

US Strike IMMINENT, Iran Masses 420,000 Troops Against Invasion | Col. Daniel Davis

Daniel Davis joins for the first time to discuss why Trump is moving rapidly toward returning to war with Iran despite being unable to aid Saudi Arabia in its own losing war in Yemen. We cover this and much more in a full analysis of the geopolitical situation in the Middle East and beyond. Lt. Col. Daniel Davis is a 4x combat veteran and the host of the Daniel Davis Deep Dive YouTube channel. Follow Daniel Davis: <https://www.youtube.com/@UCWDN5zr5ttctoIAhZwW6tcQ> Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis! Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong> Telegram: <https://t.me/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> #iranwar #trump #china #yemen #usmilitary

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. As you can see, for the first time, I am honored to have as my guest former Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis of Daniel Davis' Deep Dive to go over the latest developments. We are talking now about a very confusing situation right now, I think a very alarming one to Daniel. We have... The Iranian military has amassed 420,000 troops on the coast of its southern border in response to what they believe are threats of a potential U.S. ground operation. This comes as there have been Middle East alerts throughout the week, warning the State Department, warning embassies everywhere of possible escalation. Iran has said that they are also willing and able to try new weapons as Donald Trump is weighing options to either, quote, wipe out Iran, let them rot economically, or make a deal.

And this comes as we were a hair's breadth away from the United States entering another front directly. We know that the U.S. has been supporting Saudi Arabia militarily for years and years and years. But according to The New York Times, this weekend Trump reportedly initially opposed an intervention into Yemen before talking to MBS and was preparing strikes this weekend. He reversed course again on Sunday, yesterday, before the operation began, even after target lists had been approved and U.S. aircraft were being armed. So, Daniel, what's going on here? Is the U.S.—it doesn't seem like we're out of the woods in terms of the United States escalating on all of these fronts, in particular with Iran. What do you make of the possibility of another U.S. strike or even an attempt at a ground invasion at this very peculiar and difficult time in the war?

#Daniel Davis

Let's take a look, first of all, at the issue with the Houthis. That's the one that's the most insane. Why anyone in the Trump administration, why anyone in the Pentagon would think that that's a good idea, that they would even have strikes prepped up, is beyond me, because it's not like we don't have a decade of direct experience of failing to bring the Houthis to their knees. We have tried bombing. The Obama administration tried to help Saudi Arabia in their war, with their version of the Yemenis on their side against Ansar Allah on the other side, failed for all those years to bomb them into submission. And they bombed them a lot, and they blew up a lot of targets, and they never brought them to heel.

They never caused the collapse of the political regime, or caused them to give up, et cetera. They never did. They completely failed, and it ended up costing them a lot in the process. Then President Biden joins into the fray during the 2020 election, I guess, period, when Ansar Allah started interdicting shipping related to Israel in the Red Sea owing to its attacks into Hamas in the Gaza Strip. It did not succeed there. President Trump tried the same thing in 2025. The New York Times posted and said, listen, they spent together about \$7 billion to fail to get anything done. Then now all of a sudden, here comes Israel.

Saudi Arabia, again, totally inexplicably says, "Hey, you know, we've kind of been in this quasi-ceasefire period with Ansar Allah since 2023." And all of a sudden, they decide, "You know what? We're going to use military force, and we're going to hit their airport in Sana'a" during the time of the senior supreme leader's funeral, where a delegation from Sana'a was going to head over there. And they choose that to start firing. And that was the straw that broke the camel's back for Ansar Allah. And they said, "Okay, fine, we'll start firing." Saudi Arabia can't defend itself. What a shock. We just had all this experience to show that we can't defend ourselves against Israel.

I'm sorry, against Iran. And now that you want to say, here, we're going to take some of the same missiles, going against some of the same targets, using the same defense. And by the way, it didn't work there either. So why would President Trump want to say, "Hey, Ben, I bet it would be a really cool idea to join in with Saudi Arabia again and to strike targets against Ansar Allah in Yemen." All that's going to do is stir that hornet's nest up a little bit, and then they're going to now start taking into account—or to strike targets—our targets. And they have been very open about saying, "Listen, this is a fight between us and Saudi Arabia." And by the way, this whole thing that they're a proxy of Iran is completely false.

It's just a gross misreading of the situation. They have common cause in some things, but they are two distinct entities, and they have their own interests. And that's why you saw Ansar Allah. They did not get involved when Iran was first attacked in 2025, the first attack here, you know, throughout this first six months of this. They did not get involved until they were attacked by Saudi

Arabia. And then they got involved for their own reasons, i.e., to stop the blockade of Saudi Arabia. If we now get involved, and they have been open to say, as long as the U.S. stays out of it, we are going to stay away from the U.S. We're not going to attack them.

But if the U.S. chooses to get involved here, then we are going to choose to retaliate against you in return. So I don't know why we would want to put that hornet's nest on us, because you're not going to bomb them into submission, for much of the same reasons why we can't bomb Iran into submission. They, on their side, they're a much smaller country, but still not small per se. They have mountains that they have facilities underneath. They have their own version of missile cities that we can't bomb. We've been trying for years, and we haven't succeeded. We wouldn't succeed in the future here either. And so that is one of my biggest complaints as to why we even thought about it. And thank God President Trump didn't do it. But, I mean, I just think that we're safe for the moment.

But I don't think that we're out of the woods because President Trump is so mercurial. And so, I mean, all you can say—I mean, if we're just being honest—he has some real cognitive decline problems. His decision-making process and his calculations are just flawed, even by his own standards that he used to set. He's just out of control right now. So you never know what he's going to do from time to time. It did look like he was going to attack over this weekend, which nearly happened, what, a month or so ago in Iran, where it looked like he was about to launch the biggest strike since World War II and all that, which also would not have accomplished anything, would have put us more in the crosshairs from Iran in the region.

And all of that's still the case. You mentioned this issue about Iran moving troops to the border. My worry is not that they're, like, saying, "Hey, we're moving troops in case America launches a ground offensive," because probably, at most, we have maybe 10,000 ground troops in the region that can actually do anything on the ground. And that's a combination of, I think it's like, 82nd Airborne, some Marines, et cetera, that can be flown in with helicopters from a certain place, or air assault landed, or something like that. But all you can do is just take a point target. Maybe you can take Kharg Island, and maybe you can take Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

That's about it. I'm more worried about the possibility that Iran may be posturing to take territory in there. They could be potentially thinking of moving even on Kuwait or some other stuff, with some of these PMF units in Iraq potentially joining with them there. I don't know, but I think that to say Iran would never do anything on the ground is a dangerous assumption because I think they could, and I think that they're seeing what they watched the Houthis doing. They moved on the ground in areas where everybody thought they couldn't do it, too, into some of the Saudi-backed areas of Yemen.

And who knows if they're going to continue to go further beyond that. But they clearly can. They have the ground force capacity to do it. And air power alone is not going to stop them. You've got to have somebody on the ground. I don't think that there's enough ground troops. I don't know if Iran is going to do this, but I can tell you from a military perspective, it is a threat and it is a risk that you

better take seriously, or you may one day find out something like August 2nd, 1990, where Saddam Hussein rolled into Kuwait. That same thing could happen again, just from a slightly different direction.

#Danny

Yeah, and given what we've seen from Iran too, maybe in a much more stable and powerful kind of force that Iran has shown itself to be, which Saddam, as we know now, was not capable of doing. Colonel, let me ask you this: then, is a U.S. strike—which I think Iran, they put their military on maximum alert. They've been saying now daily for the last couple of days, since the United States put all these security alerts out there, that if the U.S. strikes, they can expand the geography of this war, right? Does Iran believe that another strike is coming very soon? And if so, does that then give Iran credence to do exactly what you said, which is to expand the geography and potentially even take part in these kind of operations, which I'm sure they've been preparing for, given that they keep saying there's all kinds of cards left on the table for them to play here.

#Daniel Davis

Yeah, I've talked to a number of Iranian sources, and they say that they have just mentally said, yeah, we just are acting like it is definitely coming. So we're preparing ourselves mentally. We're preparing ourselves physically. We're coming up with a whole range of things that we can do because they said that it's—they said that they expect it to happen because of statements that President Trump keeps making, like he's been here in the last few days and I think, again, repeated this morning, if I'm not mistaken, that, you know, I've got some big decisions coming up. And I think that the fact that he's going to be speaking at the U.N. on Tuesday, tomorrow, the president of Iran will speak on Wednesday, and then Netanyahu will speak on Thursday.

So I would imagine that President Trump and Israel probably wouldn't do anything in those three days because they're going to want their moment in the sun to say whatever they want to say. After that, it starts to get pretty dicey because President Trump had previously said, what, a week or so ago, that this is going to be over by the midterm elections. Shortly thereafter, almost immediately thereafter, I think was the word he used, it's going to be over. And he keeps using these words that make it appear that he's considering nuclear weapons. You mentioned in your opening there this past weekend, he said he's got three different options, one of which is to completely destroy Iran. And of course, there's no possibility to completely destroy Iran with conventional weapons.

We've already proven that unloading thousands, tens of thousands of strikes altogether is not enough to bring the country to its knees, even conventionally. So we don't have that much ammunition, at least not of the long-range stuff. So you're not gonna take it out that way. So then that leads to the natural conclusion: are you talking about nuclear weapons? And so the Iranian side has said openly, repeatedly, again this weekend, if you start hitting these kinds of significant targets inside of us, we will no longer have any restraints at all. And they have had a lot of restraints up to

this point. They have—we hit civilian targets, and then they hit military targets. They have sometimes initiated.

They hit U.S. military targets, and then the U.S. hit civilian targets in response, and civilian tankers, which is supposed to be a war crime. We're not supposed to be able to do that. Why we didn't go after military targets seems kind of irrational to me. I don't know why. If somebody is using military power to hit your side, then you would want to take out their military capacity or whatever launched that attack. But instead, we go after civilian targets. So that doesn't really make a lot of sense to me at all. But it also convinces the Iranian side that there's no rational reason why they should withdraw or hold back in the target list. So now they say, if you come at us now, especially if it's a big strike, we're going to go big against you.

And they've said not just military targets, but also energy targets and civilian targets like banks, like businesses, Yahoo, and some other kinds of civilian targets in the area—American concerns they're talking about. So they're saying, you're hitting us with economic warfare, with sanctions or whatever else. We don't have the capacity to do sanctions, but we can do economic warfare in other ways, and we'll hit your businesses in the region. You've got a lot of them, especially in Abu Dhabi and Dubai and some other big places. There's a lot of very lucrative targets that are American-based or American-associated that they could come in and hit, and there's literally nothing we could do to stop that.

So if we decide to foolishly go into this trap again, there's nothing militarily we can accomplish. We're not going to bring them to their knees, but we can then open a new Pandora's box. Not that the one we've opened up on February 28th wasn't bad enough. We could literally open up a new one that would be catastrophic for America's national interest, for America's national security, and for the global economy. Because as bad as it's been so far, we're still getting stuff out to some degree, still not enough. And it's starting to rise to cause a global problem with diesel fuel and jet fuel. And this would only make it immeasurably worse and for a much longer period of time if we do it.

#Danny

Those are great points. And now I'd like to ask your expertise on the kind of how, if the United States actually does it, how would it be done? Because Iran just said that they have pushed U.S. military forces, or U.S. military arsenal, essentially hugging the Jordanian-Israeli border. They say that the U.S. is almost trapped there because of the successful operations of Iran over these months. Does this mean that the United States is going to have to launch an aerial campaign from Jordan, moving all the way toward Iran, to continue these strikes? And what do you make of the state of the U.S. military in the region, given all that has happened, and the fact that, yeah, Trump and the United States are playing what seems to be a very confused and, for lack of a better term, all-over-the-place, chaotic kind of game here? Yeah, there's no doubt that that's the case.

#Daniel Davis

It's just characterized by just, I mean, fecklessness, really, because there is no strategy. There was never an attainable military objective from the beginning. War is supposed to be an extension of politics by other means, right? The famous Clausewitzian dictum. And it's true. It's obviously the case because you use military power because you want to achieve a political outcome, right? The conquest of another country, taking away some capability, some threat that opposes you, something like that. And you can't get it done by other means. You talk to them about it, you put sanctions, whatever, and then you feel it didn't work and you feel threatened enough, and so you're going to use military power to coerce that way.

That's just kind of the concept of it. We don't have that time. Because if you want to accomplish something, some political objective, some national security objective, you have to first say, okay, I don't like behavior X that this country is doing, whatever it happens to be. They exist. They might theoretically have a nuclear weapon someday. So you think, okay, my objective would be to make sure they could never have it at all. I mean, like, make sure it's not even possible, not a decision they can or can't make, but that they don't have the possibility of it. So in order to do that, I've got to be able to destroy their ability to defend themselves so that the country would be open to destruction from our side.

In order to do that, you've got to take all these mountain ranges that exist throughout Iran and through the depth of it, a country that's as big as most of Western Europe, and you've got to be able to penetrate those granite mountains, many, many hundreds of meters under the ground in many cases, and knock them all out so that they can't make missiles, they can't launch missiles, they can't make or launch long-range drones. If you can knock all of that out, and then destroy also the IRGC so that they have no ability to project any power on the ground anywhere, you would have to go and take care of every bit of that, or it's foolish to go in and start something you can't finish, because if you go and you attack those targets and you can't knock them out, now you've started a war that you can't finish.

This all should be going on in your mind before you've even made a decision, much less launched one missile. It doesn't look like any of that was done, or maybe it's not completely accurate. I have talked to people who were in the room in some cases, and they said those points were brought up, that the intelligence community did tell the president this is unlikely to succeed, that the military did tell President Trump that this is an unattainable objective, and he launched it anyway, and he gave them the order anyway. They saluted and said, "Yes, sir, roger that, moving out, and we're going to do it." And it failed as predictably as it could. I wasn't in the room. I don't have classified information. I just looked at geography. I just understand military affairs. I have combat experience myself, and I wrote, and on our show here emphatically told everybody what would happen if we launched this war. You can't succeed.

So it was clear to the Donald. Therefore, to try anyway is to almost bake in and guarantee strategic failure, and that's exactly what we've done. So now that we've lost 20-some-odd troops, it's still not clear how many we've actually lost killed because we've been hiding that. Probably we're close to 900, maybe even a thousand total wounded in action of various types. They're not very clear about that either. It's a lot. Twenty bases have been damaged or destroyed, and we've been driven out of most of them. And now, as you say, we're kind of hunkering in Jordan and Israel. So we've been squeezed into these small areas here, lost 40-something aircraft altogether on this.

And whatever scores of billions of dollars wasted, we're losing somewhere around \$2 to \$3 billion per month on this just languishing thing that's not accomplishing anything. And so here we are, stuck. That's just the cost of it. Forget about it. I mean, now you have to add into it the Strait of Hormuz that's going on now. It's expanded into Saudi Arabia and the Houthis, the Ansar Allahs, in the Bab el-Mandeb. That's causing even more problems. Every bit of this because of the Pandora's box we opened on February 28th of this year. And where can it go now? What can you do? You had the off-ramp.

As disastrous as it was, at least on June 17th, you had an off-ramp that you signed with your own fingers, President Trump, with the memorandum of understanding, and you could have just walked away from it then. All you had to do was abide by the terms that we agreed to. As ugly as they were, people would have complained about it, whatever, but you could have said, "Oh yeah, but we set them back 20 years," and blah, blah, blah. The case was there, and the damage was real, and we could have just walked away. And now the Strait of Hormuz would be open at this point, or relatively close to what it was pre-war. A lot of the damage—it's going to take years to recover.

But in large measure, a lot of that could have been open. But instead, within days, Danny, within days, President Trump went back on the terms and did not accomplish the most important ones for Iran. Paragraph number one: that the war had to stop in Hezbollah and then on all fronts. And then paragraph number five: that the Strait of Hormuz is going to remain under control of the Iranian side for the duration of the period. And President Trump says, "No, you know what? How about this? We're going to add a southern corridor that's not in the terms, and we're going to start sending ships through." And when Iran warns about it, we're going to ignore it.

They're going to send them. And then Iran took them under fire, I think, like within 48 hours, which, according to the terms of the deal, they had the right to do because they had the authority over the transit. And then, of course, then we started a new 13-day tit-for-tat situation. And now here we are again. Where do you go now? If President Trump, you mentioned this weekend, he said either destroy Iran, economically rot them, or have a deal. What deal? What are you talking about? You had the deal. You signed it. You went back on it. So there's no deal. There will be no deal to be done because we're deal-impervious. We can't do anything that we agree to, so no one's going to listen to that.

So you can just take that off the table. Then it's economic rot or destroy Iran. Okay, economic rights—you can harm them. This blockade that we have on there, these economic sanctions, are genuinely causing a lot of harm to Iran, no doubt about that. Iran is open about admitting that. You can see it on the ground. But they can survive this because it is an existential threat. And they've done this in the past for eight years of the Iran-Iraq War. They've done it for the whole maximum pressure President Trump had on them and all the things that have been going on here. They have learned how to survive and to get by and suffer and endure because they know they have to. And so you're not going to starve them out.

Keeping that blockade on there, though, is going to start causing us to be starved out and us economic rot because of the fertilizers, because of the helium, because of the diesel, the jet fuel, ad infinitum, the gas, natural gas, the crude oil, all that stuff. Even on the best days, it's only a fraction of the pre-war time, which the global economy needs. Our strategic petroleum reserves, which has mitigated some of the problems since February, is getting dangerously low. China is now using less of their strategic petroleum reserves, which means that their consumption is starting to go back up, and there's just not enough supply to go along. So we can't do that one either. And we can't do the other one.

As I've already explained, we can't bomb them into submission because that doesn't exist. That's not possible. That leaves you an empty hand. There's no more fingers to count because that's all we've exhausted. So what is President Trump going to do? Is he going to just try and say, "Well, I'm going to try number one again anyway," the same way he tried it in February against all rational advice? That's what I fear. Except this time, Danny, this time the consequences could be profoundly worse because Iran is almost certainly going to do what they said in retaliation. If we hit these targets, they're going to hit these other targets, and that is going to cause long-term economic harm that you can't overcome, and you can't just walk away from it at that point. That's what I fear.

#Danny

Yeah, and what would then be, given that you said, and I agree with you 100%, this idea of a deal when there's been a deal on the table, it's almost insulting, especially to people in the United States, Americans, to tell them, "Oh, there may be a deal, but look, we have these other more menacing options, but there may be a deal too." It's almost insulting to all of us. But I'm wondering, what would be the impact on the United States military now? Because now munition shortages and all of this are public knowledge, discussed openly in mainstream Western media. What would it portend for the U.S. military if they are, with Admiral Cooper of CENTCOM, continuing seemingly to push this kind of kinetic action? What would it mean for the U.S. military going forward? It doesn't seem like a good option, but it's one that obviously, as you said, there are major forces inside of Washington contemplating. Yeah.

#Daniel Davis

We could attack Iran again without question. No problem at all. We could do it. We have a lot of long-range strike weapons still. We still have air capabilities in the region, both land-based and sea-based. And we could deal all kinds of destruction on Iran. There's no doubt about that. But at what cost, and what would be the result, which is your issue? We already know that we'd shoot through massive percentages of all the key weapon systems. I'm talking about THAAD, long-range interceptors, PAC-3 interceptors, the Tomahawk long-range cruise missiles, and the JASSM long-range cruise missiles.

Those are the ones that are the most important ones offensively and defensively in our arsenal. And we have chewed through massive portions of them. If we go back to a full-scale war, like the version that we did in the first 40 days, we can literally burn through the rest of our entire national stockpile of magazine depth, et cetera, burn through all of those. Then you're going to be left with other stuff, like some of these small-diameter bombs, they call them, several other categories of capable munitions. But there are limits and constraints to those.

They're not as effective as some of these JASSMs and the Tomahawks, especially on the offensive side. You've got to get closer to the target to be able to use them. You have to launch them from fighter jets that we have, F-35s, F-22s, F-16s, et cetera. And so you have to get closer to the target to drop them because their range is smaller, which means you make it easier for the other side to be able to intercept your aircraft. You have to fly them from further back because their enemy's capabilities to hit your airfields and other kinds of port facilities is pretty substantial. So you've got to start from further back, which means now you have to have these aerial refuelers constantly in the air.

And, of course, they're a constant threat. And even if you somehow manage to avoid getting them knocked out, you're burning through the service life of these airframes by having them in the air so much longer than they were ever designed for. You're wearing out your crews, and we've already seen what happened with the Abraham Lincoln crew, with some of the USS Boxer crew, which didn't get as much publicity. Some friends of mine did get some contacts from some of the family members. They're having trouble. I've talked to some of the family members of some of our deployed Air Force people. They're having trouble already.

And part of the reason why is not just the hard wear and tear you're doing on the troops, but because they know, Danny, they know what I'm telling you. There are no militarily attainable objectives. So to be put through all of this trouble, to be so hard-pressed, to see some of your mates die, others get wounded, and you never know if it's going to be you on the next missile, for something you know is pointless, it is just draining of the emotion and the vitality of our troops. And it's draining the physical stockpiles on something that doesn't even matter to American national security, which means nothing. By draining all of this and weakening your national security capacity, you're putting at risk places where it might matter elsewhere.

God help us if anything happens in the Indo-Pacific. God help us if anything happens in Europe with Russia, because we are not going to be able to provide adequate forces for that, or if somebody attacks our homeland, for example. We're going to be in a real world of hurt because we are not going to have enough air defense capabilities for our own needs. We're not going to have enough offense to go after an opponent who probably is stockpiling all kinds of things by seeing how weak we are. Further, it also puts on graphic display how we fight, where our strengths are, where our weaknesses are, and where we're vulnerable that people didn't know. Obviously, there's the drone issue I haven't even talked about.

We're miles behind Russia and Ukraine, where they have shown where current modern warfare is. Russia is not behind. China is not behind. I'm wagering other places, probably North Korea, has probably significantly recognized all this. They've sent troops in to fight in some of this. And of course, last year, apparently there's 40 or 50,000 that may be coming in to join Russia again right now. So they're expanding their cadre of combat-experienced leaders and then sending them back home, which makes their country a lot more capable. We, on the other hand, are burning ours out and making them weaker. China's getting stronger. North Korea's getting stronger. Russia's getting stronger. Militarily, we are getting weaker.

#Danny

Yeah, those are great points. I wanted your reaction to whether you believe this war is now becoming a forever war. Scott Bessent just said to the media that he cannot tell us how long—you and I and all of us—how long this war will take. Your thoughts on this? There have been some conversations about this. I know you're very familiar with what used to be called the forever war in Afghanistan. And then it wasn't, and then it ended quite dramatically and very badly for the United States. What do you make of this talk about a forever war against Iran and Scott Bessent's comments?

#Daniel Davis

Well, President Trump himself loves to dissuade that by saying, "Oh, you know, look how long Vietnam was. It was, you know, whatever, 10 years." He said it was a lot longer than that, but whatever, we'll just stick with 10. He said, "Look how long that was. Look how many casualties we had there. This is only seven months old, so it's definitely not a forever war. Afghanistan was 20 years, so this is nothing, man." So this is, in fact, when asked about whether the Abraham Lincoln had been deployed too long, his comment was, "Oh, it's not been deployed not near enough. We can do this forever," said Secretary of War Pete Hegseth. "We can do this indefinitely," basically saying, yeah, we can fight a forever war. The thing is not going to be, how much longer can we go?

Because at least with the Afghanistan war, it turned into a kind of a self-sustaining, low-level thing that you could fight for a long time. The level of casualties was relatively low, and stuff that our

force could sustain. The nature of the targets, the enemy target was low. We didn't have to use JASSMs. We didn't have to use air defense interceptor missiles. We didn't have to do any of that kind of stuff. So it was basically, we just have to hope we don't get blown up on the road or that we don't catch a rocket in the teeth or something like that, because the Taliban had some low-level rockets or it was roadside bombs. That's about the extent of what we had to worry about. Same during Iraq during that time, whatever, the first eight years of the insurgency that we had to fight, et cetera, that was against guys with rockets and roadside bombs.

That's not the case now, as we are seeing graphically depicted with Iran and now with Ansar Allah, is that we see that they have a significant air defense capacity, or significant air offense capacity. Some air defense capacity, so they're limited, but at least they have it. But they have significant air offense. And the Iranian side, for its part, is saying they have a number of offensive weapons they have still not revealed. So they apparently have some stuff. We don't even know how we would defend against that. We hadn't been able to defend against their other stuff. So that's not good news for our side. So there's really no way to end this unless we do the walk-away plan, where we just pretend like we won and say, yeah, we hit them.

It'll take them two decades to recover. We're leaving. That's the only plausible exit right now. And that could happen in a day. It could happen immediately. President Trump makes the decision. If he doesn't make that decision, though, then it, by definition, is a quagmire. You could call it a forever war. It's a perpetual war. That's probably a better way to put it. Nothing's eventual or eternal. Even Vietnam and Afghanistan both ended. But a perpetual war, because there's no exit. There's no path to it. There's no strategy. There's just, what are we going to do today? And so that is a perpetual war. So that's where we are, and we're going to stay there until somebody finally does something they don't want to do, which is to walk away.

#Danny

And in the remaining minutes, about five or ten minutes here that I have you, I wanted to ask you about the reports. These wars are becoming increasingly interconnected. If not, they were always very much connected. There's reports in Axios, which unfortunately we've been having to follow for a long time now in this war. But supposedly now Donald Trump, in reaction to the massive diesel price increase in the United States and around the world, he's now asking Vladimir Zelensky of Ukraine to stop attacking Russian oil refineries before he meets with him at the U.N. General Assembly coming up tomorrow. The word diesel came up many times in the call, sources familiar with it said. Now, your thoughts on this, because obviously the U.S. war on Iran has created a massive crisis. And now, of course, with Saudi Arabia under fire through this Yemeni offensive, it's only gotten a lot worse. What do you make of this crisis, how it's related to the military side of all of this, and where you believe it's going?

#Daniel Davis

Well, look, I don't put any stock in that conversation that's happening, because President Trump put his whole credibility on the line, what, a little over a week ago, with the Truth Social that said he had a deal with Zelensky, with Putin, that they had both agreed not to hit each other's energy structures, right? That's what he said, past tense. He said it's done. They both agree to it. Hours later, Zelensky said, "We'll consider your proposal as long as Russia does X, Y, and Z." I mean, all this whole long list of stuff that everybody knows Russia is not going to do. And then three hours after that, Zelensky hits a refinery in Moscow. He hit another one overnight. So he's clearly listening to it. Doesn't matter what President Trump said, whatever Axios is reporting, absolutely. This very night, just hours ago, Ukraine again hit refineries.

And at least I didn't see the type of refinery this time, but this previous one was specifically one that made jet fuel and diesel. So obviously, Zelensky listens to nothing President Trump said. He does whatever he wants to do. And I was—I shouldn't have been shocked, but I was. I was surprised, I'll say that, that President Trump, after having said that he got agreement from Ukraine not to do it and from Russia not to do it, and then Ukraine is the one that struck first. Zelensky claimed that he was replying because Russia didn't keep its end of the bargain, so neither did he. That's not true. It's categorically a lie because I did a show and I did all the timestamps on when President Trump put his Truth Social, when Zelensky made his comment, when Zelensky attacked.

And then when Russia responded to his attack, it came, like, several—like at 5 a.m. the next day or something like that. So it was many hours afterward. They responded to the Ukraine side. So it's just a lot. So Zelensky is literally doing whatever he wants to do. And President Trump is apparently powerless to do anything about it. He can talk a big game. He can put strongly worded notes in Truth Social. It has clearly no effect on the ground on our side anyway. And so—and Zelensky is going to keep doing whatever he wants to. And of course, Europe loves him. And he keeps having all these fawning meetings with now the Carpathian Eight to go along with a lot of other European leaders and the Big Three—UK, Germany, France—that have long been at his side. They'll continue to help him whatever they can, but they're limited.

And so Zelensky's—basically, one of the other reports is that he's basically threatening Trump and says, "I'll stop hitting these diesel situations in Russia as long as I get 300 anti-aircraft missiles, the PAC-3 air defense interceptors." And, of course, I'm thinking, are all of y'all stupid? Because 300 air defense interceptors is meaningless when Russia can swamp them all with all kinds of ballistic missiles, which they're not going to stop anyway, on top of other kinds. See, part of the issue with Russia is, when they have these capable missiles that can defeat the penetration of the air defense missiles, they'll send a whole bunch of dummy, basically just rocket motors with warheads on them, because you can't tell the difference when you're a PAC-3 interceptor.

So you'll send two of those to each of these dummy ones and burn them up, and then here comes the real missiles that you can't stop anyway because now they're traveling much faster, and then they're going to hit the target anyway. So even if you've got what you're asking for, it's not going to make any difference. But we don't have many of them to give, so nobody's going to give them. And

so I doubt that Zelensky is going to do anything that Trump says. I think that probably nothing's going to happen because Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday are these UN General Assembly meeting speeches by the big three leaders. After that, though, I think all kinds of things are possible, both in the Middle East and in Russia, to kick back off.

#Danny

And then, in final minutes, your thoughts on the state of the Ukraine conflict, given that the Trump administration has seemed to have a difficult time not only dealing with it, but really even just placing focus on it in any significant way. It seems like it's gone out of their direct control, and that they're kind of okay with how things are going, even if it doesn't look very good. Your thoughts on this?

#Daniel Davis

Yeah, I think that it's just kind of like, yeah, we'll figure that out later. But it's also Jekyll and Hyde and just craziness on the administration side because, I mean, on June 4th, Rubio says, "We picked a side. It's Ukraine's side. We're having sanctions on Russia. We're helping Ukraine. We picked a side. We're not neutral." A month and a half later, we're neutral. We just want the two sides to come together. President Trump just wants the war to come to an end. And then he puts these sanctions on Russia. Then after that, sends Witkoff and Kushner to go talk to Putin. And then we have more sanctions on there. What is the objective here? What are we even trying to do? It depends on what day it is. Or maybe we do nothing. Or we make these strongly worded threats to Zelensky, who ignores them hours later, in your face, and then makes more demands of Trump.

Trump doesn't do anything about it. So I don't know whether it's grotesque incompetence, whether Trump just doesn't know what he's doing and just can't figure anything out, or whether it's intentional and it's like, no, I'm just saying all this stuff publicly. Meanwhile, we just want the war to continue on. As long as it continues, somehow that's good for some of his elite people. I don't know. All those are possible. I don't have that kind of insider information, so I can't really say anything. But what I can tell you authoritatively is that what we're doing will never help Ukraine, that Ukraine can never win the war. Ukraine can't stop Russia from winning the war. Eventually, Ukraine will lose the war. You can perpetuate this for a lot longer, for some period of time longer, and you can get a lot more Ukrainian people killed.

You can get more cities turned into rubble, and you can get more territory lost. That's where they're headed, whether it's something quick, because by this winter it could be just catastrophic. It could be decisive for the Russian side. They could finally break the Ukrainian army down. Or they may not. Maybe they continue on. They continue to put this incredible defense up and continue to make it really slow and expensive on Russia. But the way wars of attrition historically—and I'm talking over

centuries—no matter what the technology is, the side that has the most manpower, the most industrial capacity, the most ammunition is going to win the war, when the two sides have an equal will to fight and will to win. And they do. Ukraine has a very powerful will to fight, but so does Russia.

We like to think they don't, but it is an existential threat to them on their border against the entire Western world aligned together through the proxy system, [unclear] of Ukraine. That's how they view it. Doesn't matter how you view it. Doesn't matter how anybody in Western Europe views it. That's how they view it, and that's animating their actions. So given those equal desires to win and the unequal logistical capability on the Russian side, they will eventually win this, whether quickly, medium term, or long term. I can't say. It's impossible to know because no one knows where the breaking point is. But there will come a time, just enough mass gets thrown onto it, and you just, I mean, math will exert its way at the end.

#Danny

Former Lieutenant Colonel, experienced combat veteran, and current host of Daniel Davis Deep Dive, Daniel Davis, thanks so much for joining me today. I appreciate you giving the time, and I look forward to our next conversation. Thanks so much again. Thanks a lot. Appreciate it. See you next time. See you next time. Bye-bye. All right, everybody, more show to come. I'm going to stay on for another portion here just to give my take on not only what we just heard, but also what's going on. And then I might actually be on a little bit later today, so you might get some added analysis. So this is what I took away from this conversation and what I take away from a lot of conversations of late, actually.

And I think Daniel Davis really hit the hammer on the nail here, where he described a broad outline of essentially the U.S. right now relying on— it is completely dependent right now on hard power to assert its unilateral hegemony, its attempt to maintain that global hegemony everywhere, and to assert its objectives on a country like Iran without any so-called strategic purpose in large part, or strategy in large part, because the United States has only hard power left at its disposal. And what do I mean by this? Well, I've been looking at, for example— and I think this is why I'm going to write about this too— the CIA and the Pentagon are both in very big trouble. You know, I was reading Psychological Operations and Guerrilla Warfare. This was a document created in the 1980s.

I believe it was 1983, maybe released in '84. But this document was a key pillar of U.S. foreign policy at the time. It was a guide manual meant for the Contras in Nicaragua, and they ended up fighting in many other places. But these armed insurgents that the U.S. backed, armed, and funded— this was essentially a manual for them on how to achieve political ends in an expansive way that didn't include military operations. So what I mean by that is that the United States, the CIA, was attempting to guide these forces. It was attempting to guide these forces in a way where they could wrestle control over Nicaragua and defeat what they believed to be the evil Sandinista regime, which was essentially an independent government that came to power and defeated the Somoza-backed dictatorship there.

And this was all about, how do we get the Contras to become a political force that is viable? And it had all kinds of advice to these forces, all kinds of advice. I'll just read some quotes here. For example, manufacturing martyrs through staged violence, right? So it says, using the tactics of force of 200, 300 agitators, one can create a demonstration which 10,000 to 20,000 could take part. Demonstrators, uh, lead with demonstrators into clashes with the authorities to provoke riot shootings, which eventually lead to the killing of more persons, and they will be seen as martyrs. And there's also other kinds of advice here to talk about infiltration with the people.

They really were looking at the CIA. They were looking at how to learn from insurgencies against U.S.-backed dictatorships, like what happened in Nicaragua, but also in places like Cuba, across Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Third World, as they call it. They were looking at these national liberation movements and saying, what can we learn from them? One of the biggest points in this document was that these Contra forces need to put down their arms and work with the people, build relationships with them, and build some kind of legitimacy, so they aren't just seen as violent actors and they can begin to be convinced of their cause. This is what the United States is missing right now, almost entirely across the board.

They are missing these kinds of forces because they are completely U.S. military. The U.S. hegemonic power structure, Washington, and the elites that control it are dependent right now on hard power to assert their global objectives. Just look at Iran. They have nothing of this sort in Iran. Iran just amassed 400,000 of its military, which is essentially its entire military, to be ready for ground operations. And they are likely calculating, the Iranians, that the United States is going to try to use some kind of proxy force.

But it hasn't come to fruition because Iran has been striking Erbil, for example, in Iraq over and over and over again since the war began, all the way up until a few days ago, to diminish the U.S.'s proxy forces. They defeated those proxy forces in a big way, too, before February 28th, if you remember. From the fall of 2025 into the early 2026 period, there were massacres committed by U.S.- and Israeli-backed proxies, and Iran eventually brought them down. This is what the United States doesn't have anymore. They don't have a Contra force that they can use against Iran that is significant enough to shift the landscape.

They don't have people on the inside, this so-called soft power that can convince Iranians that they need to turn their ire against the Iranian government. It's the exact opposite. The same goes for Ansar Allah. Look at what just happened to the Saudi-backed proxies, which are really U.S.-backed proxies against Ansar Allah. They are finished. They're over. Look at what's happening to the proxies that took power in Syria, al-Qaeda. They are now in big trouble. There's massive protests all across the country. Their legitimacy has essentially diminished, if they really even had it. In my opinion, I think a lot of the Syrian downfall was an internal government collapse that, yes, did have a people component to it.

But it's hard to say whether the people actually support al-Qaeda or whether they had lost support for their military and their leadership, given that the leadership and their military had a lot of internal problems born from sanctions, but also probably some internal machinations too, that infiltration from, you know, all of these forces, basically the entirety of the U.S. imperial apparatus and its intelligence arms and wings, going from Saudi, Israel, you know, all of them were attacking Syria for years, since 2011. So nevertheless, all across the board, China, Russia, forget about it. Russia just had a parliamentary election, and Vladimir Putin's political party, United Russia, swept it. They have 56-plus percent of the parliament now. That's game over for any kind of opposition.

In the CIA, U.S. intel, they don't have a force inside of Russia that can bring down the government. They thought Ukraine was going to be able to do that by creating a kind of civil war with national, I guess you could say, nation-state characteristics, right? Because Russia views the Ukraine conflict in many ways as a war against brothers. And of course, Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, a lot of Russian speakers, et cetera. So they created a civil war, quote-unquote, inside of Ukraine, genocide against Russian speakers. They thought that dynamic and the economic consequences of sanctions together would lead to the downfall of Russia. Well, look, the United Russia Party under Vladimir Putin is now stronger in 2026. This is just demonstrating—and China, forget about it. There's no force in China.

No, I've been there half a dozen times. I know people there. No force in China. It's not like there isn't any kind of opposition thinking. There's plenty of liberal-minded people, people who love America. There's some of that, but they have diminished too, just in terms of their individual influence in the universities and other areas because, well, what does a lot of Chinese people say, or at least some Chinese people say? Well, Trump is making China great again. Trump has actually, in both of his terms, brought Chinese people together to defend their country's sovereignty because there's been such direct hostility against China.

So a lot of backfiring happened, but I think what I wanted to end here with and to bring to you is that what often isn't talked about now is what has been a pillar of the United States' power structure: its ability to wield dominance around the world. A big part of this is what Brian Berletic often says is the ability to capture—political capture—the ability to capture other countries' governments, control them indirectly, and to wield its influence without having to invest that much. Well, now we're at a point where this capacity has diminished greatly. It's not completely gone, obviously. The CIA obviously is still operating in many places. There's a lot of governments around the world that basically do the United States' bidding.

Just look at what happened to the Gulf region, the GCC countries. Look what's happening to Saudi Arabia. If that isn't an indication that the United States still has the capacity to wield its power over vassal states, well, I don't know what is. But I think what's more important here is that what is in front of the United States is this rising multipolar world and this shift into a world order that is led by China, Russia, now increasingly Iran, toward a more democratic international system, toward a system that is less reliant on the U.S. dollar, toward integration rather than a zero-sum game,

hegemony, etc. That is in front of the United States empire, and they don't have the forces to arrest it.

They can squeeze Saudi to leave the, for example, mBridge system, the alternative payment system led by China. They can push around India and tell India, well, you need to align with us on matters of Israel and West Asia, etc. But they can't arrest the overall process of even countries that do the bidding of the United States needing to diversify their economic, diplomatic, and otherwise portfolios away from U.S. hegemony. And the U.S. can't stop it because they don't have the soft power forces to undermine Russia, China, and Iran in a way that makes a significant difference on the ground. So this is really a massive crisis of confidence in the U.S. empire right now.

This is in large part because the U.S.'s influence in the world is diminishing. People don't look at the United States like they used to and say, "Maybe I need to get with that." It's harder for U.S. intel and various kinds of covert operation forces, whatever department they are in, to build relationships with the people if the people hate you. And this is what's becoming increasingly a problem for the United States. It's not a problem for us who want peace, who want an end to these wars. But we have to look at why this problem exists, how it exists, how it came to be. Why was it in the 1980s the CIA could write a whole field manual and was investing massive amounts of resources in this kind of kinetic activity?

And now it is focusing far more on how can it use what's left of its military arsenal to essentially bomb countries into submission or to find ways to build up to that point. I covered on this show, we just had a scenario back in March that was just leaked that said the United States was this close to a shooting war with China because of an AI chatbot error that inevitably would have gone nuclear. If the United States intercepted a ship, struck at it, killed Chinese people, sailors on a vessel, what would China have to do? It would have to defend itself. It would not be able to say, well, we can just talk about this now, especially given what that strike would have essentially declared on China, which is war.

So we were very close. And why were we very close? Because the United States wants to contain China, wants to encircle China. It wants to militarily overthrow China, politically overthrow China. But it does not have the military power to do that. But it certainly doesn't have any coercive power to do that. And that coercive power has essentially—that is essentially gone, right, in terms of its capacity to do that against countries, targets that it has in its sights. Again, as I said, it doesn't mean it's entirely gone in what exists already, its foothold on countries like Saudi Arabia. But its ability to expand that into parts of the world that are at the top of its list of targets? No, it doesn't have it. It doesn't have it to the same degree.

It's struggling with much smaller cases like Cuba, which— and all that's the purpose is Cuba should have fallen a long time ago if it had a much stronger internal presence that could push Cuban people to essentially say, "Well, we submit because we are willing to cozy up to U.S.-backed forces that will at least bring stability," right? A la Syria. The same goes for Nicaragua even today. This field manual

was written in the 1980s. They succeeded in overthrowing the Sandinista government in an election process in the early 1990s—1990, I think it was. But then they failed again in 2006, and now we have a Sandinista government again. And they tried a coup attempt. So do you see what I'm saying? They tried a coup attempt in 2018. It was very violent. Now look where we are. We don't hear much about it because they don't have the influence that they once did.

So that's the conclusion I want to come to you with. I may see you again very soon as well. Go to the video description. You can check out Daniel Davis' YouTube channel if you're not already subscribed to it, Deep Dive with Daniel Davis. Also in the video description below, all the places to support this show: Patreon, Substack, and much more. Please do hit the like button. That's a free way to boost the show on YouTube's algorithm after we are done here. Until next time—for certain, tomorrow I have Colonel Anthony Aguilar for the first time at 2 p.m. Eastern Time tomorrow, the 22nd. But be on the lookout for a potential report on other developments I wasn't able to cover here today in a bit. All right, so until next time, everybody, hit that like button, and I'll see you again soon.