

# Scott Ritter: Iran Orders Strike on EUROPE?! Trump Preparing NUCLEAR War

Former UN Weapons Inspector & US Marine Intel Officer Scott Ritter discusses the dangerous new phase of war exploding as Iran begins an offensive campaign against US assets in Europe. Trump is threatening nuclear war amid intensifying economic sabotage and unstoppable geopolitical shifts, making this a must-watch program to understand what's unfolding. <https://scottritter.substack.com/PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: [chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com](https://chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com) Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #iranwar #europe #trump #israel

## #Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. Standing by, as you can see, I'm joined by Scott Ritter, former U.N. weapons inspector and U.S. Marine Corps intelligence officer, journalist, and author, to go over the latest developments. So we begin with NATO issuing a warning, saying that it is fully ready for Iran's potential retaliation against U.S. assets in Europe. NATO said it is fully ready to respond to any future Iranian attacks. This comes after a report from the Financial Times said that people close to the Iranian military, the Iranian government, had said that there were many targets within Europe of U.S. assets that have been put on the table in case of a future restart of the war.

This includes targets in Bulgaria, Cyprus, and undersea cables that would affect Europe greatly. Ibrahim Azizi, who is the chief parliamentarian for the national security of Iran, said that we're watching your every move carefully. Any further mistake or miscalculation will carry consequences far greater than before, and your presence immediately. He said this to the United States. Now Donald Trump is said to be weighing a nuclear attack on Iran. This comes from Marjorie Taylor Greene, who had reported this, and The Telegraph has picked it up, saying that it is a likelihood that this has been discussed.

However, despite this, Donald Trump has announced something completely different, saying that now we are in an economic D-Day against Iran, that there is a crushing economic operation that has been the biggest ever taken against any country underway. He did not go over details, despite much, uh, many texts there, but he did say that there would be consequences for any country that does business with Iran. So, Scott, help us understand these developments. In particular, this idea that Iran would target even European assets or U.S. assets in Europe, NATO assets, in case of a future attack, as well as more talk about Trump considering the nuclear option. What do you make of all this?

## #Scott Ritter

Maybe it's a slow news cycle and people have to fill the gap with something. Look, why would Iran strike European targets? I mean, I know there's people out there frothing at the mouth because, you know, Iran's won the war, and why not go in for the kill and all this. Iran's not stupid. Why complicate the mix? You know, it's not just about the military aspect. I don't think Iran's losing any sleep over the prospect of a NATO retaliatory strike. But the diplomatic and economic aspects cannot be ignored. You know, Iran right now is in a position where the United States is increasingly isolated. It's winning on this front of getting the United States to leave the Gulf.

One of the reasons why the United States would leave the Gulf is that, you know, it feels abandoned by its NATO allies. And so let's just have Iran give the United States a big gift. Hey, Iran, you know those European countries that really aren't having impact whatsoever on the war you're having with the United States and Israel? Attack them. And now what you'll do is you make them politically close to the United States. See, it doesn't take a tremendous amount of military force to get Donald Trump excited. He just has to believe that Europe has come to, you know, honored his call. And it changes the psychology. And since we're dealing with an emotionally unstable president, you know, it would do it in a manner which is moving in the opposite direction Iran wants the United States to be moving.

Iran wants the United States to be leaving the Middle East, not coming back to the Middle East with European assistance. And, you know, the military help that Europe is providing is nothing. Why didn't, for all you big, bold, brave Iranian armchair generals, why didn't Iran attack Israel last time around? I mean, American tankers were coming out of Israel. That's what's happening in Bulgaria, Romania. So why not attack Israel? Didn't want to expand the conflict now, did they? It's the same thing. So I just think this is stupidity in the extreme. You know, there might be people in Iran that are talking about this, you know, talking tough. But the notion that Iran is going to strike Europe is absurd.

You know, the United States has recognized there is no military solution to this problem. That's why Donald Trump's gone to the massive economic sanctions, or whatever the hell he's going to call this package, as if we've never heard these words before. I think we've put this pressure on Iran in the past, and it's never worked, and it isn't going to work this time. And this is reflective of the fact that Donald Trump doesn't have a plan. What we do know is he can't use military force to seize the Strait of Hormuz. The Pentagon has told him as such. And so he's gone to Plan B. It will fail. But the last thing Iran would be doing is attacking Europe.

I mean, again, I don't make Iranian policy for the Iranians, but I couldn't think of a dumber move than that. It's just stupid. It doesn't need to happen. All the pressure, if the conflict is resumed, all the pressure should be on punishing those nations in the region that helped the United States, not trying to get Europe to join the United States or somehow, you know, embolden Donald Trump. So there's that. On nuclear, look, I've said this all along, and people, you know, can listen the way they

want. If the United States is faced with, you know, existential defeat, it will use nuclear weapons. It's just the way it is, guys. It's just the way it's going to be.

It doesn't mean we're going to use them because we're not faced with an existential defeat yet. We're faced with political embarrassment. There's a difference. You know, but, you know, and then the other thing people are like, you know, Iran's got to build their own nuclear weapon. There's no greater way to guarantee an American nuclear strike against Iran than Iran building a nuclear weapon. I mean, right now, you know, the talk of a nuclear weapon seems to be focused on Pickaxe Mountain, where there's a deep underground facility where Iran may or may not be doing things of a nuclear nature. I don't see the Iranians moving in that direction.

Again, the son of Ayatollah Khomeini has assumed the mantle of the supreme leader. His father made it a point to make nuclear weapons, you know, against Islam. And they just beat the United States and Israel using conventional weapons. There's really no need for them to do this. They gain nothing from it. You know, the United States was beaten militarily. Right now, the United States recognizes that it can't achieve its goals using conventional weapons. And the United States is pulling away from military confrontation, you know, going to an economic siege. This will probably fail, which means the United States will have to eventually find some sort of diplomatic outcome.

And so as long as Iran isn't building a nuclear bomb, I don't think there's anything to worry about. But, you know, if the Iranians start getting bold and saying, "We have a nuclear weapon," I would start worrying. You know, we saw the United States say, "When we diminish our long-range precision strike weapons globally," meaning that we don't have enough to fight China or Russia in the Pacific or European theaters, not to sustain a continued conflict in Iran, what did the Trump administration do? They reexamined their nuclear posture and said, "Well, we're going to lower the threshold for using tactical nuclear weapons. We're going to use them a lot earlier in any potential conflict."

Why? Because they got no other weapons to use. And so it is a dangerous situation. What you want to do, if you're the Iranians, is preclude the United States from feeling tempted to use nuclear weapons, and you do that by not expanding the conflict so that it becomes an existential one for the United States. Right now, all the United States is suffering is embarrassment. I mean, you know, if the Middle East was this important to us, we'd be taking a different approach to the Middle East. But Trump, in his National Security Strategy document that was published in the fall of 2025, has, you know, or fall of 2025, yeah, has said,

## **#Scott Ritter**

We want to unplug from both Europe and the Middle East. We're not interested in these long-term, drawn-out wars. And so that's his natural inclination. So let him go. Don't do anything to keep him there. Let the United States withdraw. There will have to be, you know, you had an Iranian senior negotiator, the Speaker of Parliament, I believe, show up in Iraq yesterday or the day before and

say that Iran understands that the United States needs a politically elegant exit strategy, that they have to save face. So the Iranians get it. They understand what this is about.

It's about saving face. It's about giving Donald Trump a politically viable exit strategy, which is the smartest thing in the world to do. And if you do that, you take nuclear weapons off the table. There's no reason to use them, no justification, and no desire on the part of Trump to do this. So I think, you know, but we have to recognize that they're on the table. They're being talked about. And, you know, this president, if given the right set of circumstances, would authorize nuclear weapons to be used. Of that, there is no doubt in my mind.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, very concerning, Scott. Well, I wanted to get your take, Scott, on this: the timing of all of this. We have, on the one hand, a report about Trump mulling a nuclear attack. And then right after this, he comes out with Economic D-Day, crushing economic sanctions and other weapons employed to essentially bring Iran down. This is nothing new to Iran. And then we have curious reports.

It came all at the same time, as Barak Ravid announced this stealth operation that supposedly the United States has been conducting through the Strait of Hormuz, where he reports that this has been going on for the last several weeks, escorting tankers entering and exiting the Strait each night through the southern channel, and saying that the United States had blown out in their attacks on Iran the radars that allowed their missiles and drones to effectively target both U.S. warships and planes. But what doesn't really track is that the number of tankers, through actual data, appears to be much lower. So I'm curious what your thoughts are on this kind of narrative spin and if there's any truth to any of this. Is this just a way for the United States to try to get an off-ramp under Trump, where Trump really hasn't been able to find one?

## **#Scott Ritter**

I think it's an effort to create a narrative and spin the narrative in a way that's advantageous to the Trump administration. Again, I don't know the details. I'm not privy to the targeting undertaken by Central Command in the Strait of Hormuz area or the battle damage assessment. I don't know what the intent of the targeting is. It would make sense if I were a targeter, I would be going after the radar systems that help, you know, guide these missiles in. But I would also understand that the Iranians know that I'm going after them, and the concept of redundancy, you know, isn't one that should be, you know, unknown to the Iranians.

And unless we were 100% successful in destroying these radars, and I think recent activity in the Strait of Hormuz area indicates that we weren't, because some ships have, in fact, been struck recently. This just appears to be one of these situations where this is what we wanted, and therefore somebody has briefed a journalist on what we wanted and, you know, has hypothesized certain scenarios. What does it mean, escorted by U.S. military? I don't think it means that U.S. ships are

going through the strait. But we know that U.S. helicopters have been operating, and it may be that we have helicopters who are, you know, escorting ships that have turned off their onboard GPS trackers and are seeking to secretly navigate their way through while we jam Iranian radars.

Who knows what's going on? But let's say that's happening. As you pointed out, the number of ships that are getting through is very minor. And the other problem is, I don't think there's an insurance company in the world that would say, "I'll insure that." So, you know, I think the United States was offering some sort of insurance alternative that maybe some ships have taken them up on. But, you know, this doesn't seem to be a program conducive to, you know, supporting large amounts of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. This seems to be a program where a lot of resources are being put in to get a very small result.

And then you spin that result, you know, to try and achieve some sort of, you know, politically beneficial dynamic in the media coverage. You get an article that says your ships are flowing through, but again, we don't know the veracity of this. We'll just assume that some, if not all, of the reporting is true. It's still so minuscule in terms of what's happening as to, you know, negate its impact on the global economy, which is what this is all about. Is enough shipping getting through with enough energy-related resources to restore global energy balance? And I think the answer there is no.

## **#Danny**

Yeah. And Scott, the question now of economic isolation of Iran—it appears many seem to believe that now the strategy, or if we can call it that, or now the approach to Iran is to go full throttle: economic warfare, sanctions, blockade, et cetera, and just focus on this. I'm wondering if you believe that Iran can be economically isolated in this way? Some have mentioned that this almost is reminiscent of what happened after the fighting in Syria came to somewhat of a halt after 2016, and the United States focused primarily on starving Syria of everything it had. Your thoughts on whether the United States can be successful, or do you believe the U.S. could be successful in starving Iran in the same manner?

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, let's say that—let's use the Syria analogy. So you're saying that the starvation began in 2016, and it led to the collapse of Bashar al-Assad's regime in December 2024. So, you know, I'm not much of a mathematician, but that would imply somewhere around eight years. There's two years left in the Trump administration. Whoever takes over after Trump is going to be finding a world completely different, and the person will hopefully have a little bit more functioning brainpower than to try and continue failed policies. So, you know, Trump isn't going to strangle Iran to death in two years. That's not going to happen. How are they planning on doing this?

I mean, one of the things is that they're going to sanction the hell out of anybody who dares buy anything from Iran, like oil. You know how long that sanction-the-hell-out-of-them policy is going to work when China buys Iranian oil? It's not going to work at all. India, it's not going to work. Don't forget that I think it's next month that Xi Jinping is showing up in New York. Trump will be there for the General Assembly debate, but Xi Jinping isn't going to be speaking at the United Nations. He's coming in for a meeting, a state visit. He's going to actually go to the White House and have a state visit with Trump. Trump wants this more than anything in the world.

Do you really think that that state visit is going to be the success that Trump wants if Trump is sanctioning the hell out of Chinese companies buying Iranian oil? Trump doesn't even know what he's doing right now. He hasn't even thought this one through. And so, no, I don't think it's possible that the United States will be able to economically strangle Iran. First of all, Iran has some big supporters in Russia and in China, who both have a vested interest in having Iran survive and thrive. But right now, survival mode means that there needs to be trade with Iran. There needs to be economic activity. Russia will continue to supply Iran with what Russia is supplying.

China will do the same thing. And I don't think Russia or China care about Iran or American sanctions, primary or secondary, at this point. And if the United States gets too crazy with China, China holds all the cards, literally. So I just think what happened is the president got a briefing from the Pentagon that said, "Mr. President, there are no military options available to us regarding the Strait of Hormuz." And so he just panicked, and he tweeted out this tweet, or he had somebody write it up for him, and they sent it out. It's not coordinated policy. They haven't thought this thing through. Please square that one for me.

You can help me here if you have any ideas how this works. So Scott Bessent told the president that I can strangle the crap out of Iran. We need secondary sanctions. Anybody who buys any Iranian oil, we're going to pound. And the president's already said, I will sanction you to a thousand percent, or whatever percent he throws out there. Meanwhile, Marco Rubio's knocking on the door to China saying, hey, we got the state visit thing coming up. We know you're going to come out. It's going to be really cool. It's nice. We'll put out the red carpet. Big deal. Band, soldiers marching. And we love you. We're trying to keep the door open. Things are going to be nice. Part of the charm offensive that Trump seems to be going on.

And those two policies don't—they don't work. They don't blend. What happens when Iran sells oil to China, which they're doing now and they will continue to do? Does Trump sanction Chinese oil companies? Sanction Chinese refineries? China's already gone on record telling them earlier, "Pound sand." Remember that? The secondary sanctions against Chinese buyers of Iranian oil. And the Chinese government went, "Keep buying it, guys. We're going to back you up 100%." And they did. I don't think China's policy has changed any. So this tweet that he put out, it wasn't coordinated with anybody. It's just made-up stuff, and it won't survive. And all we know about Donald Trump is, let's just wait 24, 36 hours. He'll put out another tweet that changes this. So there we are.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, well, here's that tweet again, Scott. The key part here, because it's always a lot of text when it comes to Donald Trump's Truth Socials: "But today I'm also announcing that any country that allows its financial institutions, businesses, airports, or government entities to provide any type of lifeline to Iran will itself face tremendous economic consequences. Oil smuggling, swap lines, cash transfers, exchange houses, ship registries, front companies—it all needs to stop now. You know who you are."

Which makes me think, Scott, throughout his whole administration, he's been very hesitant to actually go after Russia and China, two of Iran's biggest partners, directly, in large part because, well, going after China has actually had economic consequences in the United States with the tariffs and all of this. And then, of course, Russia—there seems to be a block for Trump in terms of any kind of effective policy to do anything different than what's already happening now against Russia. So is this all just bluster then, especially with Russia? Because it really is Russia and China here. There aren't many other countries lining up at the door to, you know, to stand up to U.S. economic warfare in this regard.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, I mean, first of all, Turkey. Turkey has a lot of front companies that are dealing with the Iranians. Georgia has some. I'm sure, you know, the Pakistanis got a bunch. Turkmenistan, you know. The Iranians have been, you know, doing this stuff for a long time. They're very good at—one second—they're very good at evading sanctions. I don't know what Trump is talking about. Again, the Department of Treasury has come in and given him a briefing, probably backed up by the CIA. I'm familiar with these because we used to see these same briefings when it came to trying to stop the Iraqis from breaking sanctions. We looked for front companies everywhere in Europe, using Palestinian proxies, the whole thing. So I know these briefings inside and out.

And I know what the Department of Treasury has put together. I know what the CIA has put together. You know, and I also know that past experience shows that a lot of it's just wrong. It's just bad analysis. Somebody didn't connect the right dots. It's incomplete, meaning that there's a whole bunch of other stuff happening that they're not aware of, that's not reported. And at the end of the day, it's almost impossible to stop, you know, because of the way these front companies operate. You know, you'd have to go in and shut down, you know, all of Jordan's banking industry. You'd have to go in, you know, get the Swiss to stop playing games. You'd have to, you know, go into, you know, Slovakia and the Czech Republic because of some of the banking stuff.

I mean, the people that do this for a living, smugglers and the people that, you know, go around sanctions, they're very clever. They've been doing this for an awful long time, and they have, you know, shell companies, fake companies, false leads. They've been avoiding detection for decades. So, you know, Trump received a briefing and thinks that he's empowered with information sufficient

to have an impact on the situation. I don't believe he is. I don't think the United States has ever been empowered to that degree where they can speak about, you know, an economic D-Day. This is just the stupidity of the people surrounding Donald Trump who have allowed this kind of language to infiltrate his social media postings.

## **#Danny**

Well, Scott, the stupidity does extend even further, as you said, to the people surrounding him. So, as Brent crude accelerates, I know you are for energy intelligence, too, so I definitely want your comment on this. It breaks \$94 today, which is the highest level since last month. Scott Bessent had these comments, to say a bit perplexed about why this is happening at all. Here is what he said.

## **#Speaker 1**

Yeah, well, look, anything that happens within a 24-hour period is noise. And, you know, I think that once the market understands that we are focusing on fiscal consolidation and that we are trying to bring the market back into equilibrium in a thinly traded market, I think I'm confident that bonds will continue declining. We've got a spike in oil prices today that I don't really understand. Our announcement is for economic action, and I think that the economic action will mean that oil prices will come down sooner.

## **#Danny**

So, Scott, he doesn't really understand why oil prices are going up, but yet he is the Secretary of the Treasury. Your thoughts on this? Or coming up, I mean, or coming down, I should say.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Yeah, I just think he's the wrong man for the job. I think he's a, you know, a man who exists to please Donald Trump. I don't think he has any grand, innovative global economic strategies. I think he lives every day, you know, putting out one fire after another fire after another fire. You know, right now his job is to bring stability to a bond market that's been destroyed because, you know, the bond market requires global stability, and especially U.S. bonds. And there's none of that from the United States. There's no confidence in the United States. There's no underlying plan that generates the kind of confidence that would make, you know, purchasing U.S. Treasuries, you know, worthwhile at this time. So he's putting out fires. A large aspect of, you know, putting out a bond-related fire is confidence.

Do people have confidence? So he has to project an air of confidence. But, you know, he's in pure panic mode. So is the United States government. You know, we're in trouble. The American people should wake up to the fact that Donald Trump is literally destroying the economy of the United States and, with it, threatening to destroy the economies of much of the world, who are heavily



invested in U.S. Treasuries. So, you know, I don't—look, if you want to dig deeper into Scott Bessent, go talk to Michael Hudson or talk to Richard Wolff or, you know, somebody with an economic background. I can just tell you that Bessent is just as useless today as long when it comes to, you know, the kind of rational policy advice that should be being provided to the President of the United States. Nothing Bessent has done has worked. Nothing.

## **#Danny**

Well, how about we get to the Ukraine conflict, Scott, because last night there was a massive attack on Kyiv and surrounding areas, hitting defense tech sites all across the capital. Ukraine said they downed about 90 percent of everything, but were complaining that the Iskanders, the Zircons, these hypersonic missiles, were hitting and landing on their targets, with Patriot missile interceptors essentially gone. Now, a lot of people are saying that the situation is a lot worse than this. And I want your assessment on what's going on, because Ukraine and the Western mainstream media are still celebrating these drone attacks. But even inside of these reports, you'll see that Russia has taken down 90, 95, 98 percent of the massive number of these drones fired at Russia. So how do you explain, in real terms then, Scott, what's going on beyond the media spin?

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, the last couple of days, Ukraine fired over 1,400 drones, long-range drones, into Russia. 1,400. These drones have, you know—

## **#Scott Ritter**

Anywhere from 10 to 20 kilograms of high-explosive warhead. They go pop. The vast majority of these, as you said, 98% plus, have been shot down. A handful have made it through to their targets, where they go pop. Sometimes they go pop on a Wildberries warehouse, and they cause tremendous fires inside, burning up cardboard boxes and things of that nature. A lot of flame, a lot of smoke. Sometimes they just go pop on a refinery and they, you know, cause some damage that requires the refinery to be shut down and then, you know, repaired in a week and a half, two weeks later, brought back online. Ukrainian drone attacks are inconvenient. In some places, they're more inconvenient than others.

In some places, they don't matter at all. But it's a propaganda exercise. We know it is. It's designed to create the impression that Vladimir Putin can't defend Russia. Remember, September 20th, the State Duma elections. The CIA and MI6 are basically trying to repeat past attempts to undermine domestically, politically. They did this in 2007, 2008. They tried again in 2011, 2012, and now they're making another run at it. It's a form of regime change to indirectly attack the stability of Vladimir Putin by undercutting him at the State Duma to try and get the party or parties that support him removed or diminished in terms of their power.

They do this by creating the impression of weakness or insufficiency on the part of Vladimir Putin. Previously, in 2007, it was about corruption. In 2011, 2012, it was about the economy. And now it's about the war. He can't defend you. I mean, you have people like Gilbert Doctorow calling, you know, suggesting that Putin's a coward. So, you know, this seems to be the theme going on. Let's just acknowledge that the Ukrainian drone war has failed, hasn't achieved what it wanted to achieve. Now, what has Russia done in response?

Well, last night was an example of it. They held off for a couple of days, accumulating sufficient stockpiles of missiles, and then they fired them against targets that were relevant, and they destroyed them. You know, you're not going to see too much of this talked about in the mainstream media or whatever, but to show you just how good the Russians are at targeting and why it's relevant, I think in the Brovary section of Kyiv is a large petroleum storage facility that was struck extensively by the Russians. Some of the, you know, facilities that were struck carried petroleum products that were for civilian use, commercial use.

It just means there's going to be an even greater gas shortage in Ukraine right now, greater than what's already been achieved with Russia attacking about 400 gas stations. But they struck one that was exclusively for the Ukrainian military. This was the fuel that they had been hoarding up for a Ukrainian counterattack that was timed to begin, you know, shortly before the September 20th election. The purpose of this counterattack was to threaten Russian forces in the vicinity of Sumy and Kharkov, perhaps even to penetrate into Russian territory, similar to what they did in August of 2024. You know, to embarrass Vladimir Putin, to say, look, this man simply can't protect you.

You know, look at what our military is doing. Well, that fuel no longer exists, which means all the vehicles that Ukraine was hoping could be driven towards the Russian border won't be driven anywhere anymore. And the counterattack is pretty much over before it begins. This shows that the Russians are striking decisively. They know what targets to hit. The targets they're hitting have a real impact on the situation. This is the reality. Ukraine fires thousands; very few hit, and what they hit is insignificant. Russia fires dozens. They hit everything they aim at, and it's all destroyed. This is just simple military math. Ukraine just—the Russians are going to grind them down on this front as well.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, it seems so. You're explaining, Scott, is it, you know, Ukraine, NATO, they've all explained, they've all tried to say that it's Russia that is feeling now the economic pain, the burden of the war coming home. But it sounds like actually Russia's approach now to this war, which has been escalating—actually, it is escalatory if anyone keeps track of the numbers of strikes that are hitting targets in recent weeks and months—that it's actually achieving. I mean, there is also, I believe, a Russian blockade, I believe, on Ukraine as well that the Western mainstream media doesn't want to talk about. Maybe you could talk about this.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, I mean, one of the things that came out from the 40-day war that Zelensky announced on June 25th was an expansion of the drone conflict to include striking targets in the Sea of Azov. There are many Russian ships in there. Over a dozen were attacked and hit. And also to expand the conflict into the Caspian Sea to threaten Russian shipping routes, you know, between Russia and Iran, Russia and Turkmenistan, et cetera. And I think this was, you know, an expansion that was ill thought out. So what Russia has done in return is to basically kick Ukraine out of the Black Sea. They're attacking all shipping. They're shutting down the ports of Odessa and other ports. They're denying Ukraine the ability to export grain. They're denying Ukraine the ability to import weapons and other critical items for their economy.

Sixty percent of the Ukrainian economy is in danger of being shut down because of this. I mean, this is destroying Ukraine. Businesses are going out of business, you know. What little resources that Ukraine had stockpiled are being burned up in warehouses or being struck by Russia on a daily basis. You're looking at the economic strangulation of Ukraine today. And what you're doing is, you're establishing the conditions of what conflict termination will look like. I think Russia's made a decision that Ukraine, especially in its current configuration, cannot be permitted access to the Black Sea. Right now they're denying it indirectly. I think one of Russia's long-term goals in this conflict is to deny it directly, meaning that Odessa will be occupied by the Russians and eventually be incorporated into Russia.

## **#Danny**

You recently wrote an article, Scott, "Ukraine, Welcome to the New Reality." Do you want to talk about what you were writing about there? Because I know that it even discusses a much broader scope, a scope that some have been denying of late, even after the Iran situation has really opened up questions and debates about the ongoing reality and viability of a U.S./NATO hegemonic order.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, I mean, basically what I did is I compared and contrasted where Russia was, diplomatically speaking, as recently as June of this year, where Vladimir Putin came out and said, well, you know, in June he said that, you know, this war is going to be fought. There's unconditional—we have strict, you know, requirements, et cetera. But then in August, he meets with Donald Trump after the Americans put forward a peace plan built around the concept of compromise. And Vladimir Putin basically said, okay, I'll do the compromise. And the compromise appears to be basically freezing the line of contact and doing a land swap, meaning that where Russia occupies lands that are considered, you know, Ukrainian, then Russia will keep those.

And where Ukraine occupies land that Russia considers to be Russian, Ukraine gets to keep that. And they'll just draw the line there. Now, the basis of a ceasefire moving on. Apparently, in

Anchorage, the Russians believe that the United States, having made the request for compromise and having embraced this, agreed to it. And yet nothing happened. Instead, what you see is a continued expansion of the war to include this 40-day drone war. And what you see now is that Russia has taken a very hard line on this now. They've gone back to basically unconditional surrender is how this war ends. But it's even worse than that. It means that the United States has lost its ability to function as a mediator. We're not trusted anymore.

Russia believes that Alaska wasn't just a failure, but it was deliberately sabotaged by the United States, that used Alaska as a mechanism of buying time for the Ukrainians to build up military resources. So the new reality is that this war ends on Russia's terms and Russia's terms alone, and this will be very bad for Ukraine, it seems. It means that Ukraine will be significantly reduced in terms of territory, in terms of its economic potential. When Russia says denazification, it means the end of the Zelensky regime and everybody affiliated with the Zelensky regime. When it says demilitarization, it means that every weapon that the United States and NATO has provided to Ukraine will either be destroyed, turned over to Russia, or returned home. But there will be no Western weaponry. It means the physical destruction of Ukraine and the eradication of the Ukrainian government.

## **#Danny**

Yeah. And, you know, Scott, I'm wondering your opinion. There's been a lot of interesting but strange ones. You know, the U.S. was supposed to be conducting pretty extensive military drills out in South Korea, with South Korea and the Pacific. Those were scaled back because Trump said that South Korea didn't sufficiently help the United States with the Iran war. Now the USS George Washington has just replaced the USS Lincoln, and Trump is boasting about how this blockade could be—will be just that much more effective now than it has been in the past. And, of course, you have now a Ukraine conflict that is very much stagnant when it comes to U.S. objectives, but really advancing when it comes to Russian objectives. So how does this play out? Midterms coming up, and also the potential for economic catastrophe the longer that guys like Scott Bessent act—or are actually stupid—and continue on this path.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, what we're watching is the unraveling of a global national security architecture that has been decades in the making. I mean, just look at what you started out with, the military exercises in South Korea. This happened because Donald Trump, in the middle of the night, put out a social media posting that said, you know, "I've ordered the Secretary of War—Defense—to significantly reduce our involvement in these annual military exercises." These are the major military exercises that, you know, allow the United States and South Korean militaries to, you know, function in a cohesive fashion in case of war.

These exercises, in addition to being annual in terms of, you know, their military scheduling, the planning for it begins months in advance. These are not simple exercises. They're complicated exercises. But these exercises are done to prepare a military establishment that now sits as the core feature of what we call the tripartite pact between the United States, South Korea, and Japan. If you remember, Joe Biden back in June of 2023, maybe, had the— you know, held meetings at Camp David where he brought all these leaders together and they formalized this pact. You know, it says the United States will be there for you. We're your security blanket.

Don't worry. We got THAAD interceptors in South Korea. You got Patriot 3s in Japan. We're giving Japan 400 cruise missiles. You guys are part of our joint nuclear war planning now. You're part of— you got big boy pants. You get to come to the big boy tent. And even as recently as last year in September, I believe, Trump reiterated the importance of this tripartite agreement. What's happened since then? Well, we ran out of ammunition in the Middle East, so we took away the THAAD battery in South Korea without asking. We took away the three PAC-3 batteries in Japan without asking. We denied Japan the ability to buy 400 cruise missiles with little coordination.

And then we get upset when the president turns to South Korea and says, "Hey, could you come and help us open up the Strait of Hormuz?" And the South Korean president said, "No." Now, what could Korea bring? Nothing. They don't have a blue-water navy. I mean, so how does Korea even factor into this thing? But Trump took umbrage at it, so he said, "Significantly reduce the exercises." These exercises have been, you know, months in the planning. They were supposed to happen, you know, I think he put the tweet out Sunday night. The exercises were supposed to happen Monday morning. And that means that everybody who was planning everything suddenly was told, "You're not—you're not doing this."

I mean, it's just chaos. It's devastating. It reduces confidence in the United States. But it is reflective of the reality that America is, you know, under Donald Trump, is looking for a way to reduce our exposure in the Pacific. He said, "Why should I maintain 39,000 troops in South Korea if this is, you know, they don't want to help us? Why should we help them?" And I think he's talking about reducing troops. You know, with Iran, again, we got beat and we're leaving. All those military bases we had in the Gulf Arab countries are practically abandoned now. The United States is moving military resources out. You know, we're in Saudi Arabia. We've moved into Jordan. We've moved into Europe, etc.

And I think that's the direction we're heading. We're leaving. Why? Because we were insufficient to the task. We no longer have the trust and confidence of the Gulf Arab nations, who previously labored under the belief that they had an American security blanket that was going to keep them safe at night. Well, there is no American security blanket. We roll into Europe and Ukraine. The United States has, in effect, abandoned Ukraine. You know, they talk about, you know, opening up

intelligence sharing. But when you dig deep enough, it just means that they're giving some basic access to commercial satellites. But we're not giving them really anything really good anymore. But Trump has done the same thing.

He had a meeting, press conference, where he was talking about NATO and U.S. forces. And he said they weren't there when we needed help. Maybe I'm not going to be there for them. And then he said, "I think I made some breaking news here. Did anybody catch what I said?" He said he's withdrawing from NATO. I think that's true. We're looking at the United States in retrograde. It doesn't matter what our good friend Richard Medhurst might put out on his social media platform. To the contrary, the reality is that the United States is in retreat in the Pacific, in the Middle East, and in Europe. And I think people need to reflect on this reality, that we aren't the nation that we used to be, and we're definitely not the nation that Donald Trump thinks we are.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, it almost seems like the more that Donald Trump and his administration boast about this massive defeat in Iran, and everything is going so well on all of these fronts, and that the United States is stronger than ever before, it seems like it's almost one of those cases that the more you say that, the less true it actually is.

## **#Scott Ritter**

It's an episode of Seinfeld, opposite day. I mean, literally, it's a Seinfeld episode. We're doing so good—that really means we're doing quite bad. Everything he says, it's the exact opposite.

## **#Danny**

And so, you know, as we hit the last 10 minutes or so here, Scott, you know, what does this mean then, especially for the countries in question here: Russia, Iran, China? Where do they go from here? There's still two more years of Trump. Iran, the Iran war situation seems like it's going to be, for a while, in this, as Iran calls it, no peace, no war kind of scenario, given the options of the United States and the way that Iran wants to approach its own objectives. And then, of course, with Ukraine, you know, Russia seems to make a conservative decision. It will escalate, but it's going to do it on its terms. And China, of course, is China. So, your thoughts on where things are heading now? It seems like the U.S. is getting more desperate on the war fronts in terms of the warmongers, but the options are very limited.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Yeah, I think that we have to examine all the issues that you just raised. We collectively, all of us, I mean, your audience, you, me, we have to be careful not to be victims of our past conditioning. And what I mean by that is, regardless of how you felt about the United States or how you feel about the

United States, you could be anti-American, pro-American, neutral on America. I think everybody had to acknowledge that America was a power to be reckoned with, that the United States had very strong establishments of governance. We had a deep state that helped perpetuate bad policy, it would be my opinion, but some people say policy in general. But you didn't have to like us.

And maybe you feared us, but you should also respect us. Not respect in terms of, wow, I aspire to be you, but to respect, saying, yeah, America, they're doing a lot of harm, but they really got their act together when it comes to doing harm, and there's not much we can do to stop them. You know, the American system today, we don't have that. We have a cult of personality, literally one man who makes the entire world revolve around him and him alone. This is a completely different world from an assessment standpoint. You know, where do you begin? How, you know, what's the framework? The four corners of our assessment are defined by what it used to be defined by, you know, American establishment. You know, the American system today, it's defined by the cult of personality and the senior cultist, the object of their desire.

If you're not evaluating American policy from the standpoint that it's a policy that singularly serves a hegemon, a policy that singularly serves, um, you know, a narcissist, that this is all about the cult of personality, all about sustaining the Trump brand, if you're not approaching problem solving from that perspective, you're not solving the right problem. There's that old saying that, uh, you can't solve a problem you haven't adequately or correctly identified, defined. Because what are you solving? If you haven't defined it properly, it means whatever solution you're trying to do isn't going to define the problem. And we need to acknowledge that the problem today is the malignant narcissism of Donald Trump. The fact that we don't have a president where the office of the presidency is held in high regard. We have a cult of personality where the only thing that matters is the senior cultist.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and that dynamic, Scott, seems to further empower neocons, warmongers, military-industrial complex, Wall Street. They seem to be making off very well with this cult of personality, this narcissistic framing of everything where Trump gets all the attention he wants and the policies end up being what they have been, which are a disaster when it comes to at least those who sit outside of the insider trading markets, et cetera. Yeah, I agree. Now, there are some things that the United States may not have full control over. And I want your final comment on this, because some have been asking me about it: what the heck is going on with Turkey, Israel, and this whole situation with Syria? Because some have voiced concern that there might be an open conflict between Turkey and Israel. Do you think that's possible? What would be the U.S.'s role in that, if any at all, or if there's any ability for the U.S. to have a role in that at this point?

## **#Scott Ritter**

I think one of the big problems of our time that hasn't been adequately resolved is what the hell happened in Syria. Bashar al-Assad seemed to be firmly in control in a situation that was relatively stable, with the backing of Russia and Iran. The United States seemed to be policy adrift, with no, you know, the days of Timber Sycamore, or Sycamore Timber, or whatever the hell that CIA program was to arm the rebels, seemed to be done. Turkey seemed to be mollified and put on the sidelines in terms of its support for the Idlib rebels, that Russia seemed to be in the driver's seat there. And just literally in the span of, you know, two or three weeks, it just all flipped.

And I think it took everybody by surprise, including the Turkish government, including the Israeli government, including the United States, the Russian government, including Bashar al-Assad, who one day woke up in Damascus going, "I better get on an airplane or they're going to kill me," kind of thing. And we're struggling to figure out just what the hell it is. How else do you explain a former al-Qaeda head chopper being, you know, wined and dined and greeted by everybody? Vladimir Putin, Donald Trump, everybody, Macron, are all shaking because there is no Plan B. This thing came out of nowhere, and you have Jolani now there, and everybody's going, "What? What the hell happened?"

And I think we're still in that shock mode, responding to that. And because it took everybody by surprise, there weren't any concerted policies in place on how to proceed. Israel lives to exploit chaos and anarchy, and so what Israel did is just fill that vacuum. And it came at an auspicious time for Israel because they were sort of getting their asses handed to them everywhere. But then they punched into Syria. It seemed to change the entire perspective. Now things have calmed down a little bit. Turkey, you know, was the key sponsor of Jolani and his Idlib head choppers. And, you know, Turkey is seeking now to begin, you know, consolidating their control over Syria.

And so they were looking at occupying a military base, putting in Turkish assets. And Israel, who has been saying now for some time now, especially with the fall of Syria, that Turkey is the number one threat. I mean, there are senior members of the Israeli government who have stopped saying that Iran is the number one threat. They're now saying that Turkey is the number one threat. And Turkey perhaps is the number one threat because while Iran can fire missiles into Israel, Turkey can put divisions on the Turkish border. And you don't want to fight the Turks. I mean, I don't like being dismissive of people, but let me just be very dismissive of the IDF. If the IDF went up against a real military, they'd be slaughtered.

The IDF doesn't know how to die. I mean, you don't want to die, but, you know, you talk to the best combat soldiers, they're the ones who say right up front that I gave up hope of surviving. And I just acknowledged that I was going to die, and therefore I was going to make my death as painful to the enemy as possible. So I'm singularly focused on killing the enemy, executing my mission, but I don't go to bed at night looking at the photograph of my wife and my kids and having hope that I'm going



to survive. No, hope is gone. I'm going to die. The Turks do this very well. The history of the Turkish Brigade in Korea—people should familiarize themselves with it. The commanding general of the brigade was a Gallipoli veteran.

That means that in 1915, he was fighting the Anzacs in Gallipoli, where literally Atatürk, when his division came in, he said, "I'm not ordering you to advance. I'm ordering you to die," meaning, get up that hill and stop them. And none of you are coming back. You're all going to die doing this. And the Turks went, "Yes, sir." And up the hill they went. They showed up in Korea, and nobody talked to them. They didn't speak English, and no English speakers spoke Turkish, and the brigade just sort of advanced while everybody was retreating. The Chinese had just attacked. And the Turks ran out of ammunition because they outstripped their logistics, because there was no logistics plan because nobody talked.

So they just fixed bayonets, and they kept attacking. Then they turned around and attacked, and they came back, and a lot of them were dead, but they never surrendered. That's the Turks. And if you want to know the character of the Turkish soldier—you know, the sergeant major was on duty on the night of July 16th, 2016, when the coup took place. You know, he got a phone call from the commanding general of special forces, who said, "You know who I am?" He said, "Yeah." And he said, "Well, my deputy is betraying the president. He's going to land a helicopter at the compound with 40 guys. They're going to come in and try and take over."

And you can't let that happen. Kill him on sight. And the guy said, "Yes, sir." And he says, "You know what I'm saying?" "Yes, sir." "You understand what it means?" "Yes, sir." They hung up the phone. The guy checked his pistol, walked out. Helicopter landed. The general and 40 guys showed up. He pulled out the pistol and killed the general on sight. And then he was killed. But that was his duty. These are the guys that the Israelis don't want to fight. Okay? The Israelis don't know how to die. They don't want to die. They scream and they have snot coming out of their nose when they all cry and wail as they're burying people. Hey, war is hell.

Israel likes to rape little kids. Israel likes to murder people. Israel likes to shoot pregnant babies. Israel likes to commit genocide. But Israel doesn't like to fight. They don't know how to fight. They literally don't know how to fight. And if they go up against an enemy that can fight, they'll be wiped off the face of the earth. And Israel knows that if they take on the Turks head-on, they're in for a lot of trouble. So they're trying to preempt it by hitting a Syrian base before the Turks got there. I don't think it's going to work. Does Israel have a right to fear the Turks? Yes. Should Israel fear the Turks? I hope so.

I'd like to see Erdogan actually put some action behind his words condemning Israel's genocidal behavior in Gaza. It would be nice. What would the United States do? Not a damn thing. Not a damn thing. What can we do? Yeah, I mean, we have to be careful. Trump knows this. Why do you think Trump went to Ankara? He didn't want to go to this NATO meeting. He doesn't like NATO. I already told you, he said he's going to withdraw from there. He had that little briefing where he said, "Yeah,

I'm going to make headlines now. I'm pulling American troops out of Europe." And everybody went, "What?" Yeah, but he went to Ankara because of Erdogan. He respects Erdogan. And he went there and he met with Erdogan. He continues to speak highly of Erdogan. You know, but the Turks, they don't need too much excuse to just say, "The hell with you, Europe. We're done."

I mean, they know they're not going to be part of the European Union. They've been trying to be. Europe won't let them in. They know they're treated, you know, basically NATO, which is a failed institution, is trying to sustain itself on the backs of Turkey. And I don't think the Turks are going to take that bait. Turkey is trying to fill the gap, the vacuum that's been created by America's defeat against Iran. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan have come together with some sort of tripartite defense pact. But that means that Turkey is orienting away from Europe towards West Asia, towards Central Asia. And so the idea that they're... I mean, Trump went there and promised them F-35s and came back and broke that promise. So what is the United States going to do? Threaten Turkey with what?

I don't see Turkey rushing to war with Israel, but I don't see Turkey standing back and saying, "No." I think Turkey is going to take this base. They're going to fortify this base, and then they're going to move south, I think, you know. The United States will work to keep Turkish divisions off of the Syrian-Israeli border. But I think Turkey is going to consolidate its position strategically in Syria. It's very important to do so. It solves many problems, including the Kurdish problem, or it helps move towards a resolution that's beneficial to Turkey and detrimental to the cause of Kurdish independence. And the United States has already abandoned the Kurds. So anybody's like, "Well, America would never let that happen." We are. We're gone. We're done. We're finished. Anyways, that's a developing situation.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, it definitely seems like a big clash of Turkey's, Erdogan's neo-Ottoman vision and the Greater Israel Project, which at this time, the Greater Israel Project is in far greater crisis than the former. Scott, it was a great show today. I want to make sure I pulled it up earlier. It's in reference to one of your articles, but [scottritter.com](https://scottritter.com), your Substack is in the video description for people to support your work. I also want to let you know that tomorrow, August 21st, 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time, mutual friend Andre Martina will be on the program. Scott, any final words for the audience before we head out of here? No, I mean, thanks for supporting Danny's work and supporting everybody's work.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Just to remind people, I think in 34 days or so, I'll be in Russia to continue my work there. And, you know, I'm an independent journalist, and that means that I don't go anywhere that you don't allow me to go to, meaning you, the audience. I, you know, there's a donation page on my Substack. I go

to [scottritter.com](http://scottritter.com), and I'm about a little less than a third of the way I need to be to make this trip viable. So if you like what I do, go to the page, check it out. And if you think it's worthwhile, go to the donation page. Every little bit helps.

## **#Danny**

Great. Everybody, that link is in the video description below to give that support. I want to thank all the new members. I just put you up on the screen. Thanks to Jeff for your super chat, as well as Keith. In the video description below, all the places to support this channel. I'll see you tomorrow, August 21st at 2:30 p.m. Eastern with Andre Martyanov. And until next time, everyone, give Scott a big thank you with a like and checking out his site. Like the video, like the stream, and I'll see you all next time.