

Douglas Macgregor: U.S. War on Iran Risks Triggering World War

Douglas Macgregor is a retired Colonel, combat veteran and former senior advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Defense. Col. Macgregor argues that another US/Israeli war on Iran risks triggering a world war by pulling in Russia and China. Please like and subscribe! Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glenndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glenndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glenndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back to the program. We're here today with Colonel Douglas Macgregor, a highly decorated combat veteran and former advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Defense. Thank you for coming back on.

#Douglas Macgregor

Sure, sure. Of course. Good to see you, Glenn.

#Glenn

We're already seeing increased military activity in the Middle East, mainly involving different aircraft carriers and a lot of battleships moving in, along with new equipment. We're also hearing stories about troops and refueling tankers. Do you think another strike on Iran is pending? I know Lindsey Graham seemed very excited about the possibility that a strike could be imminent.

#Douglas Macgregor

I think there will be a resumption of the war. I'm surprised it's taken this long. I don't know when it will happen. Obviously, the Mossad-, CIA-, and MI6-sponsored unrest inside Iran was meant to disrupt preparations to defend the country, if not ultimately to replace the government. We have a lot of people who believe, first and foremost, that you can change a regime—that you just remove the people at the top and suddenly peace will break out everywhere. Then you have others who are absolutely convinced that Iran is exactly the way it was 40 years ago, that nothing's changed, and

therefore they strongly believe the Iranian population has come to its senses and is now devoted to destroying its own government. And then you have those who are diehard Israel supporters, who believe Israel just needs to be given the go-ahead—the green light—and it will destroy Iran.

And as a result, once again, the entire region will benefit. The world will be a better place. Which lens do you want to look through? All three lenses are the predominant ones here in the United States. Anybody who suggests, as I do and others have, that Iran is not about to fall apart—that Iran is probably more cohesive, socially, now than at any point I can remember—gets dismissed. The people who took to the streets were a small minority. Initially, many of them were very sincere, but they weren't as upset with the government as they were pushing for more reform—or, in some cases, conservatives opposing reform. But eventually that gave way to what you saw on television: the more violent unrest that was induced by the CIA, Mossad, and MI6. So I think we have a lot of people anxiously awaiting the imminent destruction of Iran.

And I think their belief is that if we give the Israelis enough of what they need, they'll be able to do it without our help. I don't think that's the case. I'm not sure President Trump was very excited about the idea of going back to war with Iran, but he obviously has no way to stop it, and he's obliged, for a whole range of strategic reasons, to support them. What's interesting is that we haven't seen the movement of one or two carrier battle groups back into the region. Normally, you'd expect to see that. Those are short-legged fighters, but nevertheless, they contribute enormously to the punching power of the force in the region. So right now, it's almost all Air Force, with some modest naval presence.

I don't know. I think it's coming. Let's face it—Mr. Netanyahu cannot walk away from Iran in his current position. Nothing he wants to accomplish happens: the wholesale elimination of the population in Gaza, the complete conquest of southern and central Lebanon—which means the elimination of Hezbollah—the encroaching movement into Syria. These things aren't going to work unless he finishes off Iran. There's a lot of activity involving the Kurds right now. And as you know, we and the Israelis, along with some of the British, have worked very hard with the Kurds to turn them into a dangerous force. A few days ago, someone knowledgeable told me there was an incursion of about 400 Kurds headed into northern Iran.

Thanks to the Turks, who were working closely with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, they identified this, and the Iranians were able to annihilate virtually the entire contingent without much difficulty. So I think what we're seeing is that, globally, BRICS is being militarized. And that's largely our fault because of our behavior in Venezuela, our behavior toward Russia and Ukraine, and obviously what's happening in the Middle East. We have an interest in the destruction of Ukraine insofar as we think it will harm China—and it could, if you can forestall the movement of oil out of the Persian Gulf. That represents probably 25 or 30 percent of all the oil China uses. So if you're interested in harming China per se, that's one way to do it.

It also creates the opportunity to work with, you know, Azerbaijan and the Turks against Iran, insofar as you're disrupting the One Belt, One Road project. And there are a lot of things—depending on whom you talk to in the administration in Washington—you get a different story. That's why I say it's hard to know with President Trump. Because President Trump, whatever his faults, is really, privately, not someone who wants to bomb the world. Unfortunately, that's exactly what he ends up doing because of the people who surround him. But, you know, that's another matter entirely. So I think we have to conclude that war is coming. Exactly when, we don't know, but we see all the conditions being developed with the hope of dooming the Iranian regime to defeat. I don't think the Russians or the Chinese are going to go along with it.

#Glenn

When you say the Russians and Chinese won't go along with it, to what extent would they back Iran? I mean, they don't want a direct shooting war with the United States, since that would, well, they wouldn't be able to control the escalation if it happens. But is this about economic support or supplying weapons? Or how could they prevent the United States from knocking out Iran?

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, I think the Chinese and the Russians have provided military technology and technical assistance—there's no question about that. This time, I think the Iranians have welcomed more technological help, particularly with missiles and radars from the Russians, than they previously received. Secondly, I think the Chinese have been instrumental in defeating the use of Starlink by the MI6–Mossad–CIA opposition inside the country. We now think that about 40,000 Starlink terminals were smuggled into Iran. Remember, this is a huge country—it's the size of Western Europe, with about 90 million people. So no one should be surprised that you can penetrate the borders. I mean, they penetrate our borders; they're penetrating Iran's borders. They were able to bring these Starlink terminals in, but the Chinese apparently came to the rescue to shut them down.

And they've enabled a blackout across most of the urban areas, and it may be national at this point, to regain control. But the point that needs to be kept in mind is that there are millions of Iranians—tens of millions—living in a state of siege. I mean, somebody earlier today was critical of me because I said that, yes, I'm sure several hundred people are being rounded up and probably facing summary execution for treason. But I said, you're talking about a nation in a state of siege. What do you expect to happen? Stalin, we know, from the time the Germans invaded until the end of the war, executed one million Soviet soldiers who refused to fight for communism. That's what he had to do. He used the NKVD to keep the other several million soldiers in line.

The Germans, in contrast, by the way, only had to execute 23,000 out of some six or seven million German soldiers. That's a very modest number, given the scale we're talking about and the pressures of that battlefield. But I think we have to understand that if you don't impose that kind of

draconian measure, it will continue—and I think that's what the Iranians are aware of. So I think the Iranian regime is recovering; it's putting things back together again. I don't think it was disrupted in any way in terms of their air and missile defense. I don't think it had any impact whatsoever on their missile stocks or their ability to attack Israel—or, for that matter, our bases in the region. So we're back to the initial question: everybody wants to know, when's this going to happen? Nobody knows. But there are plenty of indicators that suggest it can't be that far off.

#Glenn

Yeah, I thought it was strange—the narrative for legitimizing the new war. I mean, of course, it's not in the Western Hemisphere. So instead, we see Trump referencing his love for freedom, protest, and democracy as the reason he stands in solidarity with them. I thought that was strange. I thought it was kind of breaking a little bit away from this liberal imperialism, but apparently not. However, how would this war be different? Because the first round didn't go well. The Iranians proved they were able to overwhelm Israel's air defenses, which were quickly being depleted. Yeah. And also, Trump seems to have an aversion to long wars—he likes to finish them off quickly, it seems. A little bit like Venezuela—don't get dragged into a long war. So do you think they'll just try to go for an overwhelming decapitation strike, going after key government figures? Because they tried that last time.

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, I think, first of all, we have to keep in mind that President Trump is aware that in the Senate and the House, he does not have support for the use of American ground forces in Venezuela. The Senate has already voted on a measure that would prohibit the use of U.S. ground troops, and they voted 52 to 47 against it. That means the Democrats had Republican support. So I think President Trump is now—well, I don't want to say he's being humiliated—but he is certainly being chastened, in the sense that he's not pushing to get U.S. troops on the ground. Now, I think in Venezuela he's a bit naive to think that the population is going to go along with whatever we want regarding their minerals and mines—gold mines, emerald mines, silver mines, rare earths—plus all of the oil. That's not going to happen, for a whole range of reasons.

It may be that he just decides he's done all he can do and turns his attention elsewhere. I don't know. There has never been a viable, executable plan, in my judgment, for Venezuela—or, for that matter, for operations in general in Latin America. So that's the first thing. Now, when he moved to Iran, that's an entirely different matter, because that really does attract Russian and Chinese intervention. Even India is not supportive of anything we might do against Iran. So if you're looking at BRICS—Russia, India, China—that's a substantial chunk of the world. And we could probably go through the rest and find even more opposition. I don't know how he's going to handle that. There's nothing clean about an air-power-only operation. I mean, this notion that air power can achieve miraculous outcomes is a big lie.

It always has been. We've bombed and bombed routinely in all sorts of places, but until we ultimately went in on the ground, nothing fundamentally changed. Now, after that, we weren't very successful either, but that speaks more to the wisdom of having gone in to begin with than anything else. So I think at this point, he's trapped. He's going to have to take action in support of Israel. He may go in with Israel simultaneously when they finally attack. Now, we don't know what the Iranians will do, because for the first time, the Iranians have actually talked about a potential preemptive attack. I don't expect them to sit around and wait for negotiations to have an impact. I don't think anybody really trusts us anymore. I don't think anything that Trump says is going to be believed.

It's that simple. So if you're an Iranian right now, you've got your finger on the trigger. And I think if it looks like something's imminent, they're going to pull the trigger. This time, I think they'll throw everything they've got, including the kitchen sink, at Israel and our bases in the region. My great concern is always the same: what does Israel do if it's facing potential destruction and annihilation from Iranian missiles and rockets and so forth? Does it turn to the use of a nuclear weapon? If it does, do we have any influence over that? Can we constrain them in any way? I don't know. Now, the thing we haven't discussed, again, that has to be taken into consideration, is Turkey.

Turkey has enormous problems with inflation. They want to get it down to 5%, but it's been up to 20%. So that has operated as a brake on things they might do. Erdogan is very clever—he wants to be on all sides of every issue. But is he going to be compelled, finally, to intervene? The reason for that would be the Kurds. The Kurdish threat to the Turks is substantial and serious. The Turks could be mobilized in a few days to fight the Kurds. Will that spill over and involve Israel? I mean, I don't know the answers to these questions, but this region is not stable. It's not predictable. It's at a slow boil. The question is, when does it boil over? But everyone is beginning to coalesce against Israel. I think that's clear.

#Glenn

You mentioned the possibility of a preemptive strike, and I think this is a variable that should be taken seriously. This whole idea that the U.S. can just position all its air force around Iran perfectly and then go for a strike—one that Iran knows is meant to knock out their country, a decapitation strike—the idea that they would just sit by and wait for that to happen, I don't... yeah, I would take that warning from Iran rather seriously. They have a lot at stake here. But you mentioned that the Russians—and again, the Chinese—wouldn't sit by. How do you see the Russians' calculation having changed, though?

Because... if this were a few months ago, they might have been more optimistic about the possibility of a diplomatic solution with Trump—improving relations between the U.S. and Russia and ending the Ukraine war at the negotiation table. But over the past few weeks, we've learned that there's been more U.S. involvement in attacks on refineries, on Russian civilian ships, even on Russia's nuclear deterrent. And, of course, the continued effort to sanction Russia in order to break its economy. So I get the impression now, from Moscow, that they've lost hope in the Trump

presidency—that he would be the one able to end a century of tensions between Russia and the U.S. and essentially make them, if not allies, at least much, much closer. Do you think this would affect how Russia would respond to an American attack on Iran?

#Douglas Macgregor

The Russians have withdrawn their citizens—in other words, evacuated them from Israel. They've also evacuated their embassy staff from Israel. I think Mr. Netanyahu has poisoned relations with the Russians. Then you add to that what you just discussed regarding President Trump. We used to have something—I'm sure you're familiar with this—we called Kremlinology, where we had all sorts of people sitting around trying to evaluate, estimate, analyze who was going to be in the Politburo, who was next up to be secretary general of the Communist Party, and so forth. I think a lot of that is going on inside Moscow's inner circle. I think they've looked at Trump, and they've concluded a few things. First of all, I think the Russians like President Trump as a person.

I don't think they dislike him at all, and they would like to get along with him, but I think they've concluded that he's unreliable. He may say one thing at one point in time, and then a day or two later he changes his mind and heads in a new direction. You remember that in January and February of last year, there were discussions—"We need to find a way forward, and we're going to meet with the Russian leadership in Saudi Arabia." Remember, they went to Riyadh, they held those meetings. You had lots of top people there—people representing business interests, the usual suspects who supported Trump—showing up to cash in on a particular deal. Unfortunately, these billionaires align themselves with Trump, or Trump aligns himself with them. I don't know which is the chicken or the egg; you have to figure that out.

But the bottom line is, we thought there would be a normalization of relations with Moscow. And I think the Russians thought that was coming. All of a sudden, that stops. Everyone goes home and forgets about it. Then Donald Trump, who doesn't change the sanctions regime, refuses to completely distance himself from Zelensky despite Zelensky's bad behavior and his routine tendency to ignore what Trump says. He turns around, has a meeting in Alaska, shows up with no new proposals, and then tells the Russians, "We want a ceasefire," while reading nothing, studying nothing, paying no attention whatsoever to Russia's security interests. That meeting went off well—it had great atmospherics, wonderful optics—but it went nowhere. It produced nothing. And I think now the Russians have concluded that's the best you're going to get out of Donald Trump.

Excuse me. It's not that he's a menace or that he's deliberately misleading—he just can't deliver. And they're looking at other people, whether it's somebody like Lindsey Graham in the Senate, who's the chief warmonger on that side, but he's not alone. He pulls in lots of Democrats like Blumenthal and others who are willing to join the Russia-hate club. Then you have the usual suspects in the White House—you have Rubio, you have Hegseth. They're in the "bombs away" camp: "Let's go for it, let's get these bastards," and so forth. That's why I wrote in that piece that came out a couple of weeks ago—it's Team America. And I think they truly believe there's not much anybody in the world

can do to stop us. And I think that was reflected in President Trump's comments within the last 24 hours.

Well, what counterforce is there to what you want to do? In other words, what are the constraints or limitations on you, Mr. President? He says, "Well, none—except my own morality." Whatever that means. And I'm sure everybody's asking that question: just what does that mean, Mr. President? That's why Greenland is up for grabs. That's why Venezuela's up for grabs. That's why Iran's on the agenda. As far as he's concerned, whatever his whim is becomes his will—his wish becomes reality. Now, I don't think it works very well, but I have a feeling that's where we are. And I think the Russians have figured that out. So what do you do? You prepare for the worst. Everybody in Russia—on the ground, in the military—is saying, "We have to prepare for a war with Europe."

They're absolutely convinced that's going to be unavoidable. Now, they're hoping they won't have to fight us, because they don't want to. They'd like to have good relations with us. There is, for some strange reason, a lingering sense of genuine mutual respect and affection for America. It really amazes me. I don't know how it persists, but it does. So I think the Russians are torn right now. They figure, well, we're going to have to fight the Europeans. Even though you try to tell them the Europeans have nothing to throw at you, they sort of say, well, you know, we see what they say and do—we're going to have to fight them. And, of course, the French and the British have given them plenty of reason for that. Same thing with the Germans.

You know, you saw that enormous arsenal of Taurus missiles down in Odessa that was targeted and destroyed—an enormous, enormous impact down there. Huge explosion. And Mertz went public and said, "Oh, well, this is a terrible thing." And instead of feeling somewhat embarrassed, which he should have, he did the opposite. So I can understand why the Russians are taking that position. But I look at us and I just ask the question: what is the strategy? In other words, what's the end state? What are we trying to achieve? And I don't think we've moved beyond Biden's previous positions yet—harm Russia, bully Russia, push Russia into an agreement that it would otherwise never sign. You and I know that's not going to happen.

#Glenn

Do you share that sentiment, though—the expectation that a war between Europe and Russia is unavoidable?

#Douglas Macgregor

No, I don't think it's unavoidable at all. That's the Russian view. Because of all the rhetoric, statements, and behavior, I don't think the Europeans have anything to put into the battle. And if they push hard enough, I guess they could potentially come under attack. What are they going to do about it? I mean, when this war started, there was a study done in NATO on how much of the territory within NATO could be defended against air and missile attack. The answer was less than

5% of the territory. That hasn't changed. So you're talking about going into a war completely unprepared.

In 1941, when Pearl Harbor was destroyed—or at least partially destroyed—the expectation in the Army was that the Navy would carry through on its prewar plan. That plan was to attack immediately, straight across the Pacific, all the way to the Philippines, and relieve the Philippine garrison—in other words, reinforce it, strengthen it, and so forth. Two divisions from the U.S. Army, fully manned National Guard formations, were in San Francisco, ready to board ships and go to the Philippines. Well, the Navy suddenly said, "We can't do that." They'd had this plan for a decade, tweaking it every year, but they couldn't execute it. Why? One of the reasons was they had only six operational oilers.

In other words, vessels that carried fuel for the surface fleet—only six in the entire Pacific. Now, you know how big the Pacific is. How far are you going to get? The answer is, not very far. There was another problem: Japanese submarines. They were afraid; they couldn't protect the troop transports. So you know where our troops went? They went to Australia. And the whole war took a different course. My point is, right now, that's the position the Europeans are in—and it's even worse. They just don't have anything to throw at anybody. I mean, they've effectively disarmed themselves over the last 35 or 40 years. So I tell the Russians, forget it.

I mean, if I were asked, I'd say you're waiting for something to happen—it's not going to happen. But remember, it's their country. The Ukrainians are using our intelligence and our technology to attack deep targets. So the Russians look at that and say, "This is going to go on until we ultimately crush everybody in Ukraine." That's the position they're in right now. We've done nothing to change that. We could have intervened a long time ago and had a real impact. We could have forced the Europeans into an agreement with us and Russia. We've done nothing. So the war continues, and it's dangerous because it could involve us—especially if we do something stupid in the Middle East.

Venezuela—remember, the difference between us and the Russians and the Chinese is this: we're dumb enough to think we could fight a war in Ukraine against Russia and win. Impossible, for strategic reasons. It should be patently obvious. We have people who actually think you can fight a war over Taiwan against China and win—six or seven thousand miles from the United States. Stupid. Can't be done. The Chinese and the Russians aren't dumb. They're not going to intervene in the Western Hemisphere against us militarily over Venezuela. It's not going to happen, because they know they can't win that fight—not in the Caribbean Basin. So now we go to the Middle East. We can project power, but for how long, and at what cost?

And the last time around, we were getting close to the end in terms of our ability to project that much power successfully. Fortunately, the Iranians were also low in their capabilities, and so were the Israelis. What happens this time around? We don't know. But this time, both the Russians and the Chinese have more at stake—the Chinese particularly because of the Strait of Hormuz and the Belt and Road, and the Russians because of their southern flank. And we've talked about that.

They're not going to allow that to fall into enemy hands. They're already quite upset over what's happened in Azerbaijan. So, bottom line, this is a terrible strategic position for us to be in. It's a terrible strategic position for the Russians and the Chinese. Something's got to give.

#Glenn

It just looks like we might be heading into a perfect storm, because these 25% tariffs on anyone trading with Iran—well, it seems that China would be the primary target, and that would restart the economic war with the Chinese. As you said, the Russians and Chinese would likely back Iran, at least indirectly, with intelligence, weapons, and so on. But also, if there is a war, wouldn't there be some opportunism? I feel like if the U.S. gets, well, tied up in the Middle East, the Russians would then feel a bit more confident about retaliating against any European provocations.

I just saw, two days ago, that the British Foreign Ministry—or maybe it was the Defense Ministry—was saying, "Oh, well, we're developing missiles now that can go 500 kilometers with 200-kilogram warheads, so we can start bombing Moscow." I mean, at some point, the Russians will see it as irresponsible not to retaliate, because it only emboldens the Europeans. In Europe now, it's kind of accepted as normal: we can strike Russia all we want, and we just call it helping Ukraine. But it looks as if, now that the Russians are in a stronger position, they're not going to accept this anymore.

#Douglas Macgregor

I think that's entirely valid. And I think, of the three—Germany, France, and Great Britain—that are the principal culprits responsible for what goes on from Ukraine into Russia, they're not alone, because, let's face it, we still provide targeting data and information. Our overhead surveillance is still critical to all of that. But of the three, they really, really have had it with the British, because they know how weak the British really are. The British have nothing to fight with; they're in terrible shape. They don't hate the British people, but they hate that damn government that's talking and behaving the way it is. Now, the interesting part is, they seem to want to challenge us over Greenland.

That's about as ridiculous as the Russians or Chinese trying to challenge us in the Caribbean. So hopefully the British and the French will drop that dumb idea. And they're all talking about how America is bringing an end to NATO. They don't seem to understand that that's fine as far as this administration is concerned. We've been tired of the Europeans and their demands on us for a very long time. The problem is, we can't seem to shed the Russia-hate problem, which I think is entirely an artificial construct that sits in Washington as a result of powerful lobbies. The American population doesn't share that view. They don't know much about it.

Their knee-jerk reaction is to think, "Oh, it must be the Soviets again." Then, "Oh, that's right, it's not the Soviet Union anymore." I mean, Americans don't know much about what's beyond their borders—let's face it. You know that from having been here. But still, it's not a systemic problem in

the United States. I think the Russians, if they're pushed, could respond. And I think the British ought to seriously examine their fragility, their vulnerability. The Russians aren't going to attack London and blow anything up, but there are lots of military targets that could easily be brought under attack and absolutely annihilated—and there's not a damn thing the British can do about it. Now, there's something else.

And this is something I've been working on with some friends. I'm going to try to make this presentation in the near future, but I'm trying to get people to think a little differently about our relationship with Russia. And that's about "no first use." This idea has been kicked around many times. JFK, before he was killed—after his experience during the Cuban Missile Crisis—wanted to pursue a course that I think would have ultimately led to something like that. The Chinese have a declared no-first-use policy, but we dismiss that because, after all, their arsenal isn't that large. Well, it's actually growing, and it's potentially very lethal. But we have many nuclear powers today: Pakistan, India, Israel, North Korea, Russia, China, Great Britain, and France.

I think, given the dangers we're talking about in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, if we can't come to any sort of agreement that would bring those conflicts to a head, maybe we can at least reach some kind of arrangement that prevents the use of nuclear weapons. Because once a nuclear weapon is used, escalation is inevitable. Every study we've done, every model we've looked at, inevitably leads to escalation—because each side decides, "Well, if I don't use it, I'll lose it. So I'm going to use it." This has been discussed for many years behind the scenes. I think President Trump, who's talked a great deal about his qualifications for the Nobel Peace Prize—most of the time that just evokes laughter.

But if he were to step forward and say, you know, we can't solve the Ukraine problem today, but we can at least prevent Armageddon now—look at it from that standpoint and stand up for no first use—and then sit down with Moscow and Beijing, and ultimately India, Pakistan, and the rest, and put together an agreement under which everyone says, none of us will be the first to use a nuclear weapon under any circumstances. I think that could be very good. It would also promote a new way forward on the Korean Peninsula, because I know the Republic of South Korea wants to put this away, wants the nuclear problem to go away, but they'd also like us to leave, because we're now increasingly seen as a catalyst for war on the Korean Peninsula.

We're no longer seen as the security blanket we once were. So I would hope the president thinks about that. We're going to make a push in the very near future on this. I hope to talk about it in Vancouver, at the Vancouver Resource Investment Conference coming up at the end of January—January 25th through 27th. But that's the only thing I can think of right now that would circumvent this kind of jammed-up diplomatic mess and get to something really critical to the survival of the planet—something we could agree on, I hope.

#Glenn

Well, the START treaty is due to expire next month, if I'm not mistaken. It seemed at one point that Trump was prepared to make nuclear weapons a key issue. He talked about denuclearizing the relationship between the U.S., Russia, and China. And indeed, if you want to deal with the largest nuclear powers, then including China would be a good approach. But I haven't heard much talk about it lately. Instead, I've heard talk about increasing the U.S. military budget to \$1.5 trillion. I'm sure they'll find the money, but that will have some consequences.

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, you know, there's somebody named William Hartung that you should consider interviewing. I don't know if you've interviewed him or not, but William Hartung, who writes frequently at the Quincy Institute, talks about the budget. He makes the point that this leads to more foreign interventions and is inherently escalatory, moving us down the road to greater violence. I think that's part of it. But something most people don't understand, inside or outside the United States, is that a large part of our defense budget is fixed. It involves the cost of medical care. You might say, "Well, why is that a big deal?" Well, we have a lot of veterans, a lot of wounded, and a lot of people who were killed, and their families have suffered.

There's a lot of money in that for those purposes, dealing with those issues. Then on top of that, you have pensions. Huge numbers of people are retired because we've gone to this, quote-unquote, all-volunteer force. That's very expensive. So at the end of the day, that's a big chunk of the budget. Now, moving beyond that, a lot of the money he's talking about won't produce the dream military establishment he describes. You're just going to get more of what you already have, because ultimately that's what the generals and admirals want. And the people on the Hill don't pay any attention—they just want to spend money. If I take you to Washington and walk you through the Senate and the House, and you ask these people, "What do you do here?"

They say, "Well, we spend money. If we're not spending money, we have nothing to do." Now, when you say that, they also look at the budget as an opportunity to do what? Aggrandize themselves, their donors, and the various corporate structures rooted in their districts and states. So they start piling on in this massive feeding frenzy at the public trough. Just because you add more money doesn't necessarily mean you're buying more real capability. You just saw us go into and out of Venezuela in what everybody is describing as this brilliant operation—and it was. We have remarkable capabilities in the special operations world. But special operations don't win wars.

They're a niche capability, and you have to have an environment conducive to using special operations. That worked very well in Venezuela. I wouldn't try it in North Korea. I wouldn't necessarily try it in China or Russia. Right now, maybe Iran—but even there, you're going to have problems. And we haven't really told everyone how much money we spent to buy off key members of the Venezuelan government and security forces. So what I'm saying is, you're likely to see a lot

more money go into those things, but you may not necessarily see anything that fundamentally or dramatically improves your position in a strategic sense. And finally, you have the problem of the debasement of our currency, because all of this is push-button money—it comes out of thin air.

#Glenn

Yeah, the economic crisis that's coming, I think, is going to come, unfortunately, as a surprise, which will complicate all these conflicts that are now seemingly playing out at the same time. So, yes—interesting times ahead. Well, Colonel, as always, thank you very much for your time. Thank you, Glenn. Bye-bye.