

# Daniel Davis: China & Russia Will Defend Iran

Lt. Col. Daniel Davis is a 4x combat veteran, the recipient of the Ridenhour Prize for Truth-Telling, and is the host of the Daniel Davis Deep Dive YouTube channel. Lt. Col. Davis discusses why diplomacy in Iran has failed, how there is no off-ramp, and why this war will likely be a disaster. Daniel Davis Deep Dive: <https://www.youtube.com/@DanielDavisDeepDive/videos> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: [https://x.com/Glenn\\_Diesen](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](https://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. Today we're joined by Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis, a four-time combat veteran and host of the very popular \*Daniel Davis Deep Dive\* YouTube show. I'll leave a link in the description, and I highly recommend watching the videos and subscribing — that's where I get a lot of my information, at least. Thank you for coming back on the program.

## #Daniel Davis

Oh, it's certainly my pleasure. Always great to be here.

## #Glenn

I wanted to get your take on what's happening now in Iran. First of all, how do you read the diplomacy? Because it seems to be taking place under very strange conditions. This is what the Iranians are complaining about — they don't like negotiations when they have a gun pointed at their head. But given that the U.S. and Iran have forty-seven years of conflict behind them since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, there seems to be a lot to resolve. If you look past all this talk about wanting justice for protesters and that kind of thing, what are the main problems here? Because when you're negotiating with the U.S. Navy and Air Force parked off the coast of Iran, I guess it's great for pressure — but what can Iran actually be pressured into? And how long can the U.S. afford to keep doing diplomacy with such a massive force deployed? It seems like an expensive endeavor.

## #Daniel Davis

Well, yeah. And, you know, you have to look, first of all, at what we're even trying to accomplish here. What are we trying to do? It certainly makes sense that the Iranian side would be very frustrated because, as you just alluded to, in just the last month or so — the last few weeks — it's either "those poor protesters in Iran, we have to defend them," or "well, it's the nuclear program again," or "it's their long-range missiles," or "it's their proxy forces," or just "the fact that they exist." It keeps going back and forth. What exactly are we negotiating for? When we say we're looking for diplomacy, what kind of diplomatic outcome are we actually talking about — toward what end?

What does the end state look like? What does it look like for the United States to say, "OK, if diplomacy works, this is what the end will look like. We'll have this, this, and that, and they won't have the other thing. They'll have X, Y, and Z, and then we'll all live together peacefully." That doesn't exist. And I think the reason it doesn't exist is because this is all driven — and we just have to be honest about this — by Israel. This is what Benjamin Netanyahu has long, long, long wanted, along with many others. It's not just him, but he's the prime minister right now, and he's definitely the driving force behind all of this.

They do not want the Islamic Republic to exist. So they're not looking to curtail the nuclear program. They're not looking to actually limit defensive missiles for their own purposes or anything like that. And they would certainly like to have the proxies turned off — who wouldn't? But those really aren't the fundamental issues for them. The fundamental issue is the existence of the Iranian regime. They just don't want it to exist. So they're using whatever seems most persuasive to the American public. That's the primary objective. The Israeli public is already sold; they don't have to be convinced anymore. They're ready to go and totally supportive of this.

But the American public isn't as much. So they have to try to build a case, and they're like, "OK, well, sometimes it's the negotiations on the nuclear program. We don't want a nuclear bomb." And that generates some interest. And then there are other things, because we have such bleeding hearts — we'll say, "Oh, those poor protesters," and they build that up, and then it's democracy and freedom and freedom of speech. You know, whatever works today, we'll try that again. Which is why it shows there's no actual objective for the United States.

So President Trump has so much pressure, either from Benjamin Netanyahu personally or from a lot of the AIPAC sponsors or folks in the United States — and there are many of them — and from his own allies inside his otherwise inner circle that's supposed to be on his side. But they're definitely on the side of the Israelis against him, and they're putting pressure on him to do something that's not militarily sound and not necessary for our national security. And there's no negotiated path that will make all the parties happy. It just doesn't exist, because Israel doesn't want it to exist. So that's why you see the Iranians so frustrated, because they're like, "This isn't anything new for us."

I mean, they worked for two years with the Obama administration to get the JCPOA, which by all accounts was flawed, because nothing is perfect in human affairs. But it was really good at its

primary objective, which was to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon and to give us confidence that they weren't going down the path to get one. That was all in place — the intrusive inspections, the limits on reprocessing capabilities, the limits on the amount of material they could possess, etc. All those were really, really good things if your objective was actually to prevent a nuclear weapon, which the Iranians didn't want anyway, so they could work with that.

And of course, we tore that up in 2018. We said we wanted a better deal, which basically meant they would give more and get nothing. Surprisingly enough, they weren't interested in that. Then, you know, their embassy gets blown up in 2024, someone gets assassinated in their capital later that year, and they get attacked by Israel in 2025. We claim we had a deal and wanted to do nuclear negotiations — we were already five rounds in when the bombs started falling. So Iran is saying, "Well, where's the diplomacy there? You were just using that as a cover." And now here we are again — same thing. You know, President Trump says we had ten to fifteen days, several days ago, to come up with a negotiated settlement.

But Iran is like, what negotiation? We're willing to have a negotiation here on the nuclear program, if that's your stated objective, but not on these other things. And there's no rational reason why we would say, "Get rid of your only defensive capability — the long-range missiles — or your efforts to protect yourself forward with some of these proxies, what they call allies." There's no rational reason to say you have to get rid of those things. There's no justification for it. It's just what we want. So we're asking Iran to do something that's against their national interest, that's counterproductive to their own national security, and that's irrational — something we would never do. And so that means the only thing left is the use of force.

I think that's by design. And I think that's where we are right now. I'm hopeful that President Trump will listen to, at least according to reports, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the vice president, J.D. Vance, and Tulsi Gabbard — who are all reportedly telling him this would be a disaster. Don't do it. But there are so many others — Lindsey Graham, Jack Keane, Mike Pompeo, a bunch of other folks. Ted Cruz has joined in recently. All these people are calling for combat operations and the destruction of Iran. It's just going to be a matter of who wins that pressure contest on the one guy that matters — Donald Trump. And I think he's probably going to lose that pressure battle.

## **#Glenn**

This is a problem of essentially telling Iran, "The only reason we haven't bombed you yet is because you have a powerful conventional deterrent. And we will bomb you unless you give up that deterrent — and then just hope that we won't bomb you." Well, it makes it even more problematic, I guess, as you suggested, that there are all these different objectives. I think that just presenting it as a nuclear issue is strategically good for communication. It's a good way of getting the whole world behind you, because nobody wants to see Iran with a nuclear weapon. But once it's time to make a deal, as you suggest, it's problematic, because if Iran delivers on a nuclear deal showing that they're

not going to get a nuclear weapon, then that means our side has to normalize relations with Iran — which means it can strengthen itself economically. Now, if the ultimate objective is the destruction of Iran, yeah, you can see why we get entangled in this.

## **#Daniel Davis**

By the way, it's really important to point out that there are two — well, there are many, but two main voices in the U.S. Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Jack Keane are emphatic about saying, "No negotiated deal is good, because all it would do is extend the life of the regime. We can't do that." So, we shouldn't even try to get a negotiated settlement. That's what they're saying out loud, in the open. They don't even want to negotiate. They're just stripping away even the facade that there are actual negotiations. They don't want there to be one, because they say you can't trust them — they never keep their word — and so they're going to get a nuclear bomb and they're going to use it.

That's what they say. That's the claim. So they're saying there's no alternative but military force. If President Trump listens to sound military advice and doesn't attack, and instead comes up with some kind of negotiation with Iran — apparently Iran is more than happy to make a deal — then he's going to come under continued pressure from inside. And Israel, I promise you, will never give up on this lust for war with Iran. They'll keep the pressure on. We can't rule out the possibility that someday they might prompt some kind of attack that would then force the United States to engage anyway. It's just hard for me to see how this doesn't end in war.

## **#Glenn**

It does remind me a bit of these conflicting objectives in negotiations with Russia as well. I remember in June 2021, the former U.S. ambassador to NATO, Kurt Volker — who was also, I think, a special envoy on Donbass — wrote a piece as Biden and Putin were about to meet to try to de-escalate. In it, he argued — I think this is a direct quote — "Yes, success is confrontation." He warned that we shouldn't make a deal that de-escalates with the Russians because that would give them legitimacy and breathing room, it would strengthen Putin, and our goal should be the opposite. So that was his conclusion.

"Yes, success is confrontation." And this is the problem: when you have all these different objectives to weaken rivals, peace becomes your enemy. It's a very stupid place to be. So, you think this war is coming now unless Trump does a massive turnaround. But do you see anything recently — like his performance at the State of the Union speech, where he seemed to walk back some of his former hardline statements and suddenly it was all about nuclear weapons again? I'm not sure if that's genuine or if it's just him selling the war, or pulling back to avoid the war. It's very hard to read him, I think.

## **#Daniel Davis**

Yeah, no, I didn't see it in any hopeful way like that, because he just said, you know, they can't have a bomb — they can't have it. And, you know, he talked about all these bad things they've done as well. So all I saw was that he was basically saying, "I'm not going to tell anybody tonight what I'm going to do." But he didn't offer any words of olive branch, didn't offer any new diplomatic possibilities. He didn't say anything like, "Well, you know, we're talking and there are some positive signs coming from Tehran." None of that. He just kind of listed a bunch of claims about how bad the Iranians were, how many people they've killed and all that — painting them as this, you know, dastardly regime that can't be allowed to live, and just, you know, "We're not going to let them get a bomb."

So, keeping open the possibility that all we have to do is claim they're seeking a bomb — which, of course, there's no actual evidence for. And even when you ask about the obvious absurdity of that, they say, "Well, it was obliterated." They've repeated that even in recent days. Caroline Leavitt, the White House spokesperson, has said again recently that yes, it was completely obliterated back then, but now maybe they're going to try to build a new one. Who knows where? They never say that. Who knows how we'd even know that? They never explain, even though all the facilities were allegedly obliterated.

Now, all of a sudden, no, it's back on again. And then you had this ridiculous statement by Steve Witkoff a couple of days ago, saying that on top of it being obliterated seven or eight months ago, now they're one week away — one week away — from having bomb-making material, weapons-grade, which means 90 percent. Who knows where that's supposed to be, since you obliterated all their facilities? And apparently there's not a new one spinning it, you know, the 60 percent reprocessed facility. But that's just accepted at face value. It's absurd. And again, that's President Trump's primary guy.

## **#Glenn**

That was the White House statement back in June — that anyone who argues the Iranian nuclear program hasn't been obliterated is spreading fake news. And now, of course, they have to make the case that Iran could be days away from nuclear weapons. But in the interview you referred to, Witkoff also made the point that Trump was a bit surprised the Iranians hadn't capitulated yet. What would that actually entail, though — this capitulation Witkoff mentioned? Because if it's about nuclear weapons, then sure, OK, we capitulate, we're not going to develop a nuclear weapon. But how do you even operationalize "capitulation," given the wider demands coming from the United States?

## **#Daniel Davis**

Yeah, the way I interpret that is both Witkoff and Trump are, I think, thinking like they would if they were in that position — like Americans. If somebody had the upper hand against us and came in and

said, "OK, give up your nuclear weapons, give up your long-range missiles, quit supporting your regional allies — we call them proxies — and then we won't bomb you. Everything will be fine." So to them, they're like, "OK, that's what we would do then." It makes sense in their minds to do that. "Well, I don't want to receive this bomb. I see this massive armada of power that you have in both the air and the sea, and all these bases throughout the region. Sure, why would I not do that?"

So I think he was telling the truth there — that he was genuinely perplexed they didn't accept that. Because the only way capitulation makes sense there is not just on a nuclear deal; it would have to include the missiles and the proxies as well. That's what a capitulation would look like. And to them, they can't imagine somebody saying, "No, I'm going to go against what's self-described as the most powerful military on the planet," with all this incredible firepower on display. And it is legit — I'm not trying to minimize it. It's a lot of firepower, and it can destroy tremendous amounts of things above the ground, which is an important caveat.

And it can kill a lot of people — there's no doubt. He doesn't understand how someone would say, "I'd rather not capitulate and suffer that onslaught than give you everything you ask." But that means they have no understanding whatsoever of the Islamic Republic of Iran — of the religious component of that, of their culture as Persians. They just don't understand the history of what they've done and how their mentality works. And you don't understand anything if you're surprised by that. I mean, you can't be surprised by that. And yet, there he is saying it — and I think he really meant it.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah, well, one problem — another problem, it seems, with the Trump administration is that he tends to go for these easy wins. I think that's tied to his aversion to the forever wars. So, Panama — that was a bit of pressure, the U.S. got some concessions. He had the one-day operation inside Venezuela; again, it was a success, with the limited objectives that were set. Greenland was supposed to be something easy, and when it didn't work, he pulled back a bit. Got to squeeze some assets out of Ukraine. All of this has the same format to it — very little effort, and then at least something to show for it. He can leave as a victor without many consequences.

But what we're looking at here is the exact opposite. Yeah, he could knock out Iran in a big blow, and then Israel gets to dominate the region. Iran gets chopped into smaller pieces. Russia and China are weakened. He can go for a victory lap — a significant victory, perhaps. But what if he fails here? Because that's a very real possibility. I haven't seen a clear strategy for what victory actually means or how it's supposed to be achieved. But if it fails, what happens then? Because this would be quite shocking for the U.S., which, much like Israel, tends to rest on credibility. What do you think the possibility is here?

## **#Daniel Davis**

Yeah, that's something that really needs a lot of analysis and light shined on it, because President Trump loves to talk a big game. And then, like with the Houthis, he did it for seven weeks, saw it wasn't going to work, wasn't going to succeed anywhere, so he just said, "OK, they begged me to stop doing it." So we allowed them to go, as long as they didn't shoot any Americans alive. You know, we're good to go—just quit fighting. They were blowing up all these alleged drug boats in the Caribbean and the Pacific Oceans and just said, "Yeah, they're there. We declared that they're guilty, so we assassinated them all, killed everybody just because we wanted to." What can a drug boat do? It can't fight back. And so those were easy. And then we claimed—

Oh, yeah. And it had this tremendous impact — ninety-eight percent of all the drugs coming to the U. S. by water have now been cut off, which was completely bogus. There wasn't any truth to it whatsoever, because those boats could never reach America anyway. So they had no impact on the drugs that might be coming in through the water in the Caribbean and Pacific Oceans. But he claimed they did. And most people don't know — they just said, "OK, I guess it's true," and moved on. It didn't cost him anything except for a few missiles. Then there was the issue in Venezuela, the attacks in Nigeria, the attacks in Somalia, the attacks in Syria, the assassinations we did of some people in Iraq earlier. He just goes all over the place. But these are all one-offs, and he claims victory.

This one — that's why I'm hopeful that Vice President Vance, if this is true, and Tulsi Gabbard, and certainly folks like you, channels like ours, and several others are saying, "Don't do this." It will not be quick and decisive. Apparently, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Kane, is also saying there are significant risks — and that's an understatement. There's the probability, the almost certainty, I would say, that you're going to have a lot of casualties. Lindsey Graham acknowledges that there are going to be a lot of casualties but is fine with them, which, as an American, just angers me greatly — that he's willing to have a war of choice that we don't need for our national security and is fine with it costing the lives of American service members. That's reprehensible in itself, and it's something I believe needs more attention.

Illumination said that you're saying he had the audacity, on camera, to one day say, "Well, God bless you if you're one of those who's going to be involved over there. God bless you." What are you talking about, man? Why would you want to sacrifice the lives of Americans for the desires — not even the needs — of another head of government? I mean, that's insulting and angering to me. But that's kind of what passes for elite thinking in the United States right now. And, you know, we could probably go into Europe — there's probably a lot there too — but it's a real problem, because militarily the chances are you're not going to succeed here. You said, "What happens if you don't succeed?" Well, if you look at the fundamentals here...

Iran has what they call underground missile cities, which they've been building for decades. These things are massive in some cases. They have manufacturing going on underground and all that. Some of them we know where they are, I'm sure. Some we don't. Some we may know where they are, but we can't knock them out. So it's not just about what you can hit on the surface — you have

to be able to destroy what's underneath, and you're probably not going to be able to do that. They're going to have some capacity to strike back, and every incentive to use all of their capabilities while they have them, to cause us damage and casualties, to show there's a price to pay for this. Surely President Trump knows that. So it's not going to be like all those other situations you just described — it's going to be radically different.

And the chances of victory — militarily attainable objectives — are vast? Very low. I would say astronomically low, almost to the point where, practically speaking, you're not going to accomplish your task of destroying the regime and causing the people to rise up, which is apparently our issue. You had Senator Ted Cruz saying we should be arming the protesters, because they don't want boots on the ground. So it looks like they're trying to use the proxy force of the Iranian people, just giving them guns, ammunition, communication devices, etc. Which is also reprehensible in my view, because we're basically saying we want the people of Iran to be slaughtered in large numbers against, you know, a professional military. They're not going to be — they're just going to be guys with guns, at best.

I mean, I've seen that play out before, and that could lose in large numbers. But that's not going to set, because the Iranian regime has well-trained forces and plenty of people on their side. By the way, this doesn't get enough attention — it's not like the whole country is against the regime. There are large percentages of the population that are for the regime and would also fight for them as well. So, in my mind, this has no chance of success. And I hope President Trump's aversion to getting sucked into something will win the day. I just don't think it will. I hope it does.

## **#Glenn**

Well, I've heard a lot of this new talk coming from Trump's advisors and military planners that this will definitely not be a cakewalk. There are a lot of pitfalls. It's a bit late, of course, after mobilizing all these military assets and making all these huge statements. But if you were tasked with the war planning here — the attack on Iran — what would be your main concerns, or the main challenges in carrying out such an operation with the military resources at your disposal?

## **#Daniel Davis**

Yeah, the most difficult task would be, first of all, to knock out the air defense capabilities. That's got to be number one, because if you don't take those out, then everything else you try to do is going to be at risk. A lot of the targets you'd have to attack include the air defense systems and definitely their offensive air capability — their mobile missiles, their fixed missile sites, and so on. That would be right after, as number two, because you want to limit the amount of damage they can do to Israel and to our bases in the region. So you'd have to go after the air defense missiles first.

But almost simultaneously, you're going to have to go after at least the fixed sites of these missiles, because—unless Iran is stupid—the minute they see the attack begin, they'll start firing their

offensive missiles before they get taken out, especially the fixed sites. I'd wager they probably have a standing order right now that the fixed sites are going to fire first, because they know those are targeted. The mobile sites they can deal with later on. But those fixed ones, they've got to fire while they have them, because if they lose those, they can't be repaired in any short amount of time. So they're going to rely on the mobile sites after that.

But also, if they're smart—if they have these underground facilities all over the country, as is claimed—then that probably means they're also going to have a lot of their air defense assets underground and out of targeting range. So they've got to have some out all the time, or they're going to get taken by surprise. What I fear, and the difficulty for our offensive capacity, is that I'm going to take out what I know. But then, when I think, "OK, we've got those," and now we're flying in to get to the next level of targets—the offensive missiles, the fixed sites, the mobile launchers, and so on—all of a sudden, some of these air defense missiles and batteries come up out of the ground where I thought we'd already destroyed them.

But now they're maybe up in the rear, and we're vulnerable to a flank attack from those. That's a real problem and a concern I'd have if I were in charge of the air component system. How can we know we're going to get those air defense missiles out? And is it a finite number? Do I know how many they have, so I know if I've gotten them all or not? Or are they going to surprise me a week later, two weeks later, a month later—suddenly they pop up in the rear when I think they're already gone, and we start losing aircraft all over the place? One of the bigger issues is the refueling tankers—the KC-135s and some others—or maybe it's the KC-46, I can't remember which one, the air refuelers.

Those things are incredibly vulnerable. It's not hard at all to knock them out if you have air defense. So the priority target for the Iranian side is going to be those air refuelers, because if you don't have the refuelers—and some of this is going to have to be done over Iranian territory—the country is so big, and some of the targets are so far away from the hardened bases we have, let alone the aircraft carriers. They're coming from a long way out, and they don't have the range to go all the way to these targets and then come back. They're going to have to be refueled, in some cases twice, before they even get to the target and then be able to return. So the Iranians are going to be thinking the opposite: how can we take out these refuelers?

Because that's the long pole in the tent for us—if you take the refuelers out, if you don't have enough of those, then you can't use your offensive firepower to get further in. So that's one of the big things you're going to have to defend against, and it's going to be a real problem if you lose them. And then the other thing is, of course, the missile sites themselves. Like I said, there are some known fixed sites that we've definitely targeted, and those will be priority targets, especially for a bunch of Tomahawks, because you don't have to worry about aircrews on that one—you can just launch them from a long way off. But the real problem is the mobile launchers. We keep talking about how apparently they've got a lot of those in there.

Most of them are, at the moment, securely underground. We probably know where some of the doors are that they come out of, but we probably don't know others. You can blow those doors up and rubble the place, whatever. But eventually they're going to be able to tunnel and get back out of there. And once they get the doors open and can get the vehicles out, you still have that problem. So this is something that's going to be going on for a long time. All of that is the initial, the first- and second-level problems. But then you have the strategic problem. This is one of the things that's so crucial to understand: for us to succeed, we have to accomplish all of our primary tasks, and that means regime destruction. We've got to be able to take the regime out.

Iran merely has to survive. So if they lose a whole bunch of their air defenses—most of their air defenses—they lose a bunch. If they lose all of their fixed sites and a bunch of their mobile launchers but still retain the ability to fire, and if they have these bunker capabilities all over the country and their leadership spread out, as they almost certainly do, then they will continue to exist. They will continue to function. And if you don't get that other lucky thing—thinking the people are going to rise up and do your job on the ground for you, go kill these guys, and take over with another revolution—I know that's what people hope.

They're looking for something like what happened in Libya when Gaddafi was taken out with Western air power. They want that kind of scenario where the locals rise up. I just don't know that that's possible yet—I think it's unlikely. So if you can't get that done and the regime survives and retains power, this could drag on for weeks, then into months, and become inconsequential. They could keep periodically firing missiles, blowing up our bases, attacking our ships at sea. This could get ugly. And President Trump—I don't know that he can survive domestically, especially heading into a midterm.

If he promises a quick, sharp, clean victory and he can't produce it, and we're suffering casualties with no path to victory—no achievable, attainable military objectives he can credibly tell anyone we're going to win—then he starts to look really, really bad. It loses even more support at home because he was elected as the guy who's not going to get into wars of choice and isn't for any dumb wars. And now, here he will have, in this case, started one he can't end. It could just doom the rest of his term. He could be a lame duck even before he gets to the midterms, much less afterwards. So there's so much at stake here, and the odds of success are almost stratospheric in difficulty. But for the Iranian side, they just have to survive.

## **#Glenn**

We'll assume the U.S. is planning to gain some benefit from the element of surprise—not in terms of attacking, because I think Iran sees it coming a mile away—but something to cause chaos: maybe electronic warfare, using some fighters inside the country, some proxy force, and so on. Drones have definitely been smuggled into Iran. I'm sure there's some infiltration that allows them to target the leadership, something along those lines. But if this were happening for the first time, you'd assume it would have been a lot bigger. But again, this movie isn't very old.

We saw this being played out back in June. There was an attempt to deliver a knockout blow against the government. So why, if anything, has Iran rolled up a lot of these things? I mean, all these local fighters, the networks, the drones that were smuggled in, the people who infiltrated the government—surely some of this must be under control. All these American assets and Israeli preparations being put in place—the Iranians must have dealt with much of this since June. Can this really be replaced in such a short period of time?

## **#Daniel Davis**

No, obviously, strategic surprise is gone—it doesn't exist. Tactical surprise, I think, is also gone, unless there's something different they didn't do in June that I'm not aware of, something they just suddenly pulled off. And there may be some of that. You know, there are a lot of smart people on both sides of this, and they may come up with something no one's thought about yet. But the problem is, the range of things you could do now that would actually catch them by surprise is really small, because you've already done a lot of these things. I'm going all the way back to, well, at least 2020—and even before that, with things like Stuxnet in 2010. So a lot of these cyberattacks have already been done, and they've now built up defenses against that.

They have pathways to prevent some of that stuff. They have experts who can deal with it faster now because they've got some experience with it. And then, of course, you talked about what happened in June, where they had the saboteurs on site—they launched a lot of drones. They may try to do some of that again, but now Iran is looking for it, so they won't be caught with their pants down again. Even when they were last time, they recovered fairly quickly—about 12 hours. There was a lot of damage to communications and command and control, a lot of cyberattacks that were very successful, and a lot of physical destruction from the drones, etc. They recovered in about 12 hours from that, primarily. Well, now they're not likely to get caught by surprise on that again. I do have reports that there are some Western special forces already on the ground.

I can imagine there's probably a lot more going on than I even know about, so I'm sure there will be some surprises. But mentally, Iran's ready for them already. The issue is, this is a war—or it will be—not just a strike. You're talking about a massive country that's, what, four or five times bigger than Iraq, and many times bigger than Israel, for example. So they can spread things out a lot, and they can absorb some hits here and there tactically, but they're not going to absorb them everywhere, because there just aren't that many assets. So the risk to Iran is significant, and the damage that will be done to Iran is significant. There's no question about that.

But when we're talking about the mentality on the Iranian side, they've calculated that they're going to have to fight this out to reestablish deterrence. So far, they've been passive in nearly everything that's happened—or at least tepid—and now they see that this approach has utterly failed. The only thing left to them, given what's been forced upon them, is a massive retaliation to cause primary casualties. I mean, up to now they've studiously avoided causing casualties, even during the 2025

attack. They've avoided them even on the Iranian-Israeli side. I think this time they'll do the opposite—they'll seek casualties to inflict pain on the people doing this, to show that you can't just keep doing it forever.

With the idea that they want to stop doing it—come up with some other face-saving, negotiated settlement—which the Iranians would be only too happy to accomplish, as long as it stops the destruction. Because it's going to be hard for them to overcome the losses they've suffered. But to them, they've calculated that in the long term, it's necessary for their survival. Otherwise, this will keep going until one day, out of nowhere, they may face a strategic surprise—without all this buildup and preparation—where they could be assassinated, or there could be a loss of the regime. So this is literally a life-and-death issue for Iran, and there's very little they won't do here.

## **#Glenn**

It's not a great strategy to put any country in an all-or-nothing situation, because they'll then act very differently. Let me just ask a final brief question here, though. I guess over the past 30-plus years, we've always gone to war and bombed small to medium-sized countries—small in territory, population, and military capabilities. We've been able to control the airspace. We've always had plenty of allies surrounding them. We've been able to isolate our targets and make sure they get no external support. In other words, we've kept all the variables as constant as possible to have full control of the battlefield. But this time, there are a lot of uncertain variables, which is why I guess many are getting cold feet. In terms of external support, how do you see Russia and China? Because it seems very likely they're going to assist in some way. But how? Is it electronic warfare, or how will they do this?

## **#Daniel Davis**

Too many people are looking at this as just Iran—that we've got them isolated again—because that's the only way we've done business, and that's what everyone expects. But there have been statements from others, and we don't know if these are just hyperbole or real claims that they're going to act. The worst-case scenario is that the regional proxies mean what they say—that Hezbollah will start attacking Israel, that Kataib Hezbollah in Iraq will start hitting American sites, and that the Houthis will reemerge and begin attacking shipping or naval assets in the region.

And all of a sudden you have all kinds of stuff coming at you—not just from Iran, but from all these other places too. That would be a huge problem for our air campaign if we're suddenly taking fire from the ground, from drones, and from other sources—like Kataib Hezbollah in Iraq or the Houthis in the Red Sea. I mean, you see, it's going to be a real problem trying to get all this done. And the Iranians, too—this could be a big problem if they actually do it. I don't know that they will; they might claim they will and then not follow through.

There was a lot of expectation that when Israel went to war with Iran the first time, Hezbollah in Lebanon would engage—and they basically didn't. Then they were just decimated, top to bottom, in their leadership. So there's some history suggesting they won't do it. But we're rolling the dice to think they won't here. Those are just the regional players. Then you get the strategic ones—Russia and China—and they both have incentives for Iran not to fall. Now, they don't want to get into a war, because China prioritizes the Taiwan issue above anything else, and Russia prioritizes the Ukraine war above anything else. So they're not going to get distracted by something like this.

And they certainly don't want to get into a shooting war with the United States over Iran. But Russia needs the technology for their drones, and China needs Iran for its energy supply, which is not an inconsequential amount. And we didn't even talk about this—they need the Strait of Hormuz to stay open. All of us do, or that's going to cause a lot of problems too. I just can't imagine that Iran would say, "Well, I don't want to cause a problem for the global economy, so we're going to leave the Strait of Hormuz alone." Why would they do that? I mean, I think one of their primary objectives would be to cause the West—especially the global economy, but primarily the West—as much trouble as they could on the economic front as well.

So I imagine they'd do whatever they could to shut that thing down and cause all kinds of trouble there. And I'd imagine China and Russia could—I'm sure they'll do something subtle if they haven't already. I mean, China has a ship in the area, so they're probably going to get some early warning to Iran. I'm not sure what Russia would do. Again, I think they want to avoid a conflict, but they'll help around the edges. And I think both of those countries would also be more than happy to see us get sucked into a long-term war that just depletes our air defense capabilities, our offensive missiles, damages or takes out some of our aircraft, maybe loses some of our ships or causes damage. They'd probably be happy to see that go on for a long time.

So that's another reason they might want to sit it out militarily. But all of that together just shows that if we—well, it would have to be Trump just saying, "I hope everything works out my way, that nobody does anything I don't want them to, that everybody leaves Iran isolated, and that they don't do anything we don't want them to do. And then we'll have a big victory." I just can't imagine that being the case. There are too many variables that all have to go in your favor. And what if we get the other extreme, where none of them go in your favor? This could be a huge, huge problem for us.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah, that's the problem with this former midnight-timer operation. The supposed success has gone to their heads.

## **#Daniel Davis**

Yeah, we may end up with a midnight nightmare this time, depending on how it goes.

## **#Glenn**

Well, thank you so much for taking the time and letting me pick your brain.

## **#Daniel Davis**

Always appreciate it. Thanks, Glenn Diesen. See you next time.