

Iran's MASSIVE Win Over US Forces Exposes Trump's NUCLEAR Endgame | Peter Kuznik

Historian and Director of the Nuclear Studies Institute at American University Peter Kuznik breaks down Trump's shocking nuclear endgame over Iran War and why the world should be very concerned about the US empire's string of defeats and what they mean for the future of the world order, Subscribe to <https://nuclearinsanity.substack.com/> SUPPORT THE SHOW BY BECOMING A YOUTUBE MEMBER: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOxLhz6B_elvLflntSEfnzA/join PATREON. COM/DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #nuclearwar #iranwar

#Danny

Welcome back to the show. As you can see, I am joined for the first time, and I'm honored to have him, Professor Peter Kuznick of American University. He's also the director of nuclear studies there, the director of the Nuclear Studies Institute there. Professor Kuznick, thanks so much for joining. I want to just ask you right away about, you know, we've been covering the war, the U.S. war in Iran, here for quite some time. Now developments seem that we are in a phase of the U.S. denying that it's a war, yet Iran continuing to try to meet its objectives, as the U.S. has not let up in trying to squeeze, blockade, and, of course, attack Iran when it suits it.

So my question to you is, there's been talk about nuclear conflict in this war, actually, for quite some time. There are reports that the Trump administration was even putting tactical nuclear weapons on the agenda. Then he rejected and denied that that was the case. I guess I'm wondering, in your perspective, how much closer to nuclear conflict are we now that the Iran war has been added to this equation alongside what's happening in Ukraine against nuclear-armed Russia? Your thoughts?

#Peter Kuznik

Sure, Danny. Clearly, we're in a very precarious moment right now. We've got two ongoing wars, neither of which is going well for the invader, but especially the war in Iran. This Israeli-U.S. illegal, stupid war has put the U.S. in a desperate position right now. Netanyahu had been trying to find an American president ignorant enough, stupid enough, reckless enough to go to war with Iran for more than three decades. He finally found his mark in Donald Trump. So the U.S. attacked. Trump had been warned from the beginning of exactly what could happen here. Tulsi Gabbard warned him

explicitly about the Strait of Hormuz, about Iran hitting U.S. allies and assets in the region, about the difficulty of getting out once this started.

And he ignored it. Even J.D. Vance ignored it, but tried to convince him that this was not a good idea. But Trump went ahead and did it. And now the U.S. is trapped, just as he was warned it would be, with the effects on energy prices, on food prices, on the global economy. And the U.S. cannot get out. And so Iran effectively has its foot on Trump's neck and is not letting up. So Trump makes these threats. He threatens to wipe out a civilization within 24 hours, turn Iran into rubble so there won't be anything left and it won't be recognizable, and to use these other weapons. Or, as Vance says, "We've got stronger weapons in our toolkit we haven't used yet." Well, what have we not used yet? I became a columnist not too long ago for Al Jazeera.

And the first article or op-ed that my friend Ivana Hughes, the president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and a Columbia professor, and I wrote was titled "Breaking the Nuclear Taboo." And we said Trump has already broken every custom, every norm, every tradition, U.S. law, international law. The only norm he hasn't broken yet, the only taboo he hasn't broken yet, is the nuclear taboo. And that with people like Hegseth, Miller, Sebastian Gorka, Netanyahu whispering in his ear that he's going to go down as the bravest, most courageous, best president ever to break this 81-year taboo, as something that would really appeal to Trump. And he's put out these posts that, you know, his X rants that show his finger on the nuclear button.

And we know from his first term in office, you know, he said, "What's the point of having nuclear weapons if we can't use them?" Which, to a normal sane person, means let's get rid of the nuclear weapons. To Donald Trump, it means let's make them more usable. And so, you know, it was during the first term when he was told that the U.S. nuclear arsenal had declined significantly, demonstrably. And his response was, "Well, we should increase the nuclear arsenal tenfold." It was at that point that Secretary of State Tillerson called him a fucking moron. But it's more than that. It's too dangerous to have somebody who's so unstable, so easily provoked, so impulsive, with control over the nuclear arsenal. And there's nobody standing between him and the use of nuclear weapons. So he's trapped. So he tries more economic pressure. That doesn't work.

He tries diplomacy. That doesn't work. Even though he's tried escalation militarily, and that hasn't worked, he still has one ace in the hole, and that's the nuclear arsenal. So, I mean, Marjorie Taylor Greene has warned about this. Tucker Carlson has warned about this. A lot of other people have warned about it. I don't have inside information that says for sure that Trump is seriously contemplating this. But I think that logically it makes sense that it's just too dangerous, because what that could trigger, we don't know. But, you know, the Pentagon for years has been trying to war-game limited nuclear war. They've never been able to do it. It never stops after an exchange of one or two or five or ten nuclear weapons. It starts with small tactical nuclear weapons, ends in full-scale nuclear annihilation every time. So I'm very, very worried about this.

#Danny

Yeah, I think your worries are understandable, Professor Kuznick. And I wanted to ask you about the historical precedent of this. You are a historian, and you were the co-author of *The Untold History of the United States*. This moment, in many ways, feels historically unprecedented, in that you're talking about the possibility of the United States using nuclear weapons in its wars. Despite the fact that these wars seem to not be going well, what do you believe the connection is between those two things? And is there any historical precedent? Of course, the U.S. used nuclear weapons at one time, but it seems like far different circumstances. Now, how do you compare this to the arc of history that the U.S. has traveled on up until this point?

#Peter Kuznik

One of the topics I've written about extensively is the use of nuclear weapons in World War II, because it was such an unnecessary use. The United States knew the Japanese were trying to surrender, that the Japanese knew they were defeated. The United States had been intercepting the cables that were going back and forth between Foreign Minister Togo in Tokyo and the ambassador in Moscow. It was clear that the only obstacle to surrender was the U.S. insistence on unconditional surrender, which meant to the Japanese that the emperor would be tried as a war criminal and executed, and they considered the emperor a deity. But they knew there was another way to end the war, and that was to wait for the Soviet invasion.

Ever since the U.S. got hit at Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt had been trying to convince Stalin to come into the Pacific War. But Stalin was fighting off the Nazis. Throughout most of the war in Europe, the U. S. and Britain were confronting 10 German divisions. The Soviets alone were confronting more than 200. But at Yalta in February of '45, Stalin agreed to come into the Pacific War three months after the end of the war in Europe, which put that date right around August 8th or August 9th. And U.S. intelligence had been saying for months that Soviet entry into the war would convince all Japanese that further resistance was futile. So they knew that would provoke the Japanese surrender.

Truman knew that. Truman said after he had lunch with Stalin at Potsdam on July 17th, he wrote in his diary, "Stalin will be in the war by August 15th." He got the date wrong. But then he said, "Finish when that occurs." He writes home to his wife, Bess, the next day, "The Russians are coming in. We'll end the war a year sooner now. Think of all the kids who won't be killed." But the U.S. used those bombs because it wanted to send the message to the Soviet Union that if they interfere with U. S. plans in Europe or in the Pacific, they were going to get this and much, much worse, which is exactly how the Soviet leaders in the Kremlin interpreted it.

So the first use of nuclear weapons and the lies that were spread about it, that somehow this was the only alternative to a U.S. invasion that would have cost the lives of a half million American men and millions of Japanese and was therefore humane, but that's what ended the war. That's just the kind of lies that we deal with as historians. But then, you know, there are so many times when we've come close. No closer, of course, than during the Cuban Missile Crisis, which we could talk about at

length if you'd like. But we've had incident after incident where either the Soviets were getting reports of an incoming U.S. missile attack or the U.S. was getting reports of an incoming Soviet missile attack. But we had people in positions who refused to go by the book and order a response. But we were lucky because we've come very, very close.

And during the Cuban Missile Crisis, one of the Soviet subs that was accompanying the other ships toward the quarantine line was getting hit with depth charges from a U.S. destroyer. And the electricity went out. The carbon dioxide was rising. People were passing out, and they couldn't reach the Kremlin. So the commander on that ship gave the order to arm and get ready to launch the nuclear torpedo. The U.S. didn't know there were nuclear weapons aboard. And fortunately, Arkhipov, who was the number two on that ship—he's above the commander on land, but number two on the ship—convinced him to stand down, or else World War III was about to start. So much of the world would not have survived that. And we don't know how many nuclear weapons would have been used. On Okinawa, there were American missiles aimed not at the Soviet Union or Cuba, but aimed at China.

So, you know, when Dan Ellsberg asked the Pentagon for McNamara how many people would be killed in a nuclear war, he found out that from America's weapons alone, more than 600 million people would likely die. And now we know about nuclear winter. Now we know that that would have triggered a nuclear winter, and probably most people on the planet, if not everybody, would have died. But there's been so many of these close calls. You know, we really have to think seriously about getting rid of these nuclear weapons, which are the scourge, the main existential threat to humanity. And that threat only increases when you've got situations like we have now with Iran and Trump in charge and the people around Trump. And you look at Trump's advisers.

Have you ever seen a more stupid and incompetent group of people advising a president? I mean, we know there's been a lot of discussion lately about Hegseth because he's in so far over his head and just wants to look like a central-casting tough guy, but is exactly the worst Secretary of Defense—or, he likes to say, Secretary of War—that we've ever had in this country, the most dangerous, and even worse than—except for Stephen Miller, who was an outright Nazi and believes, you know, believes might makes right. And the U.S. can use force wherever it wants and send these thugs into the streets of American cities or use force globally. You know, it's these people advising Trump who, you know, he did it in his own right and out of his mind in a lot of ways.

You know how deranged this guy is. An example that I sometimes use is of a Christmas party at the White House with friends and family, close aides. And in the middle of this talk, greeting them, Trump goes off on a 10-minute tangent about poisonous snakes in Peru. And he says, "They got black mambas and white mambas." And he says, "You know how many people die every year from poisonous snake bites in Peru? 28,000." And so people looked it up, and they found that over a 15-year period, only 10 people total had died of poisonous snake bites in Peru. That doesn't stop

Trump. I mean, the man was really non compos mentis. He should be put away. He should be put, you know, in a safe padded cell where he can't hurt anybody. But that's not what's happening, unfortunately.

#Danny

Hmm. No, and it's not a good sign when Pete Hegseth, your Secretary of Defense, has a nickname, Pete Kegseth, because of what has been a documented drinking problem. And this is somebody who believes himself to be a crusader, he wrote in a 2020 book.

#Peter Kuznik

He's covered with Crusader tattoos on his body.

#Danny

Yep, and identifies the left in China and essentially anybody that supposedly challenges so-called U. S. superiority as worthy of destruction. So I'm wondering, though, Professor Kuznick, this reality—you brought us all the way back to when the U.S. used nuclear weapons on Japan, and a lot have said, to your argument and the evidence you laid out, that indeed the U.S. was trying to send a message to the Soviet Union. And I'm wondering if we're here now in 2026, with Russia making significant headway against Ukraine and, of course, the NATO-U.S. forces backing it, Iran making significant headway in terms of being able to stand up to U.S. aggression and Israeli aggression, if this kind of trajectory in history leads us to another moment where the United States might be wondering and wanting to send another message, because it's both the nuclear weapons and it also seems the ideas behind the weapons and the people behind the weapons that can be so concerning. Your thoughts on this and this kind of historical possible connection here?

#Peter Kuznik

Yeah, I mean, sane people would draw the lesson that war is obsolete as a means of settling disputes. The fact that the two most powerful countries in the world have struggled as much as they have. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is four and a half years old. They've been on the verge of taking the Donbas for a couple of years now. They can't close the deal. And Ukraine has been bombing deeper and deeper inside Russia, shutting down a lot of Russian shipping, destroying oil and military facilities, creating this crisis inside Russia now. And the United States can't defeat Iran. With asymmetrical warfare, artificial intelligence, drone warfare, war does not work as a way of settling disputes. You look at the history since World War II. What has the United States won?

Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, the U.S. was able to defeat a couple dozen Cuban construction workers, but at a very high price. Maybe the first Gulf War, when we were able to slaughter so many Iraqis, could be considered a military victory, but certainly not a political one. But Vietnam, Iraq,

Afghanistan, Libya—where do any of these work? Iran is just the latest example. But that's not the lesson, I'm afraid, that all the leaders are drawing. But we look at what the warnings are. June 10th, 2025, Tulsi Gabbard, who was still DNI at that point, released a two-and-a-half-minute video starting off with Hiroshima and showing that the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima was peanuts compared to the weapons we have today. And she said that with these warmongers in the major cities now, we're closer to nuclear annihilation today than we've ever been.

And then later in October, Sergei Naryshkin, the head of Russia's SVR, Foreign Intelligence Agency, said that civilization is at its most fragile moment since World War II and that the danger of World War III looms around us. But we've been knowing this for years. You go back to General Mike Minihan, who said in 2023 that he thinks the U.S. is going to be at war with China by 2025. Fortunately, that didn't happen. But Admiral Davidson said back in 2021 that China is going to be ready to invade Taiwan by 2027. Where did he get that? Nobody knows. Or Admiral Thomas Buchanan, who said that the United States is capable of fighting and winning a three-front nuclear war simultaneously against Russia, China, and North Korea and still keeping enough nuclear weapons in reserve to maintain U.S. hegemony.

Now, that crazy idea is not so crazy. I mean, it's crazy, but it's not so esoteric. For example, on August 20th, 2024, David Sanger had a front-page piece in the New York Times in which he argued that—or she reported that—the U.S. is planning to fight a three-front simultaneous nuclear war against Russia, China, and North Korea. That very same day, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists had a big piece saying that there are now two schools of nuclear planners in the U.S. One believes in old-style deterrence theory, mutually assured destruction, which makes a nuclear war unwinnable, therefore unfightable. But a second school of nuclear planners believes that the U.S. can strike preemptively and fight and win a nuclear war without Russia or China being able to retaliate.

And they say that with modern sonar technology and AI and other advanced technology, the U.S. can now pinpoint the location of every Russian and Chinese submarine, which is the stable part of the triad that everybody said you could always retaliate from, and therefore nuclear war cannot be fought. And now they think they can wipe out the submarines, knock out the ICBMs with a preemptive attack, and shoot down the bombers. And so there are people who are seriously contemplating this again, and they should be locked up. There's no place on this planet for people who are so reckless, so willing to gamble with the future of life on the planet, that they are actually looking at these kinds of things.

But on top of that, you add the madness that we're seeing in Europe, where this kind of provocative behavior, I mean, it's got me very, very worried. And I look, for example, what's the discourse now? What are they already talking about? They're talking about the alleged Russian acts of sabotage across Europe now. In fact, David Ignatius had a piece in The Washington Post today, and he says—I'll quote a little—he says, "Russian hybrid activity in Europe became more ambitious and dangerous over the past six months, according to private analysis shared with me by TD International, a Washington-based strategic advisory firm."

TDI analysts counted 63 Russia-linked incidents against European targets since March, including 43 drone or other airspace incidents, six sabotage operations or plots, six cyber or electronic warfare attacks, and five hostile maritime incidents. The New York Times today has a big article talking about all this sabotage. This stuff is being bandied about everywhere. Is it true? I don't know. I don't know how we can know if any of this is true, but we know why Russia might be doing it, and that's because the Europeans are supplying the armaments to Ukraine to fight the war, as well as the intelligence to fight the war against Russia. And so it is, to me, plausible, but I don't know if it's true or not, that Russia might be trying to sabotage the munitions factories in Europe right now.

But I know that it's very, very dangerous. And so you had Ratcliffe flying over to Moscow, the intelligence chief, head of the CIA, flying over to Moscow. Was it because he's warning about nuclear war and the possibility of nuclear war, or just telling the Russians that they're losing, as if Putin doesn't know the situation a lot better than Ratcliffe knows the situation? You know, we don't know, but we know that things are escalating and they're getting more crazy. That's why I began an initiative where I drafted a letter to Pope Leo. Pope Leo, who took the name Pope Leo XIV to carry on the progressive traditions of Pope Leo XIII, Pope Leo XIV has denounced warfare.

He's called for nuclear abolition, for getting rid of nuclear weapons. He's been a moral voice, one of the few people who speaks for the planet. And that's why I admire him. You know, you've got Xi wanting to make China great again, and Trump wanted to make America great again, and Putin wanted to make Russia great again, and Netanyahu wanted to make Israel great again. Modi wanted to make India great again. But the Pope has been speaking for the planet. What we need at this moment is planetary consciousness. That is the human species. What unites us is so much greater than what divides us now. And so we need to be viewing the environment and global warming from a planetary perspective, and diplomacy.

Under Biden, diplomacy became a dirty word, a four-letter word. And, you know, we haven't regained that now. So there's no thinking in Europe about how we're going to peacefully resolve these questions. There's thinking everywhere: we have to remilitarize. We have to spend more and more of our money on our militaries. It's the only thing that's going to stop Russia. You know, this kind of mad thinking that's going on. So we're appealing, sending this appeal to Pope Leo. I sent it yesterday to Cardinal Parolin, who's the Vatican Secretary of State. I got a preliminary letter to Pope Leo through Cardinal Sameraro. I was in Italy last month for an exciting program called Tona-lestate. It's an alternative international university program. Six of my students accompanied me last year and again this year.

And Cardinal Sameraro spoke, and so he agreed to give the letter to the Pope. So we're trying to get it to him, and we're asking him to call an emergency global summit, minimally, of Putin, Xi Jinping, and Donald Trump, to get the world off this course of unending war and of threatened nuclear war. The nuclear threats are just escalating by the day, and the situation has become more desperate. I know that Putin is under enormous pressure from the hawks in Russia to act much more

aggressively, to escalate. And some have publicly called for Russian use of tactical nuclear weapons—Karaganov, Medvedev, and others who are very influential in Russia. And I know that there are hawks who are urging Trump to do the same thing. So, and then the situation in Asia, you know, that could blow up at any time.

The U.S. is sending ships through the Taiwan Strait, as are other countries, you know, and so we see these dangerous situations with desperate leaders in some situations. And Putin told a friend of mine that he's under enormous pressure from the hawks inside of Russia. We know that the war is not popular in Russia. I'm going to Russia next week, you know, and I'll be giving three, four talks and chairing the documentary jury of an international film festival. And I'll be urging my Russian colleagues and others there from all over the world—150-plus countries are going to be there—that we need to think about how we can settle these differences in a peaceful way through diplomacy and not through war. Narendra Modi likes to say, "This is not a time of war," but it is a time of war in reality because the wars are going on. It should not be a time of war.

#Danny

Yeah. And two things I want to put to your attention and for you to comment on, given all that you just said: you know, you said Biden made diplomacy a dirty word in many ways, cutting the cords of a lot of diplomatic channels, of course, with Russia and with much of the world during that period. And then Trump has used diplomacy all throughout this administration as a weapon to escalate and start the war against Iran, faking diplomacy, using diplomacy to buy time to strike Iran later. This is something incredibly dangerous. And then you have the propaganda, Professor Kuznick, where even just recently, Trump goes on and says that the U.S. war in Iran helped prevent a nuclear attack on the U.K. So this is what's coming.

You just laid out all the examples of where U.S. officials have literally been planning nuclear attacks with an actual nuclear arsenal. And here, Trump and the Trump administration, since the very beginning of it, as well as since the first Trump administration, have been promoting this fabrication that Iran has nuclear weapons and it's going to use them on the U.K. It's going to use them on Israel. It's going to use them on us eventually. Comment on this contradiction here. It's so loud that, on the one hand, some may find it convincing. On the other, I think there's a lot of people who are just tired of it. But your thoughts on what you make of it and why it's important.

#Peter Kuznik

Well, first of all, I don't think that very many people believe anything that comes out of Donald Trump's mouth. The man is a pathological liar. During his first term, the Washington Post cataloged, what was it, 25,573 blatant lies that he told. So, you know, anything that Trump says is immediately dismissed or discounted and disbelieved. However, you know, the irony that you're pointing out is a very, very important one. We're talking about Iran supposedly having nuclear weapons, even though the CIA reported that Iran gave up its nuclear program back in 2003. Even though under the JCPOA,

the Iran nuclear deal that Obama negotiated in 2015 after years of negotiations, we know that Iran was the most heavily surveilled, scrutinized, investigated country in the world. The IAEA was sending in spot inspectors without any advance warning any time they wanted.

And the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency said there is no evidence at all that Iran is doing anything other than abiding by this. And so that allowed for enrichment of uranium to 3.67%, way, way below the 90% really needed for weapons. We know that Iran shipped out 97 to 98% of its enriched uranium, that it mothballed most of its centrifuges, that Iran was abiding by this. But because it was Obama's only good foreign policy achievement, really, when Trump got in there, he was dedicated to blowing it up, which he did in 2018. And so Iran didn't have a nuclear program after Trump blew up the JCPOA. Then Iran began enriching up to 60% in order to have this as a negotiating tool. But the United States did not negotiate. The United States had sucker-punched Iran twice, back in June and then again in February.

So June the previous year. So, you know the situation, but the craziness that I deal with, for example, you've got Macron and Starmer and Merz and Burnham and Tusk and the Scandinavians all warning, saying, as Rutte said, the head of NATO said, that if Russia gets a win in Ukraine, it's going to march against all of Europe and gobble up one piece of Europe after another. And that's what the Europeans believe. And that's what they keep saying. As a result, now Nawrocki, the president of Poland, says Poland needs its own nuclear weapons. Zelensky says, either let us join NATO or give us nuclear weapons. France is expanding its nuclear umbrella over Germany and Austria and other places. They've got this not just in Europe. Seventy-three percent of South Koreans want South Korea to have its own nuclear weapons. We've got a planetary sickness right now.

But it's not just the leaders, the military leaders, the intelligence chiefs, the other political leaders. One of the craziest things I heard was French General Fabien Mandon, who's the highest-ranking military official in France, said recently—told a meeting of French governors—he said that the problem with France not stopping Russia is that France doesn't want to lose its children in a war with Russia. Yeah, of course France doesn't want to lose its children. During World War I, France lost 50% of its young men between the ages of 15 and 30. France didn't recover from that for a long, long time. And yes, the French don't want to lose their children. We're hearing the same thing from the intelligence chiefs across Europe and the leaders and the military officials. It's crazy. It's taking Russia five years to try to defeat Ukraine, to try to get 20% of Ukraine.

And so, is Putin going to want to go to war with NATO? He's not a madman. And he says that this is lunacy. This is idiocy, what these people are saying. Tulsi Gabbard said the same thing. In her lucid moments, Tulsi was terrific. In her other moments, she was a sycophant toward Trump, and that was embarrassing. But she said a lot of things that were smart, which is part of why Trump wanted to get rid of her. He was furious with her for releasing that video about the nuclear threat in June of 2025. So, you know, we're in a dangerous situation. So we're appealing to Pope Leo as the one figure. Maybe Guterres has that. Sometimes Lula has that. Sometimes even Xi Jinping speaks for the planet.

But we want to convene an emergency summit because I see with my kids, my students, you know, they know how tenuous the future is for young people. They know about global warming. That's what they know about the most. They're learning now about nuclear war. They were outraged by what they saw Israel do to Gaza. They also were angry about the October 7th attack on Israel. But the burning moral issue for that generation has been Gaza. And so, you know, we need to get rational leadership once again. And what happened, what we say in our appeal to Pope Leo, is that during the Cuban Missile Crisis, one of the determinative things that was done was Pope John XXIII issued an appeal to the leaders to get us off, get us away from the likelihood of World War III back in 1962. And Khrushchev cited that.

And we know that the Pope's appeal influenced Kennedy also, our first Catholic president. But explicitly, Khrushchev talked about how it gave him the cover, in part, to end the Cuban Missile Crisis peacefully. So let's give cover to Trump and Putin to end the wars today. And let's give cover to settle things peacefully in the Pacific as well. You know, it's just too dangerous. We can't play with our planet. As Jonathan Schell said, we don't have two planets where we can experiment with one and then save the other one. We have one planet. If this goes wrong, then there's not going to be anybody left alive to tell them that they were idiots to do what they did.

#Danny

Yeah, those are wise words. And Professor Kuznick, you know, as we get toward the end here, I would like your assessment of how close—because the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists have really put the Doomsday Clock very close to midnight. The Cuban Missile Crisis is often viewed as the moment in U.S. history and world history where a full-scale nuclear war was on the brink.

And some, I mean, over the years, ever since I've been covering geopolitics, covering world politics, studying world politics, I've seen many commentators and analysts also say that this great power confrontation that the United States is engaging in with Russia, China, now we can say with Iran, given that Iran has certainly elevated its stature during this war, that that leads us closer to a Cuban Missile Crisis scenario, almost like a tripwire. Like, the risks, the potential for a so-called accident or a misread or something like this, are higher than ever. What do you make of this? And maybe give some context about the Cuban Missile Crisis, which can help us understand just how correct or incorrect or factual this is.

#Peter Kuznik

What happened in 1962, I mean, Khrushchev made a stupid mistake by putting the missiles into Cuba and the nuclear warheads and not announcing it to the world. Had he announced it, it would have been an effective deterrent. But the fact that he didn't announce it meant that it put the world on a tripwire toward nuclear war. He was planning to announce it on November 7th, on the anniversary of the Russian Revolution. But he did that because the U.S. was planning an invasion to

overthrow the government in Cuba, which we're still trying to do, and because the U.S. had nuclear weapons right on Russia's doorstep in Turkey. So they thought this was the equalizer.

Also because they believed that the U.S. was planning for a first strike against the Soviet Union, because of the fact that the U.S. had a ten-to-one advantage, and McNamara announced we were going to build a thousand more ICBMs. The numbers that the Joint Chiefs and STRATCOM wanted were far more than a thousand. McNamara thought that was the lowest number he could get away with. So it was a very, very dangerous moment. And even though one of the big differences between then and now is, then we had Kennedy and Khrushchev in control. And they both hated the thought. They both had known war in the past, and they hated the thought of war. And they did everything they could to avoid a nuclear confrontation.

And yet they both realized that they had lost control, that in a crisis, you can't keep control. And so the Cubans shot down a U-2 plane, which was the pretext for the Joint Chiefs to go in there. And that was very, very close to happening. There was that incident at sea that I mentioned before. A computer malfunctioned in the U.S. and reported that incoming missiles were going to take out U.S. cities, U.S. flights going over the Soviet Union. I mean, there's so many things that could have triggered a war. And so right after that ended, the Cuban Missile Crisis, partly with the Pope's intervention, Khrushchev writes an incredible letter to Kennedy on October 30th, 1962, just a couple days after the Missile Crisis ended.

And he said, "From evil, some good must come. Our people have both felt the burning flames of thermonuclear war. What we have to do now is eliminate every conflict between us that could trigger a new crisis." And Kennedy was slow in responding, but he finally got it. And the culmination of that, his new thinking, was this incredible commencement address on June 10th, 1963, at my university, American University, the best speech by an American president in the 20th century. And he calls for an end to the Cold War. And he calls for an end to the nuclear arms race. And then he goes ahead and he concludes the first nuclear arms control treaty, the '63 Partial Test Ban Treaty.

He wanted to change the world. And had he lived and Khrushchev remained in power, they might have been able to do it. But that was the last time we came that close. The last time. Although we can say at Reykjavik, Reagan and Gorbachev came within one word of eliminating nuclear weapons. But Reagan would not do it. He wanted to keep his Star Wars fantasy. And so, you know, we've come close in a lot of ways. We've come close to doing the right thing. We've more often come close to doing the wrong thing. But these are fallible human beings who are in charge here. And, you know, especially when you look at the people in charge of the U.S. arsenal now, they scare the crap out of me.

And, you know, I think that enough people are realizing that now, that an intervention by the Pope at this moment—there's just also been, the last couple of days, articles in Reuters and other places indicating that Putin is much more open to peace talks. There's an article saying that Kushner and Witkoff, the Laurel and Hardy of diplomacy, are going back to Moscow and are going to go to Kiev

also. You know, people are talking about negotiations again. And so it's the right moment for a push by the papacy, by the Vatican. Pope Leo is the right person to do it.

#Danny

Professor Kuznick, it was incredibly an honor to have you on. I hope to have you on again very soon. My pleasure, Danny.

#Peter Kuznik

But, you know, people can go to the Nuclear Insanity Substack. It's founded by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. They can sign on to this appeal. We've got about 125 very, very prominent signers from all different walks of life: former presidents, former prime ministers of Japan, former rock musicians. Roger Waters, the founder of Pink Floyd, just signed on, Oliver Stone, Martin Sheen, all kinds of leading experts around the world. And then we've got a thousand more signers at least. And so we need as much support as we can get, because that's what's going to actually make this something that the Vatican and others can't not do, and governments can't not do, if you build up that kind of pressure, because a lot of people want to do the right thing. And it's really a minority who are threatening our planet right now.

#Danny

Yeah, that is 100% the case. I'm going to put that link in the video description below right now. Everybody, hit the like button before you go. That helps boost this show after we are done here. And, of course, I want to thank everyone who viewed today. Thanks again, Peter. We will definitely be in touch. All right, everybody, that's it for today. I will see you all again tomorrow. Thanks.