

Trump to NUKE Pickaxe!? Iran War Just Got DEADLIER | McGovern & Nixon

Former CIA analyst Ray McGovern and geopolitical commentator Garland Nixon join to react to Trump's hints at striking Pickaxe mountain and the signs that the Iran war is set to escalate big. Subscribe to Garland's show: https://www.youtube.com/@UCkt_q2060zoY6u7_3OwdIWA Ray McGovern on X: <https://x.com/raymcgovern> 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 #nuclearwar #trump

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. It's Danny Haiphong here. As you can see, I'm joined by geopolitical commentator, analyst Garland Nixon and former CIA analyst and geopolitical commentator Ray McGovern. Gentlemen, we are going to begin today with the really disturbing remarks made at the United Nations by Donald Trump. This was one of them in which, in front of the GCC countries, he referred to Pickaxe Mountain as something he's going to have to strike soon. Here's what he said.

#Donald Trump

than at any point by far since the conflict began. And again, a big portion of what we've done, maybe 99% of it, is to make sure that Iran doesn't have a nuclear weapon. Those sites have been blown up. We may have to blow up another one, Pickaxe Mountain. We're not seeing a lot of activity there, but if we do, we'll blow it up immediately.

#Danny

So he said he's going to blow up Pickaxe Mountain immediately. These have been serious moves, or serious threats, because the Pentagon just a couple of weeks ago was reported that the Pentagon has been preparing a live-fire test of a classified weapon designed to hit Iran's Pickaxe Mountain nuclear site since the day before the war started, signing a \$1.2 million contract on February 27th of this year, the day before the war started, in order to begin testing.

That process, that classified weapon, has led many to be concerned about the possibility of the next escalation, which Iran has warned may indeed be coming from the United States, to go nuclear in some sense, especially given the fortification of Pickaxe Mountain, just as a geographic and natural entity. Ray, what did you make of this and the overall context that comes in with the war? You know, this war could get even deadlier should this occur. What's your thoughts on it and your analysis of the overall situation? Oh, sorry about that. You're muted. Please restart. That was me.

#Ray McGovern

You're good. I can't see. You're okay.

#Danny

You're okay. Ray, you can go.

#Ray McGovern

I'm okay now? Yeah. Danny, I'm gonna try to be dispassionate here. It makes me angry. Where does Trump get his information about Pickaxe Mountain? It's from Netanyahu. It's from the same guys that trapped him into this war. There's no real evidence that anything's hidden under that mountain or that something could be demolished if we had a new weapon to do that. And everyone admits, and of course, Pezeshkian said that just hours ago, Iran does not want a nuclear weapon. Iran has not been working on a nuclear weapon. Iran stopped working on a nuclear weapon at the end of 2003 and has not resumed work on a nuclear weapon. And that, to my pride, is what the intelligence community says.

And an honorable way of sticking to the truth has been asserting since 2007, every year until this last year, when Tulsi Gabbard couldn't bring herself to say that again, hoping to stay on, but she got canned anyway. She kind of didn't mention it in the annual threat assessment. But there it is. It's a straw man. It's a red herring. Iran does not work on a nuclear weapon. And everyone who says, "Well, maybe they will now." Okay, they'll have to reverse their religious fatwa, an edict against it. And, you know, in my view, we already have a nuclear weapon of a sort, which is the Strait of Hormuz and now the Bab al-Mandab Strait. Why would they want to excite people by making a nuclear weapon out? So this whole business, which Trump reiterates every time again: it must not have a nuclear weapon.

It hasn't ever had a nuclear weapon. If it worked on a nuclear weapon, it stopped in 2003. Let me just share one major gripe I have. When that 2007 National Intelligence Estimate was written, and the principal judgment, unanimous, expressed with high confidence that Iran stopped working on a nuclear weapon at the end of 2003 and had not resumed work on it, reiterated every year since except this past year—this year—what happened? Well, that happened because an honest manager

of intelligence came in from the State Department to manage a truthful estimate throughout all the Israeli propaganda that those cowards in the analytic division couldn't dismiss because it was Israeli. I mean, how can you just get demoted, okay?

So that was an honest estimate. I have asked him to tell his story, tell how that happened, tell how he was requested to do this by Congress because Congress saw that Bush and Cheney were about to start a war on whom? On Iran, okay? So that's an incredible story. I've asked him, come to the National Press Club, for God's sake, tell exactly what happened. Bring the analysts that worked with you and tell them there's no evidence of this. This is a straw man. And he won't do it. And that pains me because he got a prestigious job at a prestigious university and wants to be able to have prestigious lunches with other prestigious people at that university. Makes me a little sick because he could make a difference.

#Danny

Yeah. Garland, your reactions to the threats against Iran regarding, uh, Pickaxe Mountain, you know, at rank seven on the Mohs scale. And they said that not even a nuclear explosion could actually reach whatever they say the United States says is beneath it. Uh, your thoughts on this and the dangers of a potential nuclear war here.

#Garland Nixon

A couple of things. Number one, and I'll say this: let's—we can't get over, um, and we can't get too much—just look at the absurd and deranged comments of Donald Trump and think that he is some kind of an outlier, that this is not what—that we just have a madman in charge right now, and that's why we have this. Let me read you something. Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged President Trump to, quote, “Take care of Iran for good,” praising the bold military action, Operation Epic Fury. “If you can render Iran essentially incapable of military action against us and our allies, that's worthy.”

And I think what they're trying to do is to neuter Iran as a military power in the region. The only thing that she did was she made a more intellectual argument for the same thing: take care of Iran for good. What's the difference in saying annihilate Iran and take care of Iran for good? Neuter them in the military. Well, right now, clearly, the United States does not have the conventional military capacity to do that. So one would look at Condoleezza Rice and her record and who she worked for and with and assume that she's saying the same thing as Donald Trump, which is what makes this dangerous. And let me add this: if I am the Russians right now, right?

And I say, you know, these Baltic states now are literally passing laws to change the prohibitions against having nuclear weapons on their territory. So I could have a country one mile from my border with a bunch of nuclear weapons. If I'm the Chinese and I'm saying the United States says they're planning to come get me, and I see them throwing nuclear weapons—these other countries

may suddenly, as in North Korea, they may suddenly say, you know what? There's no way out of this. They're coming at us with nukes. And so we better launch a preemptive nuclear strike and wipe them out. That's the part of the discussion about using nuclear weapons on Iran that does not take into account there's some other big uglies out here with nuclear weapons.

And they may look at this and say, well, since it's inevitable that we're going to use them, what if, you know, it's like martial arts. One of the schools of martial arts argues that if you know you can't afford to fight, you better hit the other guy first. And if it's nuclear weapons, it's easy to understand why somebody could come to that conclusion. So we're not just talking about throwing a nuke at Parchin Mountain in the middle of somewhere. We're talking about a bunch of other people with nuclear weapons that, once they see you use that and know that you see them through an adversarial context, may decide it's time to act before their number comes up.

#Danny

Yeah, and I wanted to follow up with that to you, Ray. You know, Masoud Pezeshkian, the president of Iran, he gave a speech at the United Nations Security Council today where he particularly cited the double standard with regard to Israel. He criticized the international nuclear inspections of Iran and accused Israel of possessing nuclear weapons while facing no comparable scrutiny. Israel has bombs and weapons of mass destruction and is not a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and accused, of course, Israel of the genocide in Gaza. But your thoughts on this? You know, it is true. Israel does not get scrutiny for what many believe are at least 200-plus nuclear warheads in its arsenal. And yet here we are with Donald Trump possibly threatening, through veiled threats, a strike that would have to be nuclear if it were to do any damage at all to this particular part of Iran. Your thoughts, Ray?

#Ray McGovern

Well, Danny and Garland, comparisons are invidious. But I watched the second speaker yesterday, and I watched Pezeshkian just three hours ago. What we have is a contrast that is very invidious because it shows Trump acting as, if not a king, then God himself. I mean, he's going to send them all to hell. He's going to demolish, annihilate this country. And people sit there and listen to this stuff, okay? Then this young man comes on and he says, you know, this is really weird. Oh, you know, I should mention at the very outset, he shows photos, okay? He shows photos of many dead little girls between the ages of five and 12. Now, he made the point that, you know, there is a golden rule.

You should do unto others as you want others to treat you. That comes out of a long tradition, actually a Hebrew, Christian, and Muslim tradition. It's in the Sermon on the Mount. It's all over the place. If you want to be treated equally and without vengeance, you treat people as you would like to be treated. And here you have a king, or someone who's pretending to be a king, who was the second speaker yesterday, hurling down violence, and, you know, just reminded me of the tradition

of which I'm part, the Abrahamic tradition, which is both Hebrew, Christian, and Islam, where kings are not really good folks. And from the Christian Gospels, you get this: oh, Caesar's going to get Jesus on something.

He says, oh, they say you're a king, right? Now, I want to address a real misconception here. Jesus says, yeah, in the translation, yeah, I'm a king, but it's not of this world. World is a lousy translation. The word in Greek is cosmos, okay? Cosmology, cosmetics. It's the way you arrange things, okay? So my kingdom, if you want to call it kingdom, is not the kingdom that you have arranged, where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, okay? So my kingdom is not of this cosmos. That's very different. And you have the golden rule applied not only between people, but between nations in a strategic sense, unless there is some respect given to this golden rule in international relationships, let's say between Russia and the United States.

That had been the case decades ago. Well, we're headed in a very dangerous direction. And meanwhile, we have the apostle Peter Hegseth quoting Jesus to justify unjustifiable things. If he had a little bracelet on that said, "What would Jesus do?" he would have to keep that way under his fancy, what do you call it, shirt, and actually leave his flag up there to remind everybody that we are a king, we have a king, and we're going to smite those people who don't obey us. As Pezeshkian explained, in a pretty mild but eloquent way, the contrast was invidious par excellence.

#Danny

Well, Garland, Pezeshkian was very defiant and said that Iran won't bend the knee. And then right after this, Mohsen Rezaei, the head of the National Security Council in Iran, said that the time for negotiations is over. It's time for action. Unless the U.S. meets Iran's demands, the Strait of Hormuz will remain closed indefinitely, and no further talks will take place. So we're also in a position where Iran, of course, is not backing down. But what does that lead to then, given that the United States has also not yet shown that it's going to back down from moving up, I guess, what we call an escalation ladder? But there's not really much room left in this escalation ladder for the U.S. Your thoughts?

#Garland Nixon

Well, what we're seeing is various economic actions. We're seeing non-kinetic actions. I think the United States understands that it doesn't have a kinetic road to victory here. It doesn't have something it can do, something it can shoot at, something different. I think it also understands that, to some extent, okay, let's just say for the sake of argument, they threw a nuclear weapon, that at that point, it's not like, okay, the Iranians, you win. At that point, the Iranians are likely going to retaliate. Who knows what's going to happen to Israel's—likely their nuclear power plant is going to get blown to smithereens, and then you're going to have—it's going to—things are going to be considerably worse if they do it.

So I think they understand the dangers there. And I think what we'll, for now, what we will continue to see is economic escalations and rhetorical escalations. I think after the midterms is when we'll start to see some other things happen. But I do think the other part of it is this: these things aren't happening in a vacuum. And the economic ramifications of the decisions, the foreign policy decisions, are going to manifest themselves between now and the midterms. And I think some of the things that will happen are going to force the political class to reconcile their reticence to do anything about U.S. economic damages because the people are going to start to get unruly here within the next month or so.

#Danny

Yeah, I mean, there's even talk, Ray, of a diesel export suspension. It's getting quite desperate. But your thoughts on this larger context? You know, Pezeshkian also said, "We can either be insecure together, or we can be secure together," when referring to the U.S. and the world. Your reactions to all of this?

#Ray McGovern

Well, let me refer back to a word you used: defiant. Iran is defiant. That was the headline, the AP headline. I wrote it down here: "In defiant speech at the UN," so-and-so, blah, blah, blah. Well, yeah, it was defiant. I mean, what would you expect after the previous fellow the day before said he would maybe exterminate the whole lot of them? This business about defiance, I prefer to focus on what Pezeshkian focused on, and that was, "We will resist." We will resist the kind of pressure that is being put upon us. And not only will we resist for ourselves, but our resistance applies to other people upon whom this kind of pressure is being put.

And he mentions Gaza. And he mentions Palestine. And he mentions Lebanon. And he says, look, this is all one arc of resistance. This all has to do with occupation. It happened in 1967. Do the math. Now we're strong enough to resist. And that's what this is. It's not so much defiance. It's resistance. Now, what will happen? Well, Trump has very few cards. Netanyahu has more cards, it would surprise you to say. Trump is not going to launch nuclear weapons on Iran. I believe what Larry Wilkerson, my good friend, said, that even if Hegseth ordered these professional military to launch a nuclear strike, they would more likely than not resist. Same word, okay?

Who's going to launch nuclear weapons? Now, if you look at Netanyahu, if you look at the fact that he has blackmail material on Trump—Epstein—if you look at the fact that he does genocide and the White House supplies with which he will do that, if you look at forced starvation, if you look at this assassination of foreign leaders willy-nilly, you tell me that, in extremis, Netanyahu will not use the nuclear weapons that he has. I think chances are far better than even that he would. Now, would he tell the United States? Probably not. The Israelis are really accustomed to asking for forgiveness after the fact rather than permission before they do these things.

So that's the real danger on the nuclear side, as I see it. And that's a real tough one. And that's why I hope that the Iranians, even though they have a new preemptive approach here—they're going to strike first in many respects—that they won't put Netanyahu in extremis to the point where he has no other, in his mind, no other choice than to do what I fear he might do. And again, I think the odds are better than even guessing he would do so if he found no other way out for him, for his election coming up or for whatever. So that's what bothers me. That's what keeps me up at night. Netanyahu cannot be predicted to avoid doing the worst.

#Danny

Yeah, Garland.

#Garland Nixon

Oh, yeah, absolutely. I think that much more so than the U.S. And I mean, the U.S. is certainly, you know, a wild card enough, certainly. And, you know, we're very concerned. And as I said, I brought into the conversation what Condoleezza Rice said, just so we'll know there's no shortage of lunatic neocons out here who are of an extreme nature when it comes to violence. The Israelis at this point have shown that there—there's a level of barbarism, barbarism that is, you know, almost unimaginable to most countries in the world. So yes, I agree with Ray that Israel has already demonstrated—I mean, if you think about it—what they've done in murdering men, women, and children and openly, defiantly saying to the world, "Yes, we kill men, women. Who cares?"

We don't care what you think. We are your superiors, and you're just cattle as far as we're concerned. So in their statements and their actions, they've shown a reckless disregard for human life. And I think our concern, A, is them. And of course, the other thing that Ray brings up is this, and that is this: what appears to be a control and capture of U.S. foreign policy by Netanyahu and his ilk, the Zionist billionaires, and how far that goes. Can that level of capture get to—is that level of capture to a depth wherein that they can tell the United States, "We want you to use nuclear weapons," or something of that nature, and they'll do it? Well, right now, we don't even know the answer to that.

#Danny

Yeah, well, I was going to then ask: how much of this then is some kind of plausible deniability for the United States? Because, you know, Garland, you mentioned earlier the possibility that is, I think, a very realistic possibility, of using some kind of nuclear—or what they're calling at the Pentagon is a classified weapon—on this Pickaxe Mountain. But how much of this then would be plausible deniability if it does lead to a regional situation, which it could escalate very quickly into, a regional situation where Israel says, "Oh, well, we have the Samson option, and now we're under conditions, as you said, right, to use it." It's a very slippery slope, and I actually don't believe we're that far from that. We're not there at this moment. A lot of this is just remarks, but given that we are in an act of

war and that the United States is basically in a corner and not negotiating, not backing down, it does raise some questions. Ray, well, you have Witkoff and Kushner.

#Ray McGovern

Our aces in the hole are Mutt and Jeff. Now, the president said today that they were on the sidelines talking to some intermediaries who then were talking to the Iranians on the sidelines at the UN. Three hours it took. And so, you know, look, Trump is in a real dilemma. He's got the midterms coming up. He's got to get that straightened out. The Iranians have said, okay, seven conditions. Well, three right now: give us our money back, ceasefire, and, you know, lift the blockade. Those are the three. So, and Pezeshkian today said that, you know, look, they're always open to negotiations. So what I hope is that the Chinese and the Russians are advising the Iranians, look, we're behind you, but, okay, but please don't force these guys into extremism.

Don't force these guys so that they can't do anything other than use a nuclear weapon. Lead them along. They can't do much more damage to you than they've already done. Why? Because they don't want to? No, because they are running out of ammunition. It's a little embarrassing to be running out of ammunition, but it's a fact. And you can kick out as many journalists as you like who say that the fact remains the fact. If you compare the Russian offensive in Ukraine, when they ran out of people—I mean, soldiers—and ammunition, they stopped. And they got their factories humming. And they got missiles galore and drones and everything else. And they got 300,000. And then they started again.

Again, comparisons are invidious. But my God, we go after them, do these things, and our military say, "Yes, sir." And they don't say, "Well, wait a second. Let's count what the British call our inventories." Inventories are invented to exceed what they actually are, I suppose. So, my God, the whole world is looking at this. The danger is you've got a person who's not mentally stable, not physically stable anymore. I mean, if you look at it in a broad sense, that's 80% of the problem right now. That's why everybody has to be really, really careful. Look at what some of those psychiatrists have been watching Trump for years now, what they've been saying.

What's her name? Randi, I think, Dr. Randi. She's got a book out on this. You can't really contend with what might happen, so that's what bothers me. You do this in a measured way, but since you're winning, and since we're—that is, the United States, Israel—are running out of ammunition, and since Israel realizes that it can be decimated, if not obliterated, okay, well then let's not push it too far. And I think that that's the kind of advice that Putin and Xi are giving to the Iranians: we'll support you, but for God's sake, don't set this guy off. He's unpredictable. Hear that? We can't predict what he's going to do, because he's unpredictable. That is really fearsome.

#Danny

Yeah, Garland, you may remember during the 2024 elections, when Putin was asked, "Who would you rather have in office, Democrats or Republicans, or the Democratic candidate, Harris or Trump?" He said, "Probably the Democrats, because they're more predictable." And now we are where we are. What do you make of these reports? Israeli media now is saying this about the negotiations that supposedly happened at the United Nations General Assembly in the background. We now have more information about this. According to Channel 12 of Israel, the U.S. delegation rejected Iran's offer to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, telling Iran that it does not control the waterway and questioning its standing to make such an offer.

And the Iranian delegation gave the U.S. one week to meet its publicly stated demands, which include the immediate lifting of the blockade, the prompt payment of all assets, and an end to the war against the Axis of Resistance on all fronts. So what do you make of this kind of report? We hear so often Israeli media, then Barak Ravid of Axios, which is basically Israeli media, all kinds of reports coming out on the inside of what happens with the Trump administration regarding Iran. Do you believe any of this?

#Garland Nixon

No, that definitely sounds like something that you'd read in Israeli media. They said, "No, you have no authority. We want, you know, this solid position. We are in charge. We're the empire." And that's what you would see in the media, because anything else would be an acknowledgement that Iran has some level of power here, that Iran is a powerful actor in the context of this discussion. I do—I tell you what comes to mind with me. About a week or so ago, you know, if I'm not mistaken, I think in the next couple of days we're going to see President Xi in the United States. And about a week ago, I don't know if it was announced or unannounced.

I didn't see that it was announced, but I noticed what might have been within the last several days a picture of an Iranian airplane landing in Beijing. And we were told that the Iranian—one of the, I don't know if it was Araqchi or someone—was meeting with President Xi. Now, this is a very, very high-level meeting. And now, with a week maybe, or even days later, President Xi is here. So I would be more inclined to think that the Iranian president is going to meet with the president of China, who has considerable sway over the United States. They can cut off some things that the United States just can't get anywhere else.

That could be something that I would look at. You know, oftentimes these deals, the stuff that you see on the surface, be it at, you know, some G7 or G20 meeting or at some UN meeting, you know, those things are—you know, look like something's happening on the sidelines. But I think that person, or whoever the Iranian—I don't know if it was, like I said, I think it was Araqchi—going to Beijing within days before President Xi comes to the United States may be much more consequential. I don't know. I wonder what Ray would think about that.

#Ray McGovern

I think you're right, Danny Haiphong. She has all the high cards here: rare earth minerals, the whole shebang. There's no possibility that the U.S. could contend with a kind of embargo around the Strait of Taiwan and the island itself. So one of the things up for grabs is this: I think there's about \$24 billion worth of arms aid that has been legislated for giving to Taiwan that has not been approved by the president yet, as far as I can remember. So let's see what happens on that. But, I mean, if it's not clear now that Trump has bit off more than he can chew—well, it is clear now, okay? And many of the weapons that we had in Japan and South Korea, where are they? Well, they're either in the Persian Gulf area or they're on the bottom of the Persian Gulf, okay?

I mean, talk about the Iranian Navy being completely destroyed. Well, no, really, I don't know. Some ships or boats seem to have survived. So it's pretty complex, but it's a good thing that Xi is here. It's good that he didn't cancel out, and he's got such strong cards to play that he can just kind of, inscrutable as his face usually is—you can never tell when he's smiling, or, you know, inscrutable as he is—he can make it very clear to Trump, if Trump is in sound mind, look, it's best to knock it off on Iran. We depend on Iran. We'd like to have those straits opened. We'd like to have that petroleum and other products. For now, we're fine with getting what we need from Russia.

But, you know, we'd like those things open, and we depend on them. So all I'm saying here is that the impact of these things seems to be going against Trump, whether he's smart enough to listen, whether his Secretary of the Treasury, for God's sake, who's smarter than, by all indications, he seems to be. It's just really terrible because all my information is that those honest analysts in the intelligence community, as remain, are not getting any word through. And John Ratcliffe himself is one of these neocons, so... It's a really terrible situation if the president can't really break out of this captive group that he's got around him and is left to his own devices together with that woman who does all his other work.

#Danny

Garland, sorry about that. So I want to bring this back up. So when Donald Trump made those remarks about Pickaxe Mountain—sorry about that—he was around the GCC. And then you have al-Julani of Syria, Qatari, the Turkish, the Jordanian leaders sitting around him, where he's literally threatening what could be, as you said—and I believe you, and I agree with you—which could be a nuclear escalation, which would devastate the entire region more so than has already occurred. Then you have the President of Iran making remarks like this to the Gulf states.

Either we live in security and harmony together, or we will make sure that you and us experience insecurity together. I mean, that's... those are, you know, it's like on the one hand, the Gulf states have been so conciliatory to the United States and have allowed their countries to be used, their territories, for war in Iran. And then you have Iran saying, well, this could be fixed pretty easily if you would just work together around ending this madness. But what's your reaction to this contrast?

#Garland Nixon

Well, you know, one of the things that I think is inevitable here, if we continue in the direction that we're going, is that the Sykes-Picot borders are going to be redrawn, I think. And I think the Gulf states are looking at the situation they're in right now. And I have heard from various sources, my sources, that they want out, that they're very unhappy, but they're in a very precarious position. And they're as afraid that at this point, they're more afraid of being unseated by U.S. imperialism—that they will cross the Trump people and cross the U.S., and then, you know, they will be replaced violently, not by the Iranians. Because, you know, such as Bahrain, many of them are minority-rule governments, et cetera.

Their grip on power is tenuous, and, you know, that was tenuous before this war even started. The power was held on by the United States. So they find themselves between the devil and the deep blue sea there. Their economic power is deteriorating. They don't know how they're going to hold their country together, but they have a Faustian deal with the U.S. empire, wherein now they're afraid: if I go against the empire and say, okay, we're going to make a deal with Iran, and the empire comes and rubs me out, replaces me. So they have, you know, the Faustian bargain that was made by these various families who were put in place by the U.S., et cetera, is coming back to haunt them, and they don't really have a way out.

So they're sitting there looking at this, saying, any way you look at it, we lose. How do we get out of this with our hides? I don't know if there's a way, ultimately. And again, you know, for Trump, when people say, okay, the U.S., what do they do? I look at the analogy of a person who jumps off a building and halfway down, they say, geez, you know, that was a bad move. Maybe I should find a way to mitigate this. You know, gravity is unforgiving. You're halfway down. You made a decision, and, you know, reality is going to assert itself. And that's where Trump is. There's no way back for the empire. My position from the very beginning was, if the U.S. attacks Iran, number one, they will lose.

Number two, that's it for the empire, because to get out of this, if you think about it, the empire has to acknowledge that it's not the hegemon. The empire has to say, "Uncle, okay, we'll give you what you want," which means you're no longer the empire. How do you then say we're going to go control China and Russia and everybody else when Iran has just twisted your arm until tears came to your eyes? So there's just no way out of this for the empire. And will they use violence and turn over the chessboard is the only question. But there's no way they can get out of this because they do not have the kinetic power to force Iran to do anything at this point. And Iran won't do anything.

#Ray McGovern

They don't have the kinetic power because, well, because they don't have the weapons, right? I mean, hello. In a way, it's laughable. But I have a little benign view on what Pezeshkian said. I took

some notes here. He says, look, we're not going to be obedient to bullies, okay? No matter what, we're not going to bend the knee, okay? Then he says, we have to do this together. The only security that can be obtained here in this area is security together, okay? It's got to be fair and just, with dignity for all humans in the area. No outside power should exert undue influence in this particular region. We're appealing for justice with dignity.

We'll have resonance with these altruistic concepts. Usually don't come into play. That's another matter. But they're on their back. Look, the Saudis, they got four no's: two no's from Trump, a no from Turkey, a no from Pakistan. They're alone now. Where are they going to go? So it seems to me that when the Saudi example is realized or is appreciated by the rest of the Gulfies, they'll say, well... Okay, we thought the U.S. could protect us. Now, even worse for us, they'll probably put in a new regime if we don't make our peace with Iran right quick. So I see that happening. Not right quick, but as things evolve and as the U.S. realizes.

It's got no real options other than to meet these three key principles that I mentioned before and that you showed in that little graphic. It should be possible for even people like Witkoff, even people like Kushner, if they talk for three hours through intermediaries, they should get the right picture. And if they give that to Trump and he's got any sense at all—that's the rub—if he's got any sense at all, this thing can be accommodated. It's just that we lose our presence in the Gulf, and the emperor is shown to have no clothes. Only problem there, I'll say just once again, we have an emperor who is not sound in mind or in body.

#Danny

Yeah, and I think what's so astounding about part of this conversation, Garland, is that in some ways we're talking about Iran and then, of course, China and Russia as well. It's almost mitigating and managing the unhinged character and the crises of the U.S. empire and the elites that rule. I mean, that's almost an astounding historic kind of position to be in, because what we're talking about is the United States leadership not having the capacity to do otherwise, not having the capacity to do it itself, which, of course, is frightening for humanity. But your thoughts on this?

#Garland Nixon

You know, like three or four years ago, I did a video, and the name of the video was, "Will Putin and Xi Save the World?" And at that point, the point that I made was exactly what you're getting at. And I said, you know, in a nutshell, the U.S. empire—a nuclear empire—empires have fallen before, but you have a nuclear empire that is falling now. Obviously, we have an economic system that doesn't work. And of course, the neocons have ascended to power, and we know who they are, what they are, and what they do. And so my position was that the empire doesn't have the capacity to manage its decline anymore. And collapse—it could be decline, but it's looking more like collapse now, internally. You cannot have, you know, these people who are, you know, mentally unbalanced—I mean, you know, effectively mentally unbalanced—who got us into this jam.

They won't be able to get it out. So the question is, how do the other powers in the world manage it? And can they manage this? And again, I get back to the meetings between Putin and Xi, the meeting recently between, I think it's Araghchi and Xi, that these other powers are working together, and they are working to manage this. I think they are very—when you listen, you know, look at the Wang Yis and you look at the Sergei Lavrovs and the Araghchis—you see very, very wise diplomats. And I think they understand what they're up against. And I think that what we're looking at is not, how does Iran do this? And what is Iran going to do? And will Iran make a mistake? Certainly, Iran is an independent actor with agency, and they have their culture and their history and their pride.

And they'll stand for what they believe in because of their religious foundation, the religious foundational nature of their government. But I do think there is a coordinated effort going on, and I do believe that messages will come from President Xi. I do believe that his meeting here will not just be about rare earth minerals and the Straits of Taiwan, that there will be discussions passed on that we may not be aware of that have been contemplated by China. The big three now, which would be Putin, Xi, and, of course, whoever the leader of, you know, be it the religious leader, commander, overall commander, or, you know, whoever he designates in Iran to represent him. So I think this is not—there's serious coordination going on here.

#Ray McGovern

I agree. If I could just add a thought here, you mentioned Lavrov. Of course, he's at the UN. Whom did he meet with today? The Cubans. Okay. TASS announcement: Lavrov met with their Cuban opposite numbers, and he pledged to support Cuba through thick and thin. They have a longstanding relationship. Three paragraphs all asserting that Cuba is different, that they still are under a kind of protectorate from the old Soviet Union, now Russia, and that Russia is going to support them. Now, does that mean if Rubio sends troops into Cuba that Russia will send the Navy down? I don't think so. But I think there's a lot short of that that Lavrov and the others can do to warn: look, we had a deal back in '62 that you weren't going to invade Cuba, okay?

And for that deal, we withdrew our missiles out of Cuba. And of course, we had that side arrangement in Turkey where you would pull out your missiles. That still is unexpired, okay? So I think that the Russians feel strongly about Cuba. They've already given them some oil exports, but not enough to help them really. So even in our own backyards, and of course in Taiwan as well, the Chinese have the predominant influence out there. The Russians might reassert them in the Caribbean in a way that should worry military planners because, I don't know, do we have enough ammunition to do what Rubio intends to do in Cuba? If he does invade, he's going to encounter quite a different set of circumstances than the situation in Venezuela in January.

#Danny

Yeah, that's for sure. And Donald Trump made reference to Cuba in his General Assembly speech, saying that they are planning, the United States, a significant change there. So we have to be on the lookout. But, uh, Garland, any follow-up?

#Garland Nixon

Well, yeah, there's a lot going on right now. In fact, Lavrov said today that Russia—you know, the Ukrainians are saying they want some kind of a, you know, a ceasefire. Why they can— they're doing that again. And certainly they're in a very difficult situation. And the Russians came out and said that they do not intend to pause the special military operation for talks under any circumstances, in any format whatsoever. So there's certainly things going on now. The Americans have refused to join the anti-Russian statement on Ukraine at the UN. I mean, there's things going on. There's talks going on. But I think there's a lot. I put it like this: I think President Xi is going to come in and make an offer to Trump to try to bail him out.

I think they've said, look, you know, it's—I mean, let's face it. President Putin did that with Obama in the past. And I think bailing him out doesn't mean we're going to do a favor for the Americans or we're going to save the U.S. empire. I think bailing him out means this is a very dangerous situation for everyone and in the best interest of the world, so we don't get in a nuclear war confrontation, we'll try to remediate this situation. So I'm going to be really interested. Let's all keep an eye on this meeting. And I'll put it like this: we're not going to be told about the conversation, but I think maybe within a week after this, we'll hear something relative to the Middle East one way or the other. That's my guess. Something very significant will come out as a result after this meeting.

#Ray McGovern

Yeah, I think that the preliminary indications are that this is delighting Trump, to be hosting Xi. I mean, he loves to be. Maybe he can get some of the cable news coverage, and maybe they'll cover him on this. You know, they'll sort of have to, you know. So what's he going to do? Oh, he's going to go down to the tarmac. He's going to be at the bottom of the steps too. Isn't that nice? They've announced that, okay? So this is what Trump really delights in. It's going to be ostensibly amiable, although I agree with Garland. He will be able to pass along messages from not only Araqchi, the Iranian foreign minister, but from Putin and his son Lavrov. But, you know, this is symptomatic of how the Chinese and the Russians apply this kid-gloves treatment to Trump.

Putin, three days ago now, said, you know, through one of his spokespeople, I think it was Ushakov or maybe Peskov, said, "Please remember that there's going to be this summit in Asia, right in China there, Shanghai, I think. And it's an economic summit. And the U.S. is on the Pacific. So, you know, President Trump will be very welcome to come and to talk with Putin and Xi at this summit. It's on the 18th and 19th of November." So let's keep that in mind. How do I interpret that? The Russians are bending over backwards. They've got the long view of this whole thing. Just keep Trump from doing anything stupid, anything really stupid. Massage him, make him come to these meetings, and

they'll give him a great reception and a lot of stuff. So meanwhile, they're playing the long game, and they know which way the powers are going.

And I'll just refer one more time. I think it's so important. This time last year, September 2nd, I think it was, everybody and his brother who was in any power convened in Beijing. It was Victory Day in Asia, victory over Japan day, right? Okay. Now, Trump wasn't there. None of his lackeys in Western Europe were there. You know, I have this idea of him looking on TV and saying, "Oh my God, why wasn't I included?" And I see his behavior ever since trying to redress this movement of power toward the East. And luckily, Xi and Putin are not rubbing his nose in it. And Putin especially is going out of his way to say, "Look, not only is Xi coming tomorrow, but we can meet again on the 18th of November. So keep your powder dry, and we'll work all this out. For God's sake, don't do anything stupid." That's my reading.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. And, you know, as we get to the final minutes here, gentlemen, there are those who, you know, demand or hope for Iran to actually escalate things. That, you know, some ask, well, if there are all these refueling tankers in Qatar, why would Iran wait for them to be used for some kind of strike? The same goes for the Pickaxe Mountain question and the potential for nuclear escalation there by the United States. So, Garland, how do you answer those who have these concerns? Because they are quite frequent. This war has been going on since February. Now we are close to the seventh month here. Your answer to these concerns?

#Garland Nixon

My answer is that Iran is not an aggressive military power. You know, that is not the nature of the Iranians, to just attack. They will attack if necessary. As an example, the Iranians, you know, there are a lot of U.S. ships, and the Iranians have fired missiles over the ships and around the ships, and drones near the U.S. ships, every now and then hit one. It is pretty clear to many that Iran, if they wanted to, could cause significant damage. And they've said it, but they don't desire to do that. They understand, you know, we've got to hold our powder.

And again, I'm sure there is a discussion between the Russians and the Chinese and the Iranians just how far they should reach, that some of their attacks will be symbolic. Some of their attacks will be a reminder, you know, if we really wanted to, we could sink these ships. So I think Iran is playing a game where they understand that, look, you don't want to run up behind a crazy person and scream, because who knows what they might do. And so I think there is a level of consideration that they have an unhinged leader in an unhinged country. And they're going to demonstrate their capabilities, and they'll use them if necessary, but not arbitrarily and aggressively.

#Ray McGovern

Yeah, right. Yeah, I would say that at the UN yesterday, particularly when I was watching most of it, it was very disturbing that more people didn't get up and walk out, for God's sake. That performance by that second speaker—well, I won't say any more about that—but it was just outrageous. I mean, this is the UN, and thunderbolts are coming. He's going to annihilate the whole nation of Iran unless they kowtow. And then Pezeshkian says today, no, we're not going to kowtow. Now, Pezeshkian also said twice, if my notes are correct, that, look, you're looking at a nation that has not started a war in 200 years. That's two centuries, okay?

I thought it was longer, but two centuries is pretty good for me. Now, if there's any reason left in the United Nations, or not just reason, if they just can piece together the shift in power with the U.S. unable to achieve its aims against this, what was looked upon as a secondary nation, Iran. Well, that shift takes time. And McGovern is kind of foolish in thinking more people should walk out. They assimilate it, and they look at the two speeches: Trump's, who, of course, was the second speaker yesterday, and Pezeshkian's. So now, as Pezeshkian got up and said 200 years or two centuries, well, who got up and walked out?

The sole U.S. representative. He had a fancy suit on, looked real good walking out. But as he passed the Bangladesh representative, she cast what seemed to me to be a kind of a—not an evil eye, but she's looking at you: there goes the United States. They can't even listen to criticism of itself. So all I'm saying here is that there's all that. The most important thing is the psychological and physical situation of our president. And the next most important thing is this president didn't ask his armed forces about inventories. And so the inventories were invented, and now he's out of ammunition. Okay, so you got no good sense. You got no ammunition.

Well, let's hope that the no-ammunition facts on the ground will prevail here against the no good sense, and the military will tell him, as apparently they did, you know, when he sort of approved that strike against the Houthis one day and then reversed himself the next. Maybe there is some break on his ability to order these crazy strikes. And maybe he even suspects that the Israelis might not be telling him the truth, you know. So there is hope here. Let's hang in here. And I think that the UN was very, very useful in demonstrating the balance of power, the inequities that Pezeshkian illuminated, and that the Gulfies really have to choose. They don't have much time to do that. I think the Saudi example is what will be most instructive to the rest of them.

#Danny

Well, certainly it was very courageous of President Pezeshkian, Arachi, and the rest of the delegation to even come here at all, to come to the United States at all, given everything that has happened to Iran and all the aggression and, of course, the decapitation that triggered, or was the initial attack by the U.S. and Israel. Garland, Ray, it was great having you. I want to make sure everyone knows that, Garland, your YouTube channel is in the video description below. People should subscribe there. I want to make sure everyone knows that Ray's X account is there too, to follow all of his posts and what he's doing. Any final words before we head out of here?

#Garland Nixon

I got to run, gentlemen, so I certainly say thank you. Thanks for the time.

#Danny

I'll talk to you later. Of course. All right. I'll see you. All right. Ray, any final words?

#Ray McGovern

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The avoidance of that is what accounts for the war in Ukraine. The Russians are not going to stand for NATO on its long border with Ukraine anymore. And it obtains not only in personal relationships, but in the one that we're looking at right now, especially with Iran. And I think that people keep their heads, and we keep the pressure on, and we succeed in making sure that the midterms are carried out and not nullified or messed around with. And we may have a choice at the other end of the midterms where Trump himself will be persuaded: look, you have no ammunition. Remember that? We don't have any ammunition. Let's make a deal. And I think the Iranians are smart enough to be able to make that kind of deal. It remains to be seen whether the people advising Trump will have that kind of perspicacity.

#Danny

Yeah. Well, Ray, great being with you. Everyone, hit the like button if you haven't already. That helps boost the show after we are gone. Of course, all the places to support this show are in the video description below as well: Patreon, Substack, and more. Tomorrow, back 12 noon Eastern time with Scott Horton for the first time on this program. Be sure to catch that tomorrow, September 24th. Until then, everybody, I will see you all in the next show. Hit the like button. Thanks to all the moderators and viewers today. See you again soon. Bye-bye.