

Israel's TAKEOVER of US Empire Collapsing FAST | Prof David Gibbs

Prof. David Gibbs discusses how the US empire is falling on the sword of endless war as it loses massively to Iran and Russia, and Israel's insidious role. Subscribe to <https://nuclearinsanity.substack.com/> SUPPORT THE SHOW BY BECOMING A YOUTUBE MEMBER: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOxLhz6B_elvLfntSEfnzA/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> #iranwar #trump #israel #russia

#Danny

Welcome back. I have on with me Professor David Gibbs for the first time. He's a professor and historian at the University of Arizona. Professor Gibbs, thanks so much for joining me. And I just wanted to begin. I've been incredibly impressed by your scholarship and your analysis on the historic roots and the context for U.S. interventionism and empire. And I wanted your thoughts on this. We have Iran and Russia going in a much more offensive direction in response to U.S. and NATO aggression. And I wanted your assessment of why the U.S. keeps falling on the sword of U.S. militarism and interventionism consistently, as these wars seem to be getting worse and worse for the U.S. empire. How do you understand this contradiction based on your research and your analysis?

#David Gibbs

Well, as I would see it, since the end of the Cold War—well, at the end of the Cold War, in the first place—the United States had no real enemies. I mean, that was a remarkable thing. Colin Powell, when he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had an interview with Stars and Stripes, the official Army publication, and he said, "Think hard about it. I'm running out of demons. I'm running out of villains." The United States just didn't have any real enemies. I think one of the things you had was a very large set of vested interests in the United States that depended on enemies, beginning, of course, with Eisenhower's military-industrial complex. But it was much larger than that. It includes much of academia, elite journalism, think tanks.

It was a large constituency that favored a continuation of overseas bases, of fleets around the world, all those things that simply couldn't be justified because there were no enemies. And so I think there really was some effort there. It sounds remarkable, but it is true: some efforts almost looked for new enemies and found enemies, even created enemies. And the U.S., I think, has been doing that ever since the end of the Cold War, one after the other, because the elite structure of the United States

was very much centered on the idea of military production and a massive overseas presence, military as well as economic. And there simply were too many vested interests to part with that situation. But to justify the expense of these things requires enemies.

And so the United States has been looking for enemies, creating enemies. Now, you could say it's completely unnecessary. I mean, I don't think Iran particularly wants to be an enemy of the United States, but the United States has simply treated it that way; hence, it's an enemy. Russia was very friendly with the United States in the 1990s, so much so that it was almost a vassal of the United States at times. The U.S. openly rigged the election of 1996. Not only did we rig the election, we boasted about it. It was on the cover of Time magazine. "Yanks to the Rescue" was the title, and it told the story of how the U.S. essentially rigged the election and certainly influenced the election very heavily. In any case, the U.S. seems to have gone out of its way to make Russia an enemy.

And obviously, if you work hard to make a country an enemy, it will be an enemy. And so I think we've had one war after another after another. I think it depends to a large degree on an elite structure that is very closely connected to the idea of military expenditure, military presence, and ultimately, inevitably, these weapons have to be used in warfare, which is why we've had one intervention after another. It doesn't seem to matter, by the way, that most of these interventions have been disasters on their own terms. Look at Iraq. Look at Afghanistan. Afghanistan especially: 19 years we spent there, you know, trillions of dollars expended. You know, how many thousands and thousands of lives were expended? And for nothing, because the Taliban is back in power. The overthrow of Gaddafi was a disaster.

There are just so many of these things that have been disasters. But the remarkable thing is, we seem to have a political situation that does not punish failure; it rewards failure. There's been no price to pay for failure in Washington. It's a remarkable thing, but there's no accountability for failure. I do wonder, though, if we're getting to the end of the road on this, that the United States is facing defeat. I really do think that is what is happening here, both in Ukraine and in the Persian Gulf. And I think that'll be such a crushing blow to the United States, especially because it's having huge economic impacts on the United States and the American public. It may be very difficult for the American elites to talk their way out of this one and to avoid censure by the public.

Let's make one more point, then I don't want to keep talking forever. I'd like to get you to interject something. But I've been saying on various other podcasts that I've been doing that a precedent that I think is relevant here is Vietnam. And Vietnam—you know, the early years of the Vietnam War, people forget this. The narrative was, "We're winning, we're winning, we're winning. We're having sensational victories. The communist forces don't know what they're doing. They're incompetent. They're hopelessly weak," et cetera. We used derisive, borderline racist terms. "They're peasants in pajamas." The peasant garb of the Vietnamese, to American soldiers, looked like pajamas, so they're peasants in pajamas. And they didn't know how to fight, of course. That was the language being used in the media.

And the media went along with this. Up until finally, in 1968, the dam broke, and it was no longer credible that the United States was winning the war. The public didn't believe it anymore, and public support evaporated. And eventually, the American public essentially put their foot down and said, "No, we're not doing this anymore." Okay? We are a democracy, sort of. We have elections, people do vote, and we're not going to vote for this anymore. And so eventually, the U.S. pulled out and accepted defeat. I suspect we're reaching something pretty close to what I think may be a Vietnam moment in the Persian Gulf and in Ukraine. That, I think, would be a positive in the sense that it's better than endless war. And also, I'm very afraid this could lead to nuclear war if it keeps going. Okay.

#Danny

Well, maybe you could elaborate, Professor Gibbs, on how Russia and Iran in particular have done this, maybe beginning with Iran and then to Russia, because right now we are seeing developments unfolding in a way that indeed many are saying are just not advantageous to the U.S. empire. But yet there has been—I think the Trump administration encapsulates this quite well. He is, in large part—I mean, with Ukraine—has been very silent, in large part, has honestly been quiet about this conflict and moved away from using it as any kind of barometer or cudgel or anything for his own brand and political prestige. With Iran, of course, he made that a project, but many are saying that's not going well. And the poll numbers definitely reflect that. So how have Iran and Russia done this from that perspective? Are they dismantling the U.S. empire based on the U.S. empire's own maybe foolish decision to go to war with these two countries?

#David Gibbs

Well, I mean, first of all, it has to be said that the war—I'll start with Ukraine—the war in Ukraine was completely unnecessary. There's no doubt that it's a result of NATO expansion. It's been denied for a long time, but Jens Stoltenberg, when he was the Secretary General of NATO, in passing, he once said, "Russia went to war in Ukraine because they didn't want any more NATO on their borders." He said that. So there's a mountain of documentary evidence to support this: declassified documents, public statements over decades, to support the fact that expansion of NATO was always setting up a conflict with Russia. And I think it was known already in the '90s that this was going to be a very contentious issue.

And so I think the United States knew this was going to cause a war with Russia, but they really thought they could win that war. I think not so much on the battlefield. They expected they could win the war through their control of the international economic system, through excluding Russia, to use essentially the power of the dollar. The dollar is the world's key currency, and American control over international institutions at every level as a way of excluding Russia from the international financial system. And by doing that, they would wreck the Russian economy. That was the plan. It obviously failed. This thinking behind it was very superficial. They clearly overestimated American economic power and underestimated the ability of Russia and other states to evade U.S. sanctions.

They downplayed the significance of Russia's relationship with China and the economic importance of China, and clearly miscalculated it. Biden famously said the ruble will be turned to rubble. Well, it hasn't been turned to rubble. You know, there's a lot of talk about the Russian economy collapsing, and that's not true. You can check this fact. You can go to the website of the International Monetary Fund, and you can see that projected GDP growth for Russia—and again, this isn't Russia saying this, it's the IMF saying this—is, for 2026 and 2027, in the range of 1%, in the range of 1%. Now, 1% growth isn't great, but I believe it's about average for Europe. And it's not an economic crash. Russia's economy is, shall we say, chugging along.

It's doing okay, despite the sanctions and despite all the attacks on infrastructure that the U.S. has been helping to coordinate with Ukraine. So I don't see anything to suggest that Russia is going to collapse. I might add, by the way, Russia is not fully committed to this war economically. It's remarkable how little they're spending on it. If you look at the SIPRI Institute data, they're only spending 6.5% of their GDP on military matters, meaning if they needed to, they could ramp up this war if they had to. I don't see anything to suggest that Russia is losing. It's winning. It's winning slowly. It's not winning in any brilliant victories here.

But it is winning, and I have no doubt in the end Russia will prevail in this war. I think, again, my personal view is Russia should not have ever invaded. They should have accepted the fact the West was trying to humiliate them, and accept that humiliation is better than invasion. I don't think that the security threat presented by NATO was sufficient to violate the UN Charter and invade, so I don't support the invasion at all. But nevertheless, it takes two to tango, and it was the West and NATO that made this possible. And it's the West and NATO that will be defeated in this war. I have no doubt that's what's happening here. And so this is going to be devastating to the credibility of the American foreign policy establishment.

Trump himself has publicly distanced himself from the war. He wants to pretend it's Biden's war, but the United States is still engaged in this war. There's no doubt the U.S. is giving vital intelligence information to the Ukrainians to target infrastructure inside Russia. They're using America's vast number of satellites to transmit intelligence information to the Ukrainian military. They are still supplying some weapons to the Ukrainians, even if in theory the Europeans are paying for it. But Trump is not really disengaged from this war, even if publicly he's trying to downplay the involvement. I'm about to go into Iran, but do you want to interject anything, Danny, before I transition to Iran?

#Danny

No, please. Maybe you can get to Iran. Yeah, because as you said, the U.S. and NATO are definitely on the back foot when it comes to this war. Well, there's also this Iran war, which now Iran is on an

offensive posture with this war, according to its own military. And we're seeing actions transpiring there. So your thoughts on how these two fit together and, of course, your analysis on how the Iran situation fits into the historical trajectory that you're outlining here.

#David Gibbs

Well, Trump's attack on Iran, I have to say, I was astonished that he did it. I think many people were astonished that he did it, just because it's such an obviously foolhardy thing to do. And it did go against all the promises Trump made in the campaign. Trump campaigned, as astonishing as it may seem, as being less interventionist than the Democrats. And many people, no doubt, voted for him. I personally did not, but many people did vote for him on that basis. So this goes against all the promises he made in the election. I should add the continuation of the American involvement in the Ukraine war does the same. And so he attacked Iran. I think part of what we're seeing here is Trump's megalomania, the sense that he wanted to go down in history as a great president.

And he decided the great presidents—Lincoln, Roosevelt—are the ones who fight and win wars. And so he was going to go down as a great president who won a war with Iran. And, you know, he got all these claims from the Israelis, from Netanyahu and the head of the Mossad on a visit to Washington, that they have a perfect plan to decapitate the Iranian leadership. It's an impeccable plan. Once they decapitate the leadership, the regime will fall like a house of cards. And I'm sure Netanyahu is very convincing. He's very manipulative. And evidently, he convinced Trump. I should add that virtually all of the advisors to Trump, including military and intelligence advisors, doubted all of these things.

But he listened to the Israelis because the Israelis are never wrong. At least in the mythology, they're never wrong. The Israelis win all the battles. Again, in the mythology, they're military geniuses. And that's how Trump looked at it. And so there's no doubt that he was dragged into this war by the Israelis. You know, you do have the longstanding issue of America's extraordinary relationship with Israel, which is really remarkable. I mean, since the '70s, the U.S. has been giving Israel yearly more foreign aid of all sorts than any other country in the world. And, you know, the amount of money we've given Israel is extraordinary. And the very close relationship between U.S. policy and Israel has only gotten stronger and stronger over time.

You know, Trump, again, he said he's a nationalist. America First is his motto. And here he is being dictated to by a foreign country, Israel. It's a bit contradictory. Many people have noted this. Tucker Carlson, many of his former supporters have noted this, that this is a contradiction in terms. But that's what Trump is doing. There's this ideology of neoconservatism, which emerged in the '70s after the Vietnam debacle, of sort of intellectuals who became hyper-militarists and became deeply influential in the foreign policy establishment. And I think they always saw Israel as a model for what America should be like, that Israel pointed the way for what America should do militarily. Israel attacks; it doesn't defend. The neoconservatives like that.

That's what a serious power does: attacks. It doesn't apologize or wring its hands or engage in introspection about morality. It just does, quote unquote, does what it has to do, and disregards morality. The neoconservatives like that very much. And the Israelis are hyper-militarists. I don't want to say they never negotiate, because the Israelis, of course, have negotiated at times, but the Israelis much prefer the use of force to negotiations. They take what they want without compromise in most cases. And the neoconservatives felt that's what the U.S. should do as well. And it's had enormous influence at the foreign policy level, including, I think, the disparagement of negotiations here is perhaps one of its biggest contributions to American foreign policy. That, again, is to try and imitate Israel.

But I think with regard to Iran, the most important feature is that the Israeli idea was inside the U.S. foreign policy establishment in both parties. So Trump isn't unique in this respect. I think he went further than most would go. I mean, Biden, Obama, they resisted Netanyahu's entreaties to attack Iran, quite wisely, I would say. Trump did not. So Trump went a step further, I think, reflecting his impulsiveness. But nevertheless, I think that it should not be forgotten. Every president since Nixon has been closely integrated with the Israel lobby. And so that is not new. And now we're seeing the full effect of that, which is America is bogged down in a war with Iran that it's losing and almost certainly will lose in the end because it's been said many times, all Iran has to do to win is not be defeated.

And Iran is much more willing to accept pain than the United States because they realize this is existential. The Israelis have talked openly about how they would like to break up Iran. They certainly want regime change, not just removing the existing leadership, but removing the Islamic Republic and possibly breaking Iran into pieces because that would suit Israeli needs and, by implication, American needs as well, which means this is a war they simply can't lose. So Iran will fight on. I have no doubt about that. They will accept whatever pain it takes. And they've accepted a lot of pain already. There's no doubt they have. But I think the U.S. has its limits.

Trump himself, at one point, when he signed the Memorandum of Understanding, which he then violated—but when he signed it, he said he did not want to go down as Herbert Hoover, meaning he did not want to cause so much economic damage, instability that would lead to a depression. He openly admitted he was afraid that this could cause a depression. That possibility still exists. There are all sorts of instabilities in the economic system that are coming together that could very well lead to a major economic downturn here. And so the time will come when the U.S. simply tires of all this and walks away. There's only one qualification I would put on that with regard to both of these wars, which is it's always possible the United States and/or Israel could use nuclear weapons against the Iranians.

And it's always possible the United States or the Europeans, particularly the British or the French, could trigger a nuclear war with Russia. And so that's something that is very worrying to me as a possibility. And it's a possibility I would not rule out, given how reluctant the United States and Europe are to disengage from either of these wars, because they know that if they disengage from

either of these wars, it will mean a humiliation so deep it'll be devastating for them. And they may not be willing to accept that. The Europeans, I should add, they have an obsession with defeating Russia that's very reminiscent of Herman Melville's Moby-Dick. Russia is the great white whale. They simply can't let it go.

#Danny

Yeah, those are great points, Professor Gibbs. And I wanted to bring this up as you were talking about the role of Israel in U.S. foreign policy. I know I've heard the term "Israelization" of U.S. foreign policy. Well, Trump says the, I guess, quiet part out loud. He says that Trump is fighting Iran to protect Israel, and then he says the Middle East and the West. And he told Kan Media, which is Israeli, Israel should not worry. Why? Because I'm the president, and I will take care of Israel. So very direct there.

But Professor Gibbs, your reaction to this in the context of the fact that the United States, obviously, if it's going to continue fighting this war against Iran, it's going to be fighting for a very, very, very long time. And the results may not be good. We already have diesel prices in the United States, diesel gas prices, upwards of six dollars a gallon, which is a record, especially for this time of the year. So your thoughts on the Israelization of U.S. foreign policy in the context of these mounting crises—how do they, I guess, how do they connect slash impact each other?

#David Gibbs

I think the main connection is the world international economy and its effect on living standards, especially with regard to energy. It should not be forgotten, of course, that not only is the Persian Gulf a major source of oil and gas, so is Russia. The United States and Europe have effectively tried to cut off Russian energy supplies, first by sanctions, then by blowing up the Nord Stream pipeline, which is almost certainly either directed or countenanced by some NATO power, almost certainly including the United States. They are also now further trying to damage, with some effect, Russian oil production and refining capabilities, further cutting off the world from Russian energy sources and raising oil prices.

This also affects food prices because, after all—well, first of all, Russia is a major producer of fertilizer, but also fertilizers tend to be petroleum-based. And there's obviously, of course, the knock-on effect of the Persian Gulf. Some oil is getting out of the Persian Gulf, but most of it is not. We've had constricted supplies of oil coming out of the Persian Gulf, and to some extent through the Red Sea because the Houthis, of course, have been intermittently closing the Bab al-Mandab Strait into the Red Sea, through which Saudi Arabia exports some of its oil.

And so, in addition to that, there's the insurance problem. Insurance companies don't necessarily want to insure ships that are passing through areas that may come under attack. That further impedes shipping. So we've had greatly reduced oil production coming out of the Middle East region,

as well as Russia. So oil and gas prices will be affected. Food prices will be affected directly and indirectly. And recently, of course, in retaliation for the attacks on its infrastructure, Russia effectively has closed off Ukrainian ports. Ukraine has effectively become a landlocked country. They can't export by sea.

They can export by land, but that's much more expensive and more complicated. And Ukraine is a major exporter of grain, and so that will affect food prices further. So food and energy prices are going to continue to escalate. This also creates just a lot of uncertainty. We're seeing a lot of instability in the bond market. We're seeing a lot of instability in international currencies, most notably with regard to the yen, the Japanese yen. We're seeing a decline in business confidence. In a capitalist society—and pretty much the whole world now is capitalist, with rare exceptions—business confidence is of extreme importance. Business does not like uncertainty. All of these things produce uncertainty.

If you had any further hammer blows, like, for example, the El Niño, if it proves to be in the South Pacific, if it proves to be as disruptive as some are saying it will be, that will further produce supply shocks. There's an AI bubble. There's all sorts of things, basically, that can blow at any moment. And so this could become a major crisis economically. I think the public in the United States and in Europe are aware of a trade-off between guns and butter, both in terms of high spending on the military means that will be less available for social programs, and also through things like economic sanctions, which cut off supplies of vital inputs like energy and food.

And the public, I think, is aware of the fact that these wars are being conducted at their expense, that these will come out of people's pockets. They will result in a lowered ability to buy things at the stores. And so I think that is, more than anything else, going to put enormous pressure on governments in the United States and in Europe to end these wars at some point. Even if elites may not be ready to end the wars, the public, I think, will be getting to that point pretty soon.

#Danny

Professor Gibbs, what kind of world order is emerging out of all of this? And maybe in terms of history, you know, you've covered so many wars. You have a book on Yugoslavia. You have been covering the arc of U.S. interventionism for quite some time. And so I'm wondering, based on what you know and your analysis, how do you view the changing world? These wars against Russia and Iran, in particular, are causing massive changes in how the world looks, how it's governed, and who—you know—which countries, how countries, leaders, people, who they turn to for guidance on all matters that are important to them. So what's your thoughts on this?

#David Gibbs

Well, I mean, I have a positive image of the idea of the decline of U.S. power, because as I see it, U. S. power has been the most destabilizing force in the world, arguably since 1945, certainly since the

end of the Cold War. And it's very interesting because I think in political science, you have this notion of status quo powers and revisionist powers. Status quo powers are the ones that are on top, which are getting what they want because they're on top. Revisionist powers are countries like Germany in the '30s, Japan in the '30s. They're not on top, and they want to improve their position through war. The implication is that status quo powers are stabilizers.

They want a stable world because they have what they want. The odd thing is, the United States is a status quo power, but it always keeps on pushing the envelope. It always has to keep on thinking of new wars to start, new countries to destabilize, one after another after another. And it never tires of this. And it never runs out of enemies to destabilize. And so I think this overturns American experience, overturns much of these claims about status quo powers being stabilizers. The U.S. is not stabilizing at all, not only with regard to military action and covert operations, but also such things as economic sanctions, which have been extraordinarily destabilizing.

The Lancet, a British medical journal, did a study on the health effects of U.S. sanctions over 50 years, from, I think, about 1971, I think, to 2021, a 50-year period, and found that, on average, U.S.-led sanctions, unilateral sanctions by the U.S. and its allies, killed about 500,000-plus people per year, for a total over 50 years of around 28 million people killed. Overwhelmingly, nearly all civilians, of course, and disproportionately, these would be children, because children, especially toddlers and infants, have immature immune systems that are much more susceptible to diseases that result from deprivation. And so I don't think they did an age breakdown, but historically that is how it works.

Children and the elderly go first. So this is a—it's very hard to imagine there's any country in the world since 1990, or even since 1970, that has been as destructive of human life as the United States. I don't mean that by way of moral condemnation. I try to avoid these kinds of moral judgments, presenting that as a factual statement. That's the case. And so you could make a case that removing the United States from superpower status, removing the dollar from its status as the world's top currency, would have the most important effect of eliminating the sanctions weapon that the United States employs with such deadly effect.

And you could say that would have a significant positive effect on human welfare globally and extend life expectancy for many people on a sizable scale. And you could say that that's a positive, significant positive. So on that basis, I would see the decline of U.S. hegemony as having positive effects. That's not even discussing, again, the military and covert operations aspect of it, which is another dimension. And so I would look forward to the decline of U.S. power. Now, the question, of course, is what comes after U.S. power? Before I do that, let me stop and see if you want to say anything.

#Danny

Well, maybe, yeah, before you get to what comes after, maybe, yeah, the U.S. covert and military operations side of this, I think, is critical because, well, this is where the so-called trillions of dollars

are going. A lot of it goes to military contractors, as we know. But this is the other segment part of where it's going. So how does this factor into all this? Sometimes I view the fact that the United States has had to rely so much on these kinds of operations as maybe the beginning of the decline of the U.S. empire, as we've seen more overt operations, like what's happened with Iran, go quite badly. So maybe you can continue on this and then lead into your view on the war. Yeah, please.

#David Gibbs

Well, one of the things about Iran that's very significant is that this war stands out in American history. It's the first war that I can think of, at least, that began with a plurality, if not a majority, of the U.S. public opposing it. That's never happened. At least, to the best of my knowledge, it's never happened. Normally, the pattern is that when a war starts, the public supports the president. It's the patriotic thing to do. You have to support the president—the rally-around-the-flag effect. Americans are nationalistic people, and so when there's a war, you have a knee-jerk reaction to support it. However, as the war goes on and on, drags on and on, as it often does, then the war loses support. That's been the pattern.

What we have today in Iran is a war that never had majority support and is rapidly losing what little support it had over time as it drags on and on and produces negative results. So I really do think this could be a real turning point. This could be the point where the public, as I said, puts its foot down and says no, that we're spending too much on these things, it's costing us too much in terms of raising prices, and it's not even producing victory. That's the thing here, is that if Trump could say, well, I have victory, victory, you know, wave the flag, well, you know, that sometimes propitiates people and gets them to accept lowered living standards. But he's not going to get victory in this case. He will get defeat.

And it's very hard to see how that can be explained to the public. And it's very hard to see how the public will countenance that again, especially if it's combined with a defeat in Ukraine, as I think is highly likely. So I really do think this could be the end of the road for American overseas interventionism. Because, again, the United States, as imperfect a democracy as it is, we do have elections and people do vote. And there's always a miasma of propaganda, especially suffusing issues of foreign policy. But sometimes the facts shine through the propaganda. And I think this is one of those times where the facts will shine through the propaganda, as it did in Vietnam, and convince people that it's time to say no.

Again, I try to avoid wishful thinking, because I've done it in the past and it hasn't worked out very well, but I really do think we are reaching the point where the public—there are definite signs the public is tiring of these kinds of interventions. It used to be it was just on the left. The left was anti-interventionist, but now we're seeing—this is remarkable to me—it is on the right that you're seeing a great deal of anti-interventionism and hostility to overseas expansion. Let me add, by the way, I teach in southern Arizona, and I've had, over decades, a lot of military personnel in my classes, and I did see how embittered they were by the war on terror and how much damage that did to morale

in the military. And so I think that having a defeat in the Middle East and Ukraine on top of the war on terror will be a blow from which I think the foreign policy elite will not be able to recover.

#Danny

Right. And so, Professor Gibbs, what comes next then? We see Iran take very decisive control in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, essentially now acting as the effective operator. And if the U. S. stopped its aggression, essentially it would be the one that would be dictating terms there in conjunction with maybe Oman. Right. And then, of course, you have Russia becoming—I think Russia has become, maybe you might agree with me, has become even more internationally, outside of Western Europe and the United States, looked upon favorably, especially with regard to beating sanctions. And then, of course, you have China on the other side becoming the economic powerhouse of the world. So these countries are becoming more powerful, seemingly, despite U.S. interventionism. What comes after the historic moment when, yeah, U.S. interventionism becomes not just moribund, but maybe even impossible?

#David Gibbs

Well, I think with regard to the way the wars will end, I mean, this is something that fundamentally can't be predicted in specifics. But at some point, Trump will have to tire more of endless conflict that he can't win, especially as U.S. inventories of weapons, key weapons such as missile interceptors, are depleted almost to zero, as they're getting close to being done, as close to happening. And he'll simply have to disengage. Military morale is breaking down. We all know what happened at the USS Abraham Lincoln. Morale is very poor with regard to these extended deployments that are being demanded increasingly. The public, as I said, is getting fed up with it. So at some point, Trump will simply be forced by circumstances to walk away.

I don't think in the end there'll be an agreement because I don't think Trump can reach any agreement with the Iranians. I'm not sure the Iranians at this point have that much hope of an agreement. I can't read their minds, but I'd be surprised if they hold out much hope of an agreement with Trump. Instead, what I think will happen is Trump eventually will simply tire of this and walk away, and have to acknowledge defeat, which means a humiliating defeat. And there's no other way this can end, except one, which is nuclear weapons, but we can get to that later. That is my worry. Short of nuclear weapons, though, at some point, and I can't predict what that point will be, he will walk away from this.

It may very well be once the economy starts to collapse, if you really—let's say the AI bubble starts to burst—and then you start getting instability across a wide range of indicators in the economy. You know, if the El Niño further lowers food production and you get a massive spike in food prices. All of these types of things could be, shall we say, the straw that breaks the camel's back and causes

Trump to simply walk away. In the case of Ukraine, I think at some point—and again, one can't predict this because there's a psychological element here—the Ukrainian army and social structure will break under the weight of superior Russian forces.

I suspect that we're already seeing some preliminary indicators of that happening. And when that happens, again, assuming that Europe and the United States don't push this to nuclear war, which I would not rule out, but assuming that doesn't happen, Europe and the United States will have no choice but to simply walk away because their battering ram, the instrument of war, will start collapsing. And when it collapses, there's nothing they can do about it except basically direct confrontation, which would mean nuclear war. And hopefully they won't go there because that would be suicide. So I think that's how it will end in terms of what replaces it.

I mean, there are a number of possibilities. Obviously, there's no question China is going to play a much larger role in the world, given its higher rates of GDP growth. It's already a large economy, so it's gaining more and more prestige in the world as the American alternative is getting less prestige. People will see that as American power declines, more and more countries will look to China. And China has not invaded any countries yet. I mean, it's engaged in some saber-rattling against Taiwan, but never actually to the point of military action. I think it has only one overseas military base in the whole world.

I think in the Bab-el-Mandeb area, I think it is one compared to hundreds and hundreds by the United States. So China, I think, is seen as not that threatening a country to most places in the world. And even Russia, I think many countries do see Russia's invasion negatively. But over time, I think, you know, the Europeans and the United States are being seen as much more aggressive. I mean, what Europe is saying and doing is remarkable. Kaja Kallas, who is effectively the foreign minister of the EU, has openly talked about what you would like to see is not just military defeat of Russia, but to break it up into pieces.

I mean, that's an extraordinarily aggressive thing to say for a person who is the foreign policy representative of the whole European Union. I think other countries in the Southern Hemisphere look at that and say that, you know, compared to that kind of language and that kind of action, China doesn't look so bad. And finally, there's a saying: nothing succeeds like success, and nothing fails like failure. If the United States and Europe fail and China—inevitably, China will be seen as more successful and therefore more influential and more of a pole of influence to be—you will want to curry favor with. So clearly, China will play a bigger role.

Now, what kind of role it will play, I don't know. There's no indication as yet they want to make the yuan or renminbi a global currency like the dollar, but certainly it will play a bigger role. And, you know, you're seeing things like the BRICS, you know, so far a loose organization, I think, will become more and more influential. I think that, you know, my hope is that they'll produce some kind

of more stable government globally, one that is based less on military aggression and economic sanctions and more on conflict resolution. I think China is a stabilizing power. China does want to grow economically. That's what it wants to do.

And contrary to popular belief, it isn't actually spending as much money on the military as people think they are. If you look at the key measure here, it's military spending as a percent of GDP. And China is spending, I think, something on the order of 1.7% of its GDP on the military. And U.S. spending is 3.5%, something—I don't know those exact figures—but China is spending approximately half what the United States is spending. If they want to, they could spend more, but apparently they don't want to. So I'm not seeing China as establishing a kind of global empire the way the United States did. And so I'm hopeful that they would try and use their augmented influence to produce a more stable world.

Whatever the case, and, you know, realists like John Mearsheimer would say things like, well, you don't know what's going to come after American hegemony. It's a leap into the unknown. And, you know, perhaps it would be better to keep some form of American hegemony, and that the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know. At least that used to be his position. I'm not sure if it's the case now. The problem with that is the devil you know is the United States, and that has been so aggressive and so destabilizing. I think I look forward to the risk of removing American power. Even though it is a risk, I think it's less risky than maintaining American power, given its record.

#Danny

I think that's a really good point, especially given the fact that we are only able, as human beings, to understand what has happened and what is happening. We might not be able to tell the future, but usually we can get a sense of it based on how things are going now. And there is no indication that China, or any of these countries for that matter—Russia, Iran—have any dreams of a similar kind of hegemony, not least because they have not designed their entire systems, it seems like, to do that. I just don't see how that would be even possible or worthwhile for these countries. I mean, I've been to China so many times, and there is a literal aversion to the idea of a so-called global empire.

Meanwhile, in the United States and even Israel, which I find interesting, maybe I can get your final comments on this. Both of these entities—the U.S. government, Washington, and the government in Tel Aviv—they talk all the time about being a global force, especially Israel. They have a whole design for what it would look like for Israel to be an empire in its own right, a Greater Israel, so to speak. So, two far different mentalities, and the policies fit right with it. So, Professor Gibbs, your final comments on this and anything else maybe that we didn't get to hit on in this time together? Sure.

#David Gibbs

Well, I will say that if you want to sort of show it, I hate to end on a dark cloud or a dark note, but what I'm very worried about here is nuclear war. And if you look at it, it's significant in both arenas. In the case of Iran, you know, I'm very, in a sense, worried about the fact that so far Israel and Iran have not struck each other. Iran has struck U.S. bases in Jordan and in the Gulf, but not Israel. And the question is, why have they not struck Israel? And there have been rumors, and again, these are just rumors, but there are rumors that the Israelis, through back channels, contacted the Iranians and said, "If you attack us, we will use nuclear weapons against you." And that's why the Iranians are not attacking Israel.

The Israelis did send a submarine, a Dolphin-class submarine that is known to carry nuclear weapons, into the Indian Ocean. Did so quite publicly, and no doubt this was a warning to Iran. And so there is the possibility of Israel using nuclear weapons. There's the possibility of the U.S. using nuclear weapons. Trump has openly talked about using tactical nuclear weapons on Iran. This would cause a cascade, probably, of nuclear proliferation in the area, first beginning with Iran itself, and set a very bad precedent for using nuclear weapons, and be a disaster, obviously, for humanity. But an even bigger risk is Ukraine. In Ukraine, basically, Ukraine, as I see it, is irretrievably losing this war, and it will lose this war at some point in the medium term, if not the near term.

And the question is, what will the United States and Europe do about it? The Europeans, again, seem determined not to let go of this war, no matter what the cost. And they've insisted that their objective here is not a compromise settlement. It is defeat of Russia. Their peace terms that they have offered are a ceasefire, followed by the insertion of French and British peacekeeping troops into Ukraine, Article 5-like guarantees to Ukraine, effectively bringing it into NATO, followed by negotiations aimed at handing over the Russian leadership, beginning with Putin, for war crimes trials, and Russia giving Ukraine reparations. In other words, surrender. And of course, some Kaja Kallases have said they want to break up Russia into pieces. So these are the terms for peace in Ukraine. Obviously, these are terms Russia will never even consider.

And so the question is, if you have these irreconcilable differences, if Ukraine is going to be defeated imminently, what will Europe do? I think there is some possibility they will try and trigger some event that will produce a U.S.-NATO direct confrontation, the direct insertion of NATO forces into Ukraine, which would very likely lead to nuclear weapons use. Russia has 1,800 fully deployed nuclear warheads at high levels of readiness, and others in reserve. And of course, France and Britain have their own nuclear weapons, and the United States does too. And so this could lead to generalized nuclear war. I don't think it's likely, but it's definitely a possibility here. And so I think everybody should be very worried about that possibility and do whatever they can to prevent it from happening.

#Danny

Yeah, and you certainly aren't the only guest, especially the only guest like yourself with extensive research and analysis that's been done over the years and years, that are worried about the same thing. And I am too. I mean, I truly do believe that the U.S., as an empire, with the vested interests that you discussed earlier, does have a vested interest as well. But there's a reason they have nuclear weapons in the arsenal. And Trump has even said so, that there's a reason we have these: you can use them. So there could be a crisis moment, indeed. I truly believe that, where this becomes a possibility. And I think this is why it's so critical to be able to understand exactly how this all works, exactly what led us here, and what is the actual situation that the U.S. empire faces.

Not because we want to—certainly, I don't want to preserve it. I don't want it to stick around either. But at the same time, we need to understand what its reaction and the elites' reaction are to this. We already see some of that, but I agree. It could get a lot worse. Any final thoughts, Professor Gibbs, as we close out here?

#David Gibbs

Well, what we're talking about here, the theme of this discussion, is the decline of the U.S. Empire, maybe the very final phases of the decline of the U.S. Empire. The question is, will we have a soft landing in the form of the way, let's say, the British Empire ended—a soft landing—or will the United States insist on going out in a blaze of glory, possibly a blaze of nuclear glory? I think that's the big question here. Hopefully, it'll be the first one.

#Danny

Well said. Professor Gibbs, it was great to be with you. Thanks so much for all your contributions. Hope to have you back on very soon. Everybody, hit the like button before you go. That helps boost the show. Thanks to everyone who watched, everyone. And please do support the show in the video description below. All the places are there. Professor Gibbs, hopefully we'll have you back on soon. Until next time, everyone. See you tomorrow. Bye-bye.