

The Iran Crisis #11: Indi Samarajiva on the short-term & longterm impacts of the week's tumultuous events

Transcript of the conversation Helena Cobban had with Indi Samarajiva on 4/9/2026. The video is [here](#).

[Helena Cobban]

Hi, everybody. It's Helena Cobban from Just World Educational, and I'm here today in either the 10th or the 11th episode of our ongoing project, The Iran Crisis, as part two of our project Gaza and the World, given the fact that these two crises are intimately connected to each other. I'm really delighted today that my guest is Indi Samarajiva, who is a pretty well known blogger and thinker and writer and analyst from Sri Lanka.

And Indi's main platform is Indi.ca. So you can check up on his writings and everything else there. So Indi, it's great to have you with Just World Educational once again.

[Indi Samarajiva]

Thank you, Helena. It's really good to see you after a long time.

[Helena Cobban]

Yeah, haven't seen you since we met in Oxford. I can't remember when. Yeah.

[Indi Samarajiva]

So that was before the [Al-Aqsa] Flood. I think that was before the Flood. That would have been about four years ago.

[Helena Cobban]

Yeah. Anyway, we've all grown older and wiser since then, maybe. And a lot has happened.

Yeah. So today, we're going to dive in at a number of different levels. Here in Washington, DC it's roughly nine o'clock in the morning on April 9th. Is it the 9th?

[Indi Samarajiva]

It's the 9th for us.

[Helena Cobban]

Yeah. So it's quite a week. Indi, what do you think about these past three days, where we've had, well, four days, maybe, like, horrendous, genocidal incitement from the leader of the so-called free world.

And then, just before the designated deadline, he backed off. And he said, and his people said that he'd accepted Iran's 10 point ceasefire plan. And then, as we know, the Israelis and the Emiratis, who were not on board with that plan, completely bust through the ceasefire, starting from, I want to say, Wednesday, really badly.

The devastation in Beirut has been unspeakable. So what's your take on all this? Indi, do you think that the ceasefire is meaningful? What does it represent in terms of the balance of forces?

[Indi Samarajiva]

I think the subject of history is changing. Like, I think for a long time, America and Trump have been the subject of history. They've been the one doing the actions.

And there's a quote from, I think it's a martyr, General Rezaei, who said, as they're going into Iran, it's his hand to take, but it's not his hand to let go. And I think the initiative is pretty firmly with Iran right now. And you could talk about the ceasefire or the 12-day ceasefire.

To me, these are kind of like the waves on the ocean. And then there is a bigger flood happening, what they call the Al-Aqsa Flood. And inexorably, those waters are rising, and the pressure is increasing.

I think if you zoom out, America has lost all its bases in the Middle East. And it's pushed as far as like Saudi and Jordan. They're effectively backed up to England. That's the last safe place that they can park. The Strait of Hormuz ceasefire or not-- it increasingly looks like not, that's still under Iranian control, Iran and Oman. So those are fairly big changes.

What I think Trump is trying to do is move markets. He's trying to move narratives. And maybe oil traders are sort of baby brained enough to fall for the old "I got your nose" trick, which they seem to be doing, to saying like he's got some control over Hormuz or some control of the oil that he does not.

With the ceasefire, I haven't actually been paying attention to Trump for a while, because I pay more attention to the Iranian sources. But I do remember that night when he said, we're going to end civilization, I was afraid. And I actually did feel scared.

And my father-in-law and my wife, who are civilians, they don't like following this stuff every day, like I am. They were also afraid. And that was, yeah, that was scary, because you think, what's stopping them? They violated every other norm, right? Like killing children, like raping people, just massacre after massacre. What norm is left?

It is nuking a population. And so yeah, I did go to bed afraid. But then they must have had this, what they call "TACO," Trump Always Chickens Out, accepting what Iran had put on the table, not then, because Iran had stopped talking to America at that point.

This was, you know, like if you go to a bazaar or a street vendor, and then you make your offer and you walk away, that's effectively what Iran had done. They'd put their 10 points on

the table and they'd walked away. And then Trump has said in his own way, that he accepted it. And now they're saying that they've thrown it in the trash can.

And I think it's almost kind of like waves on top of the flood. Like the water is rising, whatever they do, I don't think they're the subject of history anymore.

And as much as they try to hide it, as much as they try to blame their losses on inanimate objects, like dryers or sand or the air, like Iran is doing this to them. And the Resistance is doing this to them. And Palestine is doing this to them. And Lebanon is doing this to them. There are other actors in history now. There are other people in control.

And I can actually tell you from the Sri Lankan perspective how it's already shifted.

[Helena Cobban]

Yeah, Indi, I want to push back a little bit on what you claimed about the US has lost all its bases in West Asia. I really don't think that's the case. They are still there.

They are very vulnerable, obviously, and they cannot be resupplied through the Strait of Hormuz. They can be resupplied by air through Fairford in the UK and through Cyprus. You didn't mention Cyprus.

And of course, there's a lot of things that they need, interceptor missiles and who knows what in Israel as well. But I doubt if the Israelis are about to give those to anybody else to use. But I take your point that they're very vulnerable, but they're still there and they're still capable of participating in some really horrendous war crimes against Iran and supporting the war crimes that Israel, I think, is continuing on a large basis to commit against Lebanon.

[Indi Samarajiva]

Yeah, I mean, Israel *is* a war crime. It'll continue committing war crimes as long as that exists. So if we go through the bases, Bahrain, the Fifth Fleet base, while they were doing Saving Private Ryan or Shavings Ryan's privates or whatever they were doing in Iran, they were evacuating that base.

There was 1,500 people and their families and dogs and whatever that were pulled out. And then they were actually trying to fundraise in America for hygiene products for them and so on. So that base has been pulled out.

And Al Udeid in Qatar, the FP-132 or FPS-132 radar in there has been smoked. So all of their protections have been, these are not defensible bases. And it's not just because of what Iran has done to them, which is defenestrate them. There's a 2024 report called *The Tyranny of Geography*, which is a quite funny title. It's by someone, McKenzie. He's the former CENTCOM commander, and it's done for JINSA, which is like the Jewish something American project.

And then it says that these bases are essentially a Soviet-era posture, which are not defensible. He just says they're naturally not defensible. They're effectively on the low

ground under Iran, and they're within range of whatever, all this stuff that Iran can throw at them, as we've seen.

And so he actually, in that, advises pulling the basing structure back to what they've done to Saudi, and then effectively Israel, and then Cyprus. So these bases are not defensible in the first place. And in the war, they have been obviously defenestrated.

And when we talk about the vital structures of that base, these bases are huge. You can see them when you're flying into Qatar or Bahrain or whatever, they're huge. So it's not like the whole thing has been leveled.

But because Iran's missiles are so precise, they've hit the radars, they've hit the vital points, they've hit the barracks. And those radars, those contain kilograms of rare earths, not like grams and so on, and tungsten and gallium and so on. And because of the export controls, which are kind of pillar to post bureaucratic export controls out of China, America would need China's permission, and then effectively Iran's permission to rebuild these things.

And bear in mind that this is America, which can't rebuild a bridge in Baltimore, which is, you know, next to its capital. So there's no way they're going back to Bahrain and back to Qatar and rebuilding these things. And this is definitely not something you can resupply through the air.

It's just done. I mean, I'm happy to take like a, I'll bet you a barrel of oil or something. Those bases are done and they're not coming back.

[Helena Cobban]

Well, they're certainly not coming back in the way that they were functioning until, you know, a month ago, or six weeks ago, that that's for sure. So that raises a lot of questions, obviously, for those Arab states of the Gulf, of the Khalij. Because those bases were sold to the rulers of those Khalij states as being like, these will protect you from, I guess, Iran was what they were supposed to protect from.

And instead, they have invited, they have attracted considerable incoming from Iran. So regardless of that, we still see the Emirates, which has been one of the most hard hit by the Iranian retaliation actions. The Emirates seem to still want to be fighting.

It feels very strange to me, unless I was reading this morning in the *Washington Post*, I don't know if you've seen it yet, a very detailed account of Jeffrey Epstein's connections with people up and down the Gulf, including MBS in Saudi Arabia, and this Al-Suleym who was running Dubai Ports Authority, but also crucially with the Emir of Qatar, and how he was setting up business deals and doing all kinds of stuff. And, you know, having them meet with Ehud Barak.

And I think this framing of the US-Israeli attack on the resistance as being Epstein fury is very appropriate right now. And it also gives you some hint as to why Netanyahu and the can just get away with violation after violation after violation in regard to not just this latest ceasefire, but also the so called ceasefire in Gaza, and the ceasefire of November 2024, regarding Lebanon. So that Epstein element in there seems to me quite clear.

Is that something that you and your friends agree that that's an important element? I mean, I want to say that also is a bit of an epiphenomenon, but it's a significant epiphenomenon. And the deeper phenomenon, maybe I would say is the joined at the hip nature of settler colonialism here in the United States, and its extension there in Palestine.

[Indi Samarajiva]

Yeah. So I call the whole phenomenon white empire because Sri Lanka has been colonized successfully by the Portuguese, Dutch, and the British, and they just keep changing flags and colonizing. And about Jeffrey Epstein, it's been Epstein Island since Christopher Columbus landed in Hispaniola.

Like there are logs from that period, there are journals from his compatriots, and he was sex trafficking native girls immediately to them. And they're very horrific logs. There's one which I don't like to repeat, but it says a native girl was brought to this guy by Columbus, and she scratched him.

And then he said, like, I beat her so soundly, and then trained her so well that you would think she'd been raised in a house for whores. This would have been, you know, a preteen girl. And so colored women, native women have been sex trafficked to the Americas since the beginning.

Epstein Island is nothing new. Even in Sri Lanka, we notoriously had pedophiles come to like Negombo, like Thailand. So like, white people sex trafficking may be news because they're trafficking white girls on Epstein Island, but I wouldn't say it's huge news to the rest of the world.

But I do think it just lays bare how these people who kill children on their day jobs, and then for recreation, they'll, like, molest children. So yeah, there is just a deep evil. And I think we are seeing sort of like a battle of good and evil.

And it cuts across, so you can see that, like, it cuts across racial lines to some degree. But when you're talking about the Emirates and the Gulf states, it's clear that Greater Israel has actually existed for a long time, and the Greater Israel is the Gulf states. If you look at the radar web that was protecting Israel, it was in the Gulf states.

It was in Qatar. It was in Dubai. It was in Bahrain.

That's where they were getting the signal feeding directly into their local system, the Iron Dome. And the missiles were being shot down in Jordan and Saudi from the beginning. So Greater Israel was already there.

Those guys had already normalized and established it. And Sayed Hassan Nasrallah called it a spider's web. And if you think of a radar web, that web already extended up right to the edge of Iran.

And Iran has swept that. And the Quran, and Nasrallah, says that there's no structure more frail than a spider's web. And Iran has shown that.

They've swept away the radar web, such that now they can hit Israel or Palestine at will. So that Greater Israel was there. And I just want to clarify, it's always been corrupt.

And it's always been one white empire. And if you talk about what Emirates is doing and what Israel is doing, I don't actually find it that relevant. It's like saying, what is the left hand doing? Or the right hand? They're both punching. And this idea that Emirates is driving American policy, or even Israel is driving American policy, or even that America is driving American policy, it's one sort of, one empire. And it has a sort of capitalistic algorithm at the center of it, which is just: must consume resources and must sell bullets and must find new places to overthrow and new places, like new countries to destroy and traffic the women and feed them into this system. And it's been that way since Columbus landed.

So I think the Epstein Fury [framing] is great. They kind of walked right into that one from propaganda purposes. My only qualm about that is it pulls the old sort of European trick, which you can see Tucker Carlson and people trying to do of they're going to try and blame everything on the Jews. And I do think like the Jewish community has gone nuts in recent years, but it wasn't Jews that colonized me and I blame all white people too.

[Helena Cobban]

Yeah. So from this point of view, I mean, I think you raise a number of really significant points about the 520 year history of white empire. I've been doing some work on this, and one of a couple of the things that I've noticed, obviously, Hormuz was crucial at the beginning of white empire.

[Indi Samarajiva]

You'll have to educate me about that, please.

[Helena Cobban]

Okay, so there was a Portuguese commander called Alfonso de Albuquerque, who was sent out by King Manuel in 1506 from Portugal. If you think of Portugal, Portugal is a tiny bit of landmass, but it's very strategically located. Some people call it the wharf between two seas, that is between the North Sea/ Baltic and between the Atlantic, South Atlantic and going around maybe a little bit into the Mediterranean, which the Portuguese never really did much.

They instead went down the west coast of Africa, establishing-- it was on the traditional Viking model, but with much better naval weaponry. And so they would build these forts and be much more brutal than the Vikings. Go down, seize anything that they wanted to seize, including enslaved people, impose their own trading terms on the local trading systems.

They got down to the south tip of Africa, and then they were delighted because the whole point of this was in order to encircle the Muslim control of the international trading systems. Because until then, in the days of Marco Polo and so on, you had trade that went from Europe to China and India, but it was always controlled by Muslims. So for the

Portuguese at that time, it was really important to circumvent and hopefully to encircle the Muslim heartland in the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt and the Mashriq and so on.

So King Manuel, his name means God with us, Manuel, he sent Alfonso de Albuquerque to go and confront the Muslims who were trading, the Muslims and the Christians trading in the Indian Ocean, which was-- right across from the eastern portion to the western portion of the Indian Ocean, it was a free trading zone and a very rich trading zone. And it was based on no single monopoly power.

And that's what made it such a good trading zone. And the Portuguese just busted right into it. Albuquerque went up to Hormuz and he destroyed the local ruler and he imposed Portuguese control, built a fort there, and then built a couple more forts up the gulf.

But Hormuz was at the hinge of history in 1507 of the common era, and it's at the hinge of history again today. And as happened then, you had a Christian power confronting what they thought of as Muslim power. So it was a continuation for the Portuguese of both the Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula and also of the Crusades, which had happened at that point just a couple of hundred years earlier.

And here we are again, Pete Hegseth, with his Crusader cross and his *deus vult* inscribed on his flesh. He is connecting us with the Crusades. It's terrifying for us here in the United States.

I don't know how people elsewhere look at it.

[Indi Samarajiva]

It's not pleasant. I think he has Kafir tattooed on his, but to be honest, he just appears like a drunk. I guess you don't see the tattoos, but they just seem foolish to a large degree, because I think everybody sees them talking and then compares it to the really quite measured rational speaking of the Iranian people, their PhDs and their philosophers.

And then also each Iranian embassy has its own sort of communication style, which is geared to sort of the local [norms], like the Japanese one is much more subdued and then South Africa and Zimbabwe are kind of off the rails. But it's a different world. People are sort of consuming different media now.

And I think the U.S. doesn't dominate the narrative. It's not like the Iraq war, where it's just like CNN. I don't actually consume the U.S. *Washington Post* articles. I don't consume that media at all. I think a lot of people don't. But that history is fascinating, that they came in through Hormuz and then, God willing, they're exiting through it.

And if you think about the biblical flood, it's quite possible that when the sea levels rose, let's say 10,000 years ago, Hormuz would have been, that's where the flooding would have come through as well. And it seems like a magnificently beautiful, not there, but carved, there's just beautiful geology and so on, but I digress.

[Helena Cobban]

We can kind of set aside the 500-year history, but I think it's really important for people to bear that in mind, because this is not like the first time that white Christian powers have intervened in that way.

Let's look at the 30-month perspective on this, which was launched, obviously, by Operation Al-Aqsa flood, by Yahya Sinwar and his planners in Gaza. And what's happened since then, in terms of the genocide in Gaza, and the horrendous suffering that the Israelis have inflicted using American money and weapons and, crucially, political control to protect them from any attempt by Francesca Albanese or anybody else, the ICC, to hold them accountable.

So we are at a situation now where international law and all the international institutions, the United Nations, they're all, I want to say comatose or very badly wounded or possibly dead. What do you think?

[Indi Samarajiva]

I think international law, or whatever people have used that to refer to, is operating as intended. I think with the ICC, someone told that guy that this court is for Russians and Africans, it's not for us. And as you can see with the Geneva Conventions, that obviously just applies to Europeans.

In Sri Lanka, the US they sucker punched an Iranian ship, the Dana, which was on a ceremonial mission. It was unarmed, it was carrying a marching band, essentially, and they left them to drown. So under the Geneva Conventions, you are not allowed to do that.

And they left Sri Lanka to collect the survivors and collect the bodies. And I think we know very well that these international law and institutions, they don't really apply to us. And there's a joke among my circles that there's no international law. Now there's international law. And the only language these people understand is force. Now, speaking of Al-Sinwar, he said that, by God, I see it coming, it will be a war, a religious war, a regional war, it will burn everything green and dry.

And I think we're seeing that now. It's not just the obviously corrupt and evil places like Israel that are being exposed here. It's also sort of the fake international institutions, and people like Francesc Albanese, who are just sort of, the polite colonizers.

It's what Martin Luther King talked about the white liberal in his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." He says, oh, they'll tell you, I agree with your cause, but not the way you're doing it. She still condemns Hamas, she'll still condemn Iran and circulate lies about them, like killing protesters, and like Mossad rioters, and so on.

So it's still part of that thing of like, well, we can have a better empire, we can do imperialism better, we can do imperialism politer. And that narrative is being overturned by the resistance. And they're not asking politely for like a legal injunction, or this or that.

They're saying like, no, we're taking back power, we're taking back the subject of history. Because even within the liberal view, it's like, oh, just wait for a more convenient season. Wait for us to give you that.

Wait for us to give you half a state. And then if you're good, we'll give you a little bit more of a state. And people tried that for 30 years.

Palestine tried that. Even Iran tried negotiating. Everybody's tried that.

And it doesn't work. So I'm with Sinwar. And when he says, it'll be a fire, a fire that burns everything green and dry.

I think it's all got to go, it's all going to reset. And from down here, it's already resetting. Like people are already shifting.

[Helena Cobban]

How is it shifting?

[Indi Samarajiva]

So one thing important to note is that Iranian oil and Russian oil has already been unsanctioned. So in Sri Lanka, it's really just timing difference, right? If you look at when the shocks emanate out from Hormuz, we get it first.

So we've got it, just like I'm a bit ahead of you in time, like for me, it's like, I don't know, what is it? Yeah, for me, it's seven o'clock and you it's later. We just get the oil shock earlier.

So we've had our fuel rationing. And then now we're getting oil through India, which is really just Russian oil coming through India. And one of our main power plants around helped build this.

So we're getting that stuff without problems now before we do all sorts of running through hoops and trade tea for oil and stuff to get around American sanctions. But that's already shifted. And I'll just give you one example.

So like the gym I go to is like, it used to be, it's in a club that used to be whites only. And then now it's like rich browns only. But they always had the channel tuned to BBC.

But now recently it's switched to Al Jazeera, which to me is not far enough. I want them showing like Hezbollah TV. But I listen to those conversations.

Those people are like Western educated, whatever, but they respect Iran. They listen to Iran and they think America is crazy. So that's already shifted.

And it's not just like what people think. It's like what people trade. So because we have reduced fuel, we have less petrol, we have rations, people are switching to electric cars.

Where do you get electric car? We get Chinese electric cars. So that's already shifted.

And then if we want to buy oil from Iran, it's only sold really in yuan or like crypto. So we'll buy it in yuan. And then we can use that.

For a long time, we've had this middleman of the dollar, whereas we don't actually buy stuff from America. It's just like a currency of convenience. But now it's not convenient to use.

And the world is shifting away from it. And that's just becoming more rapid the more they struggle.

[Helena Cobban]

Interesting. So let's get into China, which I think is the really interesting set of relationships. Obviously, China has a, I would describe it as a behind-the-scenes role in strengthening the Iranian resistance.

They have, back in June, during the so-called 12-Day War, it became clear that those portions of the Iranian communication system that were reliant on GPS, which is an American technology, were very vulnerable. And that's how they managed to target many of the targets in the initial phase of the 12-Day War last June. And so then they switched to the, as I understand it, the Chinese satellite and positioning system, which is called Beidou, I probably mispronounced it horribly, which gave them a lot of resilience.

But they have other aspects of their defense system are also heavily informed by their relationship with China and with Pakistan. So we've got this kind of China-Pakistan thing going.

And people need to also remember what happened in May of last year when there was the India-Pakistan aerial war. And the Pakistanis were using Chinese planes, Chinese missiles, and they absolutely creamed the Indian Air Force, which was using, I think, mainly French Rafal technology. So, Pakistan and China have a long, long, long relationship. We know that.

And so does Pakistan and Washington, DC. So Pakistan is emerging as a kind of interesting player here, doing what I've thought of and written about as a kind of a two-step with the Chinese, because each of them brings something to this relationship that provides some support to Iran, but also is the key channel right now, Pakistan, Islamabad, which is where we're supposed to have these ceasefire negotiations open tomorrow. So I think it's really interesting at today's historical juncture, where the White Empire, the US-Israeli axis, or the Epstein axis, or however you like to call it, is receding from portions of the Gulf, as we've just discussed.

China and Pakistan are not about to move in and replace White Empire, I don't think, in the way that the Americans replaced the Brits, and the Brits earlier had replaced the Portuguese, because that's the way that White Empire works. But I've been following the rise of China's global power for some time now, and I think they have a different vision, a much more multilateral, multipolar vision, and not based primarily, or to any significant extent, on military domination, but on economic and financial integration. Are you seeing that, or would you look at it differently?

[Indi Samarajiva]

No, I see it quite like that. And if you want to zoom out 500 years again, so I think in 1420 something, Zheng He, who I'm mispronouncing, came to Sri Lanka. And there's a plaque in Galle, which has an inscription in three languages. It has Chinese, Persian, and Tamil. And so, when they came, they had, I mean, Tamils were sailors, Persians were sailors, it was almost like, I would assume it was like an integrated crew. And then they knew about us before coming here.

And then when they came, unlike the Portuguese or the Dutch, who came and took stuff, they came and gave us gifts. And they knew who our gods were, and they came and made offerings to our gods. So it was a very different situation.

And the ships that they came on, the treasure ships, one of them was the size of the Niña, Maria, and the Santa Pinta put together. These were magnificent ships. And then they came, and they traveled all over this region, certainly.

And then they just went back because they fundamentally, like, weren't that interested at the time. And that was a big hinge of history that changed things as well. But it's just a different attitude.

So, like, the thing is, for the North, right, for Europe and so on, they're like more solar poor. That's why people are whiter. And for most of history, solar power is the energy source. Plantations, labor, you needed the sun. And it's important to understand that early colonialism was entirely renewably powered. So Europe and them, they needed stuff from us.

We didn't really need stuff from them. And China didn't really need—they came here, and they didn't need stuff from us either. We sent some, like, elephants back and, like, curiosities for their court.

But there wasn't a huge amount of things that they, like, needed from us. So it's like a different attitude. There just isn't that, like, empty sort of, like, white-hole hunger at the center of it.

It's a different cultural attitude. And I think you need to understand China on its own terms. I think a lot of people try to, like, analyze China without reading much from China.

And you see this—the philosophy is very different, the culture is very different, their attitude towards other countries is very different. In Sri Lanka, like, in modern times, we have a lot of relations with them. But they don't come in and tell us, like, how to govern or what to do.

If we ask them for help, they help us, going back to the rubber-rice pact in, like, the '60s or whatever. And then sometimes our leaders have asked them for kind of dumb stuff, and they've helped them. So we have, like, an entire city that they dredged out of the ocean, which I don't think we need. We seem to have land already. But they don't come in and tell us, like, what to do.

And I think Iran is fiercely independent. And the reason they've succeeded where perhaps Venezuela has struggled is because their military and their weapons industry and their

science and technology is indigenous. So I think perhaps they have asked China for help in some way. But you have to understand that China is kind of in the position of America, or even, like, let's say, Sweden in World War II, where they're supplying everybody.

Like, in Ukraine, Russia, they're supplying both sides, like, and they're still supplying Israel, and they're supplying Iran, and they're supplying America. So they're in the somewhat enviable position America was in World War II, where they're quite a continent removed from any fighting, and they're just profiting. Now, I do think China has, like, with the recent UN, I saw their UN ambassador or spokesman or whatever, they do come out clearly and say that, you know, this was an act of a war of aggression against Iran.

And they understand things in that sense. But I think China's, like, what's interesting about the multipolar world is people kind of try and stand on their own. Like, you see Israel immediately run to Big Daddy's pockets or, like, Qatar or UAE or even Europe.

They're always, like, running to someone else for help. And, you know, I've never even, like, Hamas or al-Qassam, at the worst of times, I never heard them really, like, ask for help. Like, Abu Ubaidah would try to sort of shame, say that you should be ashamed for your own souls to other Arab and Muslim leaders.

But he never said, like, come save me. Even Yemen's never said come save me. Iran's never called out for anyone else to come save them.

They call for people to do their duty, to, like, to have honor. But it's a fundamentally different attitude. And I think people perhaps are trying to project that, like, this will be another continuation of white empire.

And I don't think it will. And you were speaking about sort of, like, the trading relations before, where people just kind of traded without having one dominant party. And we can trade like that.

And the crazy thing is that, like, America could have traded like that, you know, like, if they just chilled out, they could have been ruled as, in a role they don't deserve based on their historical crimes, where they could have ruled as sort of, like, an elder statesman for another hundred years. But because they just don't know anything but smashing and grabbing, and they don't know anything but, like, stealing and raping, they just have to go out in a, I won't say a blaze of glory, but a blaze of whatever the opposite of glory is.

[Helena Cobban]

Infamy, violence, catastrophe, cataclysm. I mean, there's all kinds of ways of describing what the American empire is going through right now.

Back to China, though. Yeah, so earlier this week, like, on Tuesday, two important things happened. One was, obviously, Trump backing down from his his horrendous threats against Iran. But the other important thing that I found equally significant in world historical terms was that China and Russia both finally used a veto at the United Nations Security Council to block the Bahraini resolution, which would have essentially blamed Iran for

everything, and not even mentioned the US and Israel having started and sustained and escalated this war.

So the Chinese and the Russians finally used their veto in a way that they didn't last November, when we had the outrageous Security Council resolution from the UN Security Council, where they formally adopted Trump's ridiculous and malevolent Board of Peace as a wholly UN project for Gaza. And they didn't use their veto back in March, when there was an earlier resolution proposed by Bahrain and the Emirates, which did, it was a very similar resolution, but it was even harsher against Iran. And the Chinese and the Russians let it go through by not using their veto.

This Tuesday, they both of them finally used their veto, which you can describe in different ways. You can describe it as like they're injecting some life-giving substance into the moribund United Nations, or they finally decided it's time to confront white power. Do you think it was significant?

And if so, what was the significance of them finally using after previously not using their veto?

[Indi Samarajiva]

So I personally think the UN, I think it's all model UN. I personally have very little faith in it. But China and even Russia and Iran actually do seem to care.

Yet, China, in its statements, does seem to care about the UN. And in Iran's 10 points that they submitted to Trump, two of them, one of them is about the UN and the other one is about the IAEA.

So to me, as an outside observer, these things are all corrupt, they're all nasty, but they do seem to care. And they do seem to want some international structures in place. Now, the way anything with the word international or united in front of it has been in the service of empire, as we've seen exposed in the [Al-Aqsa] Flood. And if you think, I mean, the UN, it was UN resolution sort of created Israel in the first place.

And from the moment the genocide convention was adopted, genocide was effectively copyrighted by the Israelis to reproduce forever. So I can say as a person on the ground, I have very little faith in these institutions. But these are institutional people who do seem to care, these countries.

And I mean, I guess Sun Tzu said it's better to take the enemy state whole. So maybe they're thinking in that terms. But I don't know why they would veto this or not veto that.

What I can say is that Palestine doesn't have power, per se. I mean, it actually doesn't have power. Palestine barely has a seat at the UN, whereas Iran has power.

And Iran is showing power and Iran is emerging on the stage as a great power. So I think people may be getting in line.

[Helena Cobban]

Yes, but well, Iran as a power is an interesting concept. They haven't been able to save the people of Lebanon. But maybe the people of Lebanon can finally come together and achieve that.

[Indi Samarajiva]

So I mean, about Lebanon, I was just reading Khamenei's speech from 2024, after the martyrdom of Sayed Hassan Nasrallah. And Iran was supporting Lebanon then. And then I've been reading Nasrallah's from the 1980s.

And he was talking about Khamenei and Iran was supporting them then. So I think it would be quite a bit of an anomaly if they just like suddenly stopped supporting Lebanon near the end. Iran has been steadfast.

It's the one nation state that managed to become sovereign in that region. And they have been helping other people achieve their sovereignty. But I think people within Lebanon, within Palestine, within Yemen know something which I think us and the rest of the world should know as well.

Because I think a lot of people are waiting for some other hegemon to be nicer. And you kind of have to free yourself. That's something I struggle with personally and I guess nationally.

But you have to win your own freedom. And if you look at places like Sri Lanka and India, or especially Sri Lanka, we just sort of got it. And then we don't really have it.

And these people are showing us what it means to really fight for it. But I think Iran is a steadfast friend to Lebanon. And they've actually, so now they come out and said they're friends with Sri Lanka now and we can get oil.

So people are happy here.

[Helena Cobban]

So Indi, if we're looking at the Indian Ocean as a system, which I like to do.

[Indi Samarajiva]

And I think that's very important. It's like the Mediterranean, like with the monsoon, there's a circuit here, people just go in circles.

[Helena Cobban]

And you were right to invoke the memory of Zheng He, I think you say Zheng He, but I don't know, the great Chinese admiral who was actually of Muslim origin. But then he was captured by the, I think it was the Ming or one of the empires. And so it had been that free trading place.

And then it got invaded by the white people. I'm intrigued that you say that it was because the white people from the north of Europe were solar poor, that they needed to go down and take stuff from the south, which kind of puts it on.

[Indi Samarajiva]

Think about it for a bit, because I went to my kids' class, they had book look day and they had a little map of where the sun goes. And I was like, oh, it's like if you didn't have fossil fuels or whatever, that's where the energy was.

[Helena Cobban]

Yeah. So China came across from the east, Zheng He, and they were trading, they were giving gifts, they had a whole, there was a kind of a formality and people knew what to do. And then in come the Portuguese.

They knew so little about the local customs and the way that you treat people, that the first one, when Vasco de Gama came around the southern tip of Africa, he saw the, I guess, the Hindu crew of a ship doing some kind of a ritual and saying Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. And he thought that it was something to do with Christianity. And so for the longest time, he thought that all the Hindus were actually Christians.

What he knew was that they weren't Muslims, and it was the Muslims that he was opposed to. But you're right, they knew so little about it. And they just thought that their weaponry could get them everything that they wanted.

And for 500 years, that kind of worked.

[Indi Samarajiva]

Yeah, they weren't wrong.

[Helena Cobban]

So for people of the Global South to be able to liberate yourselves, and we can build something quite a bit better. What do you think about the prospects of this ceasefire now, though?

[Indi Samarajiva]

I mean, I think it seems to be broken already, because what was specified, so look, just the idea of the white empire, of Trump, of America, and let's say Trump, the idea of Trump reading through 10 points, number one, improbable. But the idea of them taking terms from someone else is low. There's a word in Russian that basically says the Americans are agreement incapable.

And they really are agreement incapable. But what people from the Iranian embassies and the Iranian parliament that I've been following have been saying is like, well, we have ways

of making them capable of ways of making them understand. Now, you have to understand that America isn't, so possession is nine tenths of the law, and Iran is in Hormuz.

And America has to expend a lot of treasure and political capital and energy to even just hang around there. And now the aircraft carriers are hanging out outside. So what Nasrallah talked about, when he talked about liberating Lebanon, was that we don't say that we can march into Jerusalem, right?

But we do say that we can wage a war of attrition and one day force the enemy to withdraw. And they did that with Israel in Lebanon.

[Helena Cobban]

Twice, they did it in 2000 and in 2006.

[Indi Samarajiva]

Yeah. And what's happening now is Iran is waging war of attrition to get America to withdraw. And that's happening.

The bases are, let's say, unusable. The aircraft carriers are, let's say, have major dryer problems and 600 beds on fire and the toilets are overflowing. Again, you can see that they're unwilling to admit Iran as a subject of history.

It always has to be inanimate objects that defeat them. But fine, like old and gold or goal, it's a goal. Those guys are getting chased away.

So it's just getting attrited. So if you have a ceasefire for two weeks, time is on Iran's side. And I play Risk, which is like a war game, and the defender wins a tie.

So if it's a tie, then Iran wins. And even just the act of pretending to take terms from Iran, that's a comedown for them. And I think Iran is fully aware, like how many talked many times about how there's no point negotiating with the Americans.

But Iran, they seem to take real scrupulous care to just try and do the proper thing and give people a chance. And in the Quran, it says, if you're dealing with aggressors, if they desist, let them desist. But also in simple art of war, it's if your enemy is leaving, let them leave or give them a way to leave.

So they are trying to give them a way to leave. I think they may also be trying to split off America from Israel, because Israel is not included in these 10 points at all. And I think that may be why Israel is throwing such a homicidal hissy fit, because they're not.

I think Yair Lapid, who's their opposition leader, just another genocidal maniac, of course. But he said, this is a political defeat for us. We're not included in this at all.

Nobody's talking to us. And I think they're dead since the 12 Day War, even October 7th. So what Nasrallah said is that if he did this symbol, right?

So when they come in horizontally, when they come in vertically, and then they leave horizontally, referring to the American troops, he said, Trump will lose the election, and they will withdraw. And we may not even have to have to fight Israel. Like Israel without all these aircraft carriers and the British support planes and the Gulf air bases giving them radar signals.

It's like a spider's web. It's the weakest of all constructions. And what I find fascinating is I read Nasrallah from the 80s, and he's talking about that's the strategy.

And I don't think the strategy has changed that much. So I think people are like, will they cease fire? Will they be that?

These things are, to me, again, like waves on the ocean. And the ocean is deeper than that. And it's rising.

And there's nothing America can really do about that.

[Helena Cobban]

Well, I think that's a really good place to bring this to a close, actually. I just want to note that we will be continuing on with this Iran Crisis project. The fact that the Iran crisis is going through so many different, like, iterations and epiphenomena and ceasefire.

It's not a ceasefire. It's obviously not a ceasefire, just as what we have in Gaza is not a ceasefire. You can call it, we cease and they fire.

[Indi Samarajiva]

But the dynamic has changed because Iran is also still firing. And Hezbollah has just rejoined. I mean, Hezbollah said, we're back and Hezbollah is firing again.

[Helena Cobban]

Yeah. So I think what we can say at this point is watch this space because history is moving at a very deep level. And so it's great to have had you with us, Indi.

I haven't had you since we discussed the Ukraine crisis, maybe four years ago, but we should do this more often because I love hearing your analysis.

[Indi Samarajiva]

Thank you very much. You helped me get started in this. And yeah, thank you. It's really nice to talk to you.

[Helena Cobban]

Okay. Bye-bye, everybody. Check our new sub stack, which is Just World Educational sub stack.

And my personal sub stack, which is helenacobban.substack.com and especially donate to support our efforts because we are totally dependent on the kindness of friends. Thank you, everybody.