

Scott Ritter: Iran's Missile Power STUNS Trump, US Navy Left DEFENSELESS

Scott Ritter is a former United Nations Weapons Inspector and US Marine Corps Intelligence Officer with extensive knowledge of US & Iranian military capabilities. Today we explore the problems with Trump's escalations toward war with Iran & how it could end very soon in a devastating defeat for the US military. Garland Nixon also joined to weigh in on this moment of crisis and imminent war.

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#Danny

Donald Trump has said a lot of things. Here's one of them.

#Donald Trump

Right now we're talking to them. We're talking to Iran, and if we can work something out, that'd be great. And if we can't, probably bad things will happen. Ships are heading to Iran right now—big ones, the biggest and the best. And we have...

#Danny

Talks are going on with Iran. The U.S. still has a lot moving toward Iran, he says, despite hinting at talks. So, Scott, could you help the audience understand what the U.S. has built around Iran, and what Iran's capabilities are that are causing so much consternation about actually going through with a strike?

#Scott Ritter

Let's start—let's reverse it. Iran can destroy every American military base in the region, and that's why there's consternation. There's not enough air defense. I just want to remind people that what the United States is doing right now is taking THAAD and Patriot-3 missile batteries from Asia, Europe, and even the continental United States, and deploying them to the Middle East because they weren't there. And everyone's like, "Well, isn't that enough?" You know, we had THAAD and Patriot-

3 in Israel, backed up by Aegis ships offshore, integrated with Israel's Iron Dome, Arrow, Arrow-3, David's Sling—the whole thing. A fully integrated ballistic missile shield, the most advanced in the world.

And the Iranians beat it. So what we're doing right now is trying to send air defense capability to the region to protect our exposed bases, which have already been proven insufficient to the task. We don't have enough ships with Aegis SM-3s or SM-6s. We don't have enough THAAD batteries. We don't have enough Patriot batteries. And even if we did, they're not good enough to stop the most advanced Iranian missiles from coming in. And this is the reality. So the key here, you know, to the defense is defense. Look, we're going to end up evacuating most of these bases anyway, because we don't want to send—well, the Iranians have set the pain threshold at 500 American dead.

They're saying that if this happens, they're going to kill at least 500 Americans because they've calculated that's the threshold of pain the president can't survive politically. They need to be careful, though. I just want to point this out. There was a book written a couple of years ago by a former NATO American—I think his name was Stennis, or something like that—who wrote about a potential war with China. And this is a guy who knows; he knows the war plans. The scenario was that an American carrier battle group went to the South China Sea, and the Chinese sank the carriers. And what did the United States do?

Doctrine said we had to take out a Chinese city with a nuclear weapon. Why? Because the carrier battle group is a strategic asset, and we can't just let anybody take it out. It's a legacy system, but it's one we rely on for power projection. And if suddenly the truth is exposed about the vulnerability of the American aircraft carrier battle group, we lose a lot of capability, because all we have to do is threaten to send it there and the world takes notice. Iran could very well sink the Abraham Lincoln. I mean, that's why the United States is shooting down the drone as it approaches—because we know that if they sink the Abraham Lincoln, Iran will receive a nuclear weapon in response.

That's doctrine. That's just the way it is. You don't get to sink an American aircraft carrier and walk away from it. People say, "Scott, you don't know what you're talking about." Yeah, I do. I actually do know what I'm talking about—and so do the other people who do this. You don't get to sink an American aircraft carrier. That's a line you don't want to cross. So Iran has to be careful about casualties, you know, because if you sink an aircraft carrier, it gets really tough. I don't think the United States is going to preempt Iran with nuclear weapons, although he's talking about "we're sending the biggest." I don't know what that means.

It's Donald Trump—as big as his hands, maybe. But, you know... what are we going to send? B-2 bombers, F-35s, F-22s—we know that. Maybe the B-21 Raider will make its debut, not just an upgraded B-2. You know, we could send Ohio-class submarines with Trident missiles that have kinetic penetrators—non-nuclear kinetic penetrators. And the angle of flight would be such that they

don't overfly any nuclear-armed nations. Therefore, we don't run the risk of people thinking they're being attacked. It'd be a flat-trajectory launch. That's one way, because it's not about buried nukes anymore—it's about buried leadership.

You know, the Iranians have been going underground for a long time. In Mashhad, there's an underground city where they take the leadership, and there are other locations as well. It's designed to ride out even a low-level nuclear attack. So we may use these kinetic killers to take out underground sites—B-2s with a lot of cruise missiles, a lot of cruise missiles. You know, people also need to wake up. How many cruise missiles did we fire at the Syrian chemical weapons research facility, even though it wasn't actually a chemical weapons research facility? I think the number was around 60 or so.

Sixty to destroy one building—and about twenty of those didn't work. Many were actually brought down by electronic warfare, and the Syrians captured them and turned them over to the Russians intact. The most advanced Tomahawk missiles were handed to the Russians in perfect condition. That means the Russians have deciphered their capabilities, and now that they have a signed agreement with the Iranians, they've given that information to them as well. There might be some new tricks up our sleeve, but there aren't enough of them. Donald Trump is a bully, so he's going to sit there and say bully things. But at the end of the day, Iran is a big country.

And there are a lot of targets, and we don't have enough weapons to hit them. They've dispersed their missiles, dispersed their leadership. Again, their ballistic missiles are their knockout blow. The Iranians have said they'll strike the furthest point from which American aircraft attacking Iran are based. So right now, that means they're going to be striking European bases with missiles that Europe can't shoot down. That's just the fact. You know, nobody's ready for this—nobody's ready for what's about to happen. You know, in the past, we've bombed Iran and gotten away with it.

That's what Trump did. You know, we sent the B-2s in—they hit Fordow and they hit some other places, the Tans, you know. And Iran sent, what, half a dozen missiles to a base that was already evacuated. Many of those missiles were old ones that got shot down. I think one or two of the new ones made it through and took out a multimillion, hundred-million-dollar radar, just to prove a point: "We can do this, and there's nothing you can do to stop us." And that's the point that's sunk in. And there it is. I don't think we have any deep, dark superweapons.

I think what we're concerned about is the vulnerability of the Abraham Lincoln. This isn't the Hood. The Iranians have missiles designed to take out an aircraft carrier. My advice to the Iranians is: don't do it. Don't do it. But if you do, be prepared for the worst. The United States is in a position where, if they take it out, yeah, maybe we blow Iran off the face of the earth. But now what's happened is the Iranians have proven a point that many people have been making for some time—that the carrier is an obsolete weapon system, just a sitting duck for any nation with real capability, like China or Russia. So, um, you know, there—I hope I answered your question.

#Garland Nixon

A couple of things—I think what he said is very important to consider and to dig into a little bit. Number one, what did China say? They said, and I've watched—I forget which one of their guys it was, maybe the foreign minister—whoever it was said, "If somebody starts a war with us or attacks us, they'll get a war. If someone uses a nuclear weapon against us, we'll make sure they don't survive." So if you say, "Okay, they took out a carrier, I'm going to throw some nukes at one of their cities," at that point, what you're basically saying is this: the U.S. doctrine is, if one of our carriers goes down, that's it for the world.

We will end the world. We'll make sure all 330 million Americans—and everybody else—die if we lose one carrier. Because that's essentially what it is. You start throwing nukes at a superpower, they're going to start throwing nukes back. And that's game, set, and match. We're all going to die. So that's the first part of it. That shows a certain level of weakness—to say, "I can stick a carrier out there and nobody's allowed to hit it." And so, let's just hope everybody plays by those rules, or I'll swallow a suicide pill. Let's hope that doesn't happen. Number two, you know, it's kind of like a person with self-defense training against edged weapons.

You know, your instructor will say, "You're probably going to get cut, and you might die—but go out like a soldier," right? That's what a lot of them say. Since edged weapons are very dangerous, they'll tell you all the things you can do, but if somebody knows what they're doing, you're probably going to get cut and you might die. Still, make sure you try to take them with you—in other words, fight for all you're worth. Only fight if you're cornered. Here's my point: if we say, "Okay, this is what we're going to do," and Iran says, "We're going to throw everything we have at you. If you so much as throw a rock at us, we're throwing everything we have at you," then what happens?

And you have to say, well, they probably won't throw anything at our aircraft carriers because we might nuke them. But if they've said, "We've said our prayers, and our religion believes in martyrdom—it is what it is," then you throw everything you have, not just your aircraft carrier. There will be salvos of missiles coming at anything we see with an American flag on it. It's going to get a hundred drones and a salvo of twelve missiles—every single one of them. So that's done. Every one of your bases—done. We told you, if you fight us, you may nuke us, you may do whatever, but you're going to be so ragged when you leave out of here.

Here's my point: as I said earlier, it'll end the empire. I don't mean they could blow up our cities. I mean, if the U.S. takes that kind of action, if the U.S. takes that kind of pain, how the heck—what do you say to the American people then? "Oh, by the way, American people, there's nuclear fallout over the Middle East, so no one can access that oil anymore. So you'd better get used to seeing what it looks like in Kyiv." Yeah, that's what it's going to look like. You're going to be frozen, freezing, starving. Your lives are going to be pushed back into the Stone Age because of this. So America as you knew it—it's all over.

We're going back into the Stone Age. We made that decision because we attacked Iran first, and they had every right to fight back. And yeah, we defeated them in a suicidal kind of way. So you're looking at an empire that's basically saying, you know, we might have to commit suicide over this. And the American people aren't on board with that. So it's a very dangerous situation. But the actions of the United States—particularly in a region full of oil—you start throwing nukes around, and then the fallout... Pakistan's got nukes. What is the rest of the world going to say if there's nuclear fallout drifting—God only knows where? It could drift all over Europe, Russia, anywhere. So.

It's a very bad situation. That's, again, why I agree with Scott's first assessment. We could both be wrong. I don't think—particularly with Trump—I don't think Trump is going to pull the trigger on this. He may not be the one making the decisions, but for the sake of argument, let's say he has at least a lot of input, or he's making the decisions. If you look at his record, he'll beat up on the little guys. Donald Trump doesn't want to engage in a long war that he's going to take a lot of heat for. I don't think he does it. All the things we're talking about are horrific, unthinkable potential repercussions. Again, I don't think Trump does it, for the discussion that we're having.

#Danny

Does the United States have the air defenses to shore up Israel, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain? I mean, there's a long list of countries that are almost on their hands and knees saying, "We need this before you can do anything to Iran." Do they have enough? Does the United States have enough of these? Are there any problems that could arise from this effort to shore these allies—or vassals, or whatever we want to call them—up?

#Scott Ritter

We don't have enough of them, and the ones we have don't work—not the way we want them to work. I mean, this is the real problem. The American people need to wake up to the fact that they've fallen victim to a propaganda campaign waged against them by the U.S. government. The Patriot system doesn't work, not the way it's advertised. It's linked, I think, to the old Safeguard system—the anti-ballistic missile system we spent a lot of money developing in the 1960s and '70s before the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty made it go away. But when the U.S. Army said it needed a theater anti-air defense missile, rather than build it from scratch, the defense contractors did what defense contractors do.

They take the technology, bring it over, and adapt it so they can save on research costs, charge maximum money, and make maximum profits. The Patriot just sucks as a system. It's fundamentally flawed in the way it approaches the problem because it takes legacy technology from the '60s and '70s and tries to adapt it. We've been tinkering with it ever since—update after update after update. It still doesn't work the way it's supposed to. The Russians have solved this problem—just ask the Ukrainians. They're not shooting down the Russian missiles. And the Russians have shared their solutions with the Iranians. The Iranians have been following.

Remember, they have a very good intelligence service. Ask yourself how they kidnapped the, uh, the Beast of Kandahar—the RQ, whatever it was—you know, the big B-2-looking stealth drone. The Iranians hijacked it. It took off, and the Iranians intercepted the signal, took it over, brought it in, and landed it. To do that, they had to solve a bunch of decryption problems. They had to develop the technology. They did it. The Iranians are the ones who got Hezbollah to break into Israeli tactical frequency-hopping radio systems so they could, in real time, collect it, decrypt it, and then speak into it, mimicking the voices of the Israelis. Nobody thought that was possible.

So when an Israeli voice that sounds like Captain So-and-so gives the code word to initiate the attack, the Israeli commandos initiate the attack and walk straight into an ambush. Ask them about it—the 2006 war. The Iranians are really, really good. They always score at the top in the Global Mathematics Olympiads. These are people who have solved a whole bunch of problems. And, you know, they've figured out how to defeat American air defense. They collected a lot of intelligence. Again, they're not stupid. They tested the system—they were playing games in the end. At the beginning, when they were launching, it was a reaction because they'd been hit hard, so they were just throwing back. Once they got their feet on the ground... notice how the missile war changed.

It became a much more directed thing. What they were doing was collecting intelligence. They were saying, "Let's try this combination. Boom, boom, boom, boom. How are they doing? Boom, boom, boom. We got it. Okay, let's try this. Yep, tickle that one. Okay, we take that out, take that out. Now come in with the one—nothing gets it. Boom. Okay, we solved that problem. Let's move on." They did a whole bunch of intelligence collection, a whole bunch of problem solving. The Russians are pouring data into them, and they're pouring data into the Russians. By the way, we don't have an air defense solution to the Iranian ballistic missile problem.

This is a hundred percent certain, and Israel doesn't have one either. The Iranians have been developing newer technology. They've taken all that intelligence collection data they gathered—and they know what to do with it. The Israelis and the Americans also collected intelligence. You know, there's missile debris all over Israel. I know this for a fact because I worked with the Israelis who collected missile debris during Desert Storm, and I know what they do with it. I know how they exploit it. They're very effective, and you can learn a lot from missile debris. So I'm sure they've done the same.

But then you need to upgrade an already defective system. So you learn something, but now you've got to go to the Patriot and upgrade it. So, you know what, you modify it—it's just a bad, broken system. THAAD is more modern, but again, very limited in what it can and can't do. And it's older technology. Remember, we don't have any cutting-edge technology out there. The Israelis are deploying some sort of laser thing that won't last—trust me. And again, there's just nothing there that can defend American bases from a concerted, directed Iranian ballistic missile attack.

#Garland Nixon

If I could throw something else in— you know, to quote Joseph Stalin, “quantity has a quality of its own.” One of the things the Iranians learned, and they’ve talked about it—not much lately, but I can recall earlier the Iranians saying—was that they were going to throw 2,000 missiles at Israel in the first two days, a thousand missiles a day. So, you know, one of the issues isn’t just the technology or the technical capacity of these missiles, or the ability to shoot them down. One of the things that’s been learned is that if you throw enough drones, even if they’re slow, and some of them are duds—and some of the missiles are too—you can still overwhelm defenses. We’ve seen the Russians do that with dud missiles, cardboard drones, you name it.

What you do is throw so many things at someone that you overwhelm their system. And you know what the Iranians are thinking? “Well, if you ran out in twelve days last time, if we throw that number of missiles and drones at you in the first three days, you’re going to be in trouble.” So clearly, that’s the Iranian strategy. I mean, you don’t have to be a military strategist to figure this out. If it starts, they know we’ll throw everything we can—old missiles, whatever we’ve got—in the first four or five days. We’ll exhaust your supplies of air-defense missiles, because air-defense missiles generally run at a minimum of two-to-one for every missile that’s fired. And you’ve got missiles coming in—remember those pictures, the skies lit up with drones.

So regardless— or notwithstanding— the technical ability of these systems to shoot down Iranian missiles, just the sheer numbers the Iranians can put in the sky, and the strategy they’ve learned, mean you can’t last very long. And what happens? What happens six days out, when you’re like, “Oh, crap, we’re all out of missiles”? Then you call the Iranians: “Hey, remember that twelve-day thing? What was it, six days this time? Can we stop it?” What happens if the Iranians say, “Oh no, I don’t think so. We’re just going to keep throwing. We’re not answering the phone this time. Last time we answered, but not this time.” And what does it come down to? “Well, if you don’t stop bombing me, I nuke you.” And again, you start throwing nukes— you’re in the U.S. empire— you don’t know where that goes. So there’s the issue of pure numbers that can’t be overcome. We don’t have enough missiles, and we couldn’t have enough missiles, because they’ve discovered that— forget the missiles— they can outdo you with drones.

#Danny

There’s been a lot of commentary in the media, including Israeli media. The *Jerusalem Post* wrote that Iranian drone swarms—cheap drones—pose a threat to U.S. ships, even, you know, the USS *Abraham Lincoln*. And I’m wondering, you mentioned the dangers of sinking a ship that could go nuclear, because the U.S. cannot take such a hit. But do you believe that Iran would? Because they have a lot of drones—I don’t know what the number is, the estimated number, of course—and stockpiles and weapons numbers are often not publicized. I’m curious if this could be one of the ways Iran addresses the Trump administration’s proclaimed armada, sending hundreds of drones toward them. What do you make of this?

#Scott Ritter

It could be, but I want to caution people that, you know, the United States— I know there are a lot of people out there who just hate the United States. A lot of people in your chat hate America, I see it. And they just despise the U.S. I'm not saying they don't have just cause, but, you know, we're not asleep at the wheel. The carrier battle group has, you know, EA-6s— I guess they call them Prowlers or Growlers— the electronic warfare planes they've developed. They've been working on how to blow out the electronics of systems that come in. And if you get a slow-flying drone and a swarm of them, we're going to be out there blasting their electronics before they even come in— blowing them out of the air, frying their electronics, dumbing them down.

See, the thing is, these ships have automatic miniguns that put out a very high rate of fire. It's just not going to be— I don't think the drone, because it's slow, is the real threat. The mass cruise missile attack, when you factor in speed, that's what you're dealing with—mass missile attack speed. Speed is the key. But if you're coming in with a cloud of insects, they're not going to make it to the carrier battle group. The carrier battle group will have them locked down and blown out of the water. There's too much distance for them to travel. So no, I'm not worried about the drone swarm, because I actually do think we've developed a solution for that. We haven't developed a solution for hypersonic, you know, maneuvering warheads—that's a different game. But drones flying in slow? I know the people who work on this; we've got them wired in.