130s and special ops troops into enemy territory to set up an airfield which they then used to project their power. You may want to watch that episode. I think he published it yesterday. I think it's a pretty good potential explanation for what happened in Isfahan. But in any event, by any measure, that was a complete and utter debacle, even if they were trying to save that one pilot and did save that pilot, the cost of doing it was absolutely enormous, and there's no indication that that pilot whatever his mission may have actually achieved his mission. So it was nothing but a debacle. And it's not a surprise that immediately after that, Donald Trump made the dramatic gesture of saying, I'm

prepared to negotiate on the basis of Iran's 10-point peace plan, which was a clear and unambiguous lie. That is now clear. There's no evidence that Trump has accepted even one of the 10 points in the 10-point peace plan. And in fact, J.D. Vance in Islamabad was just issuing maximalist demands, just like the Trump regime has been doing from day one.

So all of this is just to say that the Trump regime and the military brass have probably formulated some kind of a Plan B. They may have already had a Plan B in mind, but they need the time to implement it, to get their troops in place. That, too, is very likely to be a reason why Donald Trump sought a temporary ceasefire. But at the end of the day, you are what your record says you are. This is not a man who can respect ceasefires any more than Benjamin Netanyahu. This is not a person who is prone to peace. This is a man who is hell-bent on the destruction of the Islamic Republic and has no doubt about it, that is the goal. It isn't regime change. They want to destroy Iran because they know that any puppet they put in place could be overthrown one day. Just like the Shah of Iran was overthrown. So they want to ensure, the Israelis and the Americans, that whoever is in power at any point in the future, the nation of Iran will be incapable of defending itself and maintaining its sovereignty and independence from the United States and Israel. That is the goal and they will pursue that goal – Trump and Netanyahu and others in the US and Israeli political elite who share this objective, will pursue that goal until they are forced by external pressure, external actors to abandon this insane illegal, criminal, and barbaric objective of achieving full-spectrum dominance of the strategically important West Asia.

Now, if I'm correct in my assessment that the resumption of war is inevitable, then the world will be plunged into a global economic crisis very soon, I'm afraid to say. For the time being, the pressure is off Donald Trump, because the stock market, upon the announcement of the ceasefire, it just blows my mind that this is happening, but you'll see here, I think this was the day after or two days after the original ceasefire was announced on April 8th, the stock market, the S&P 500 hit a record high, an all-time record high. And for Donald Trump, the performance of the stock market is more or less synonymous with the health of the economy but in fact the stock market is now completely divorced from the real economy. He doesn't know that or he doesn't care that that's the case. For him this is all that matters. It's the wealthy who benefit primarily, overwhelmingly from a bull market, not ordinary workers. Most Americans can't invest significant money in the stock market because they don't have significant savings. They're living from paycheck to paycheck. So Donald Trump cares what the wealthy are experiencing. And when the stock market is at record highs, the wealthy aren't as happy as pigs in manure.

So that graph you see up there takes a lot of pressure off Donald Trump to do a peace deal. It's not just that of course, it's that the oil and gas markets predictably responded to news of the Strait of Hormuz opening. By the way, what you're seeing up there, this BBC article, which was published before today's announcement by the Iranian military that the strait is closed again. So we'll have to see how the price of oil performs in the days ahead. It is undoubtedly going to rise sharply unless a deal is quickly struck to reopen the Strait of

Hormuz and I believe that that's going to require, at a bare minimum, the Americans announcing that their blockade of Iranian ports has been called off.

In any case, what happened yesterday after the announcement of the reopening of the strait, as reported by the BBC, oil prices plummeted and the cost of a barrel of Brent crude fell to \$88 a barrel after the agreement, having been above \$98 earlier on Friday. That is a huge drop of in excess of 10% in the price of a barrel of Brent crude in one day. So all of this just takes pressure off of Donald Trump to maintain the ceasefire and to refrain from resuming the war. So if I'm right, that a core purpose of this ceasefire was to restrain the growth and the price of oil, calm the oil markets down, calm down the stock markets – well, for the time being, Trump's tactics are working, which means that he has less incentive to sue for peace and more incentive to pursue to its final conclusion his insane and barbaric mission to destroy the state of Iran.

So before completing my report today, folks, and by the way, just in terms of timing, again, this is the best sense that I can offer you. I could be wrong about all of this. I'll repeat that I hope very much that I'm wrong. But I would suspect that that attack is going to come very, very soon because it's going to get, as Professor Mohammad Marandi noted on our program yesterday and on other programs recently, it's about to become scorching hot in the Persian Gulf and throughout the region of West Asia. And it's going to become quite difficult, much more difficult to sustain intense military operations, particularly but not limited to ground operations in that heat. So if they're going to get on with the war, they have an incentive to do it as quickly as possible. An alternative scenario is that Trump does everything he can to pause the war, get the Strait of Hormuz open while the war is paused, and then after the midterms, resume the war. There is that possibility. I wouldn't exclude that entirely. That may be the intention at this stage, because as I've said, and as you can easily ascertain for yourself by checking the polls in the United States, the Republicans are in serious trouble. And if Trump loses the House and the Senate, he's almost certainly going to be impeached, and it's not out of the question that he will find himself in jail before he finally parts this world, this arch criminal and gangster masquerading as a president.

Now, before I conclude this report, I just wanted to comment on one particular participant in what I regard as a Kabuki theater, and that is the government of Pakistan. Pakistan is an interesting case because of course it is very much beholden to Washington. Some of you may have seen the leader of Pakistan and Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt late last year when the Board of Peace was announced and he gave this speech which was one of the most sycophantic pro-Trump speeches we've ever seen, and that's saying something, with the Donald standing right beside him. So this is very much a government that is beholden to Washington but Pakistan is in a world of pain right now because oil imports account for 40% of Pakistan's oil consumption and its oil imports come almost entirely from Saudi Arabia and the UAE through the Strait of Hormuz. Gas imports account for about 19% of Pakistan's gas consumption and almost all of that gas also comes through the Strait of Hormuz from Qatar. As a result, Pakistan is highly vulnerable to a prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and I think this very much explains why Pakistan's government is going to extraordinary lengths

to end this war, mediate a resolution of the conflict, and bring it to an end on terms that Iran can accept.

This might also explain why Pakistan Field Marshal Munir visited Iran for three days this week and why he showed so much warmth to Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi upon his arrival in Tehran. And here is a quick video clip of that interaction. Now, I just want to pause there and point out that just before the field marshal hugged the Iranian foreign minister, the Iranian foreign minister put out his hand as if to shake the field marshals hand, and the field marshal said, no, I'd rather give you a big bear hug and proceeded to give him a hug. And watch the warmth of their interaction. Here it is again. You'll see the hand comes out from the foreign minister. He just gives him a bear hug. He also gave him a salute, the field marshal did, as he descended the stairs towards the foreign minister. This seems to me, my friends, to be designed to send a subtle message that Pakistan is very, very interested in seeing this war brought to an expeditious conclusion. And if in fact it fails in that mission, I would suggest that the government of Pakistan and numerous other governments around the world are going to be confronted by a very, very difficult choice. This not only includes governments in the Muslim world and in the Arab world, it also includes governments in Southeast Asia like South Korea and Japan, and European governments, and that choice will be: Do we want to be allied with the United States, even if it means maintaining a posture of hostility towards the Islamic Republic of Iran, or do we want to start finally doing business with Iran on the basis that it is a sovereign nation deserving of our respect and deserving of our compliance with international law? I would not at all be surprised to see that many of these governments make the latter choice. And in fact, there was a very interesting op-ed in the New York Times of all places published by Professor Pape, an expert in conflict escalation from the University of Chicago, in which he said that this war is transforming Iran into a fourth center of power in the world. And that is indeed my own assessment for what it's worth. In any case, I'm signing off today from Kalamata, Greece, for Reason2Resist on April 18, 2026.

END

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