

USA Attacks Iran. Trump Declares War. | Live with Warwick Powell

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#Pascal

Welcome, everybody, to a very sad and not unforeseen live stream—one I hoped we wouldn't have to do. In fact, just a few hours ago, the big war between the United States, Israel, and Iran started, and it started in a way that some people predicted: a joint attack. Although I must say, the latest chatter was, of course, that Israel would strike first and then provoke a reaction by Iran, which would then draw in the United States. But no, that's not what happened. It is a joint strike, and Donald Trump has already declared it. The pictures coming out of Tehran look pretty bad—large plumes of smoke—and I am very happy to be joined by my friend and colleague, Dr. Warwick Powell, in Brisbane, Australia. Warwick, welcome.

#Warwick Powell

Well, what terrible circumstances to be with you tonight—but it's always a pleasure to join you. Thank you.

#Pascal

No, and it is absolutely horrible. Thank you for making the time, because we just need to discuss what this now means. I do think that this day, the 28th of February, 2026, will be remembered the way we remember the 24th of February, 2022—you know, the time when the big, full-out war, the so-called "special military operation," between Russia and Ukraine started. This changes things. But before we start, I'd just like to go very briefly over what we know so far. This war began with a U.S.-Israeli joint attack. We don't have many pictures right now from Iran. I know that Glenn Diesen managed to speak to Mohammad Marandi already, so it seems that some kind of communication with Iran is still possible.

And most importantly, what we have is a speech—a pretty unhinged speech by Donald Trump. Before you and I talk, I want us to listen to that, because basically, in my view, he just declared war, and he did it in one of the most difficult ways for the United States to ever come out on top of this. Here is Donald Trump speaking to us from a few hours ago. Again, for everybody, it's the middle of the night in the United States—the attack began at around 1 a.m. U.S. time. It must have been about 6 or 7 a.m., maybe 8 a.m., in Tehran when the attack started. And here's Donald Trump, in the dead of night, giving a speech.

#Donald Trump

The United States military has begun major combat operations in Iran. Our objective is to defend the American people by eliminating imminent threats from the Iranian regime—a vicious group of very hard, terrible people. Its menacing activities directly endanger the United States, our troops, our bases overseas, and our allies throughout the world. For 47 years, the Iranian regime has chanted “Death to America” and waged an unending campaign of bloodshed and mass murder, targeting the United States, our troops, and innocent people in many, many countries. Among the regime’s very first acts was backing a violent takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, holding dozens of American hostages for 444 days.

In 1983, Iran's proxies carried out the Marine barracks bombing in Beirut that killed 241 American military personnel. In 2000, they knew of and were probably involved in the attack on the USS Cole. Many died. Iranian forces killed and maimed hundreds of American service members in Iraq. The regime's proxies have continued to launch countless attacks against American forces stationed in the Middle East in recent years, as well as U.S. naval and commercial vessels and international shipping lanes. It's been mass terror, and we're not going to put up with it any longer. From Lebanon to Yemen and Syria to Iraq, the regime has armed, trained, and funded terrorist militias that have soaked the earth with blood and guts.

And it was Iran's proxy, Hamas, that launched the monstrous October 7th attacks on Israel, slaughtering more than 1,000 innocent people, including 46 Americans, while taking 12 of our citizens hostage. It was brutal—something like the world has never seen before. Iran is the world's number one state sponsor of terror and just recently killed tens of thousands of its own citizens in the streets as they protested. It has always been the policy of the United States, in particular my administration, that this terrorist regime can never have a nuclear weapon. I'll say it again: they can never have a nuclear weapon.

That is why, in Operation Midnight Hammer last June, we obliterated the regime's nuclear program at Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan. After that attack, we warned them never to resume their malicious pursuit of nuclear weapons, and we sought repeatedly to make a deal. We tried. They wanted to do it. They didn't want to do it. Again, they wanted to do it. They didn't want to do it. They didn't know what was happening. They just wanted to practice evil. But Iran refused, just as it has for decades and decades. They rejected every opportunity to renounce their nuclear ambitions, and we can't take it anymore.

Instead, they attempted to rebuild their nuclear program and continue developing long-range missiles that can now threaten our very good friends and allies in Europe, our troops stationed overseas, and could soon reach the American homeland. Just imagine how emboldened this regime would be if they ever had, and were actually armed with, nuclear weapons as a means to deliver their message. For these reasons, the United States military is undertaking a massive and ongoing

operation to prevent this very wicked, radical dictatorship from threatening America and our core national security interests. We are going to destroy their missiles and raze their missile industry to the ground. It will be totally—again—obliterated. We are going to annihilate their navy.

We are going to ensure that the region's terrorist proxies can no longer destabilize the region or the world, attack our forces, or use their IEDs—roadside bombs, as they're sometimes called—to so gravely wound and kill thousands and thousands of people, including many Americans. And we will ensure that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon. It's a very simple message: they will never have a nuclear weapon. This regime will soon learn that no one should challenge the strength and might of the United States Armed Forces. I built and rebuilt our military in my first administration, and there is no military on earth even close to its power, strength, or sophistication.

My administration has taken every possible step to minimize the risk to U.S. personnel in the region. Even so—and I do not make this statement lightly—the Iranian regime seeks to kill. The lives of courageous American heroes may be lost, and we may have casualties. That often happens in war, but we're doing this not for now; we're doing this for the future, and it is a noble mission. We pray for every service member as they selflessly risk their lives to ensure that Americans and our children will never be threatened by a nuclear-armed Iran. We ask God to protect all of our heroes in harm's way, and we trust that, with His help, the men and women of the armed forces will prevail.

We have the greatest in the world, and they will prevail. To the members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, the armed forces, and all of the police, I say tonight: you must lay down your weapons and you will have complete immunity—or, alternatively, face certain death. So lay down your arms; you will be treated fairly, with total immunity, or you will face certain death. Finally, to the great, proud people of Iran, I say tonight that the hour of your freedom is at hand. Stay sheltered. Don't leave your homes. It's very dangerous outside—bombs will be dropping everywhere. When we are finished, take over your government. It will be yours to take.

This will probably be your only chance for generations. For many years, you have asked for American help, but you never got it. No president was willing to do what I am willing to do tonight. Now you have a president who is giving you what you want. So let's see how you respond. America is backing you with overwhelming strength and devastating force. Now is the time to seize control of your destiny and to unleash the prosperous and glorious future that is close within your reach. This is the moment for action. Do not let it pass. May God bless the brave men and women of America's armed forces. May God bless the United States of America. May God bless you all.

#Pascal

Thank you. Unhinged, insane, incredible—a declaration of war, a declaration of war crimes. I just must remind everybody: police forces are civilian forces. Police forces are not legitimate targets in war. Even more insane than anything before. Please, Warwick, your reaction.

#Warwick Powell

Well, I'm glad, firstly, that you played it on fast forward, because it's the second time I've watched it in the last few hours, and I don't think I could have sat through it again at normal speed. A number of reactions. Obviously, this is the "peace president" explaining how he is the peace president. I'm being facetious, of course. If we actually break down a little bit of what's happened to date, and also what is included in that speech, I think it's quite clear that the United States has, for a long time—and particularly this administration and the machinery of state that supports it—had the Iranian government in its sights.

And we have had a clear declaration of regime change tonight. The fact that this particular attack was launched while the United States was supposedly in the middle of negotiations with the government of Iran really reinforces that, particularly in recent months, the United States has shown an inability to negotiate in good faith. This is going to have long-term ramifications for how other nations—bigger and more powerful ones—will ultimately view the United States. Nothing can happen without consequence.

I also noticed that he talked a lot about—you know, well, I mean, you pointed out that he essentially declared war—and he talked about it in both religious terms and noble terms. This, of course, has been the mantra of the United States for at least the last 35 years, and arguably going back to some of its other conflicts during the Cold War period, particularly when it mobilized wars in the name of fighting communism. American scholars Monica Duffy Toft and her colleague Sidita Kushi published a book a couple of years ago—which I might add, I would highly recommend people read—called **Dying by the Sword: The Militarization of American Foreign Policy.**

And it goes through in great detail the data on American military interventions over the course of the last 249 years—250 years now, since the founding of the United States—and concludes that the United States is a nation addicted to military intervention. And sadly, what we're seeing again today is the behavior of an addict that can't let go of military interventions as a way of dealing with the challenges of the world. If I might say one last thing, Pascal—if I may say one last thing—the United States, in pursuing this particular action, clearly is not acting in a narrowly defined sense of American national interest.

President Trump talked about the supposed threat that Iran posed to the United States. I don't think there is any reasonable observer or analyst who would say that Iran has posed a threat—let alone is in a position to pose a threat—to the United States, especially the United States mainland. The idea that President Trump speaks about concerns for American military bases in other parts of the world simply reminds me that the United States has military bases all over the world. And you have to wonder why, in fact, they're there. What we're seeing today is the United States acting out, in its desperation, the role of the 21st-century rogue. It's a role that it accused others of about 24 years ago.

Everything about today smacks of George Bush number two, when he and his Secretary of State at the time, Colin Powell, talked about and fabricated claims of threats to the United States and its allies as a basis for waging war on another country. Who can forget the images of Colin Powell waving a vial of nothing, in truth, at a congressional hearing, arguing that there was hard evidence of a threat being posed to America and that the United States had to act? Unfortunately, the United States has not learned any lessons from its recent history, let alone its long-term history. We are seeing a repeat of American violence being exacted on a government that, no doubt, American governments in particular don't like, but which clearly does not pose a threat to America or to Americans.

#Pascal

No, I just must say, even under the most stretched version of international law, the only time when something like an attack is ever in any way thinkable as a legal act is when it's a preemptive attack—like when the other side is already aiming its missiles at you and you shoot first. So the only one in the current circumstances who kind of had a right to actually shoot first would have been Iran, but it was the other side. What Donald Trump just laid out—a preventive attack—is utterly out of the question. Which is why, you know, this comment here from one of our viewers is, I think, very easy to answer: does anyone believe these lies? No, no.

I mean, the entire tirade he made up in the first two minutes was just about trying to demonize Iran as much as possible, right? Starting, of course—he had to go back over 50 years to the hostage crisis, right? And then he built from there, talking about all the brave Americans who died, all the service members, all the U.S. military personnel who were stationed around Iran. Of course, no mention of all the attacks on Iran before, no mention of all the diplomacy that was going on. Yesterday and on Friday, my home country of Switzerland, in Geneva, they were still negotiating with the Iranians, right? And the Iranians actually—this is the most amazing thing.

I need to show you this. I hope I have a bookmark somewhere here. The Omani foreign minister actually went on U.S. national TV, on **Face the Nation**, saying Iran had agreed to zero uranium enrichment and no stockpiling. He said that yesterday, and Al Jazeera still broadcast it—still before the actual attack. And, you know, this is quite remarkable, because Oman is usually very, very careful in its foreign policy, not leaning out of the window anywhere. It's like the most neutral of the Arab countries, and very, very cautious. So for them to go out and say, "Look, we are very close," is a huge deal. And then, in the wake of that, this sneak attack happens.

And of course, this is exactly the same pattern we saw half a year ago, when in June 2025 Israel attacked with the blessing and planning of the United States—right during negotiations. It's a pattern now. It's happened in other attacks too, like with Venezuela, with Maduro. This sneakiness, this way of making up excuses. But the thing is—and I just want to say this—like George Bush Jr., the second, at least tried to make up something like a case, right? At least they showed that little flask you were talking about. They were trying to make a case that the other side had weapons of

mass destruction. Here, this time, the whole accusation is that at some point in the future, someone might achieve it and get it.

By the way, he also completely undid his own remarks after the last 12-day war, right? Saying that the entire nuclear program had to be destroyed for good and that they would never have weapons. I mean, obviously, he's now admitting that he was lying. It's just flabbergasting. And again, the fact that he used the word "war" in this announcement is, from a legal standpoint—from a UN Charter standpoint—amazing, right? That he basically said, yes, I declared war. Also from a U.S. national law standpoint, because under the U.S. Constitution, it's Congress that has the power to declare war, not the chief executive of the executive branch.

#Warwick Powell

Look, as you say, President Trump's remarks clearly expose the lie about the events six or seven months ago, when the claim was made that the attacks on Iran's nuclear development facilities had obliterated those facilities. Even at the time, I might add, many sensible observers doubted those claims. But I guess it's now quite clear that those attacks did not actually achieve the exaggerated outcomes we heard about from President Trump. In fact, I think it was confirmed in the remarks or proposals made by the Iranian side in Geneva in the last 48 hours, where they also acknowledged, de facto, that they had enriched uranium resources they were willing to suspend further development of.

And so I think it's quite clear, firstly, that the attacks last year did not deliver on the claims made about them afterward, which really raises questions about how powerful the American military actually is and the lengths to which the American president will go in making things up. And speaking of making things up, I think it's quite clear too that what we've heard from President Trump is really a farrago of falsehoods and fallacies. In an attempt to fast-track a rationale—the idea of a preemptive strike—no real case has even been prepared. It's as if the leadership in Washington, the American political elite around the White House, couldn't even be bothered to go to the effort of cultivating the field, you know, plowing the ground and building that consent in the American community for these actions. They've just gone ahead, and there are some very, very significant risks.

There are a lot of, you know, issues in relation to, I think, the implications for the region. And I'll go through a couple of things with you. I'm keeping an eye on the live streams at the moment because, obviously, events are unfolding quickly. But there are very significant risks politically and at the domestic level in a midterm year. If these things don't go well, then we're likely to see—well, we're likely to see the unfolding of significant political uncertainties, where the White House could, when it's backed against the wall, look for ways to suspend midterm elections or intervene in those processes in its own interest. But I'm reading live updates at the moment, and they're unconfirmed—well, partially confirmed, if you will—but Iranian missiles have attacked the airbase in Qatar.

#Donald Trump

The most predictable one.

#Warwick Powell

At the airbase in Kuwait, the airbase in the UAE, and the U.S. Fifth Fleet base in Bahrain—and that's just in the last 20 minutes. We've also seen some images of smoke plumes rising in Haifa, which suggests that the Iranian air defense has not been successful in intercepting the incoming missiles. And we've got news that the Houthis in Yemen are beginning to launch attacks in the Red Sea on what they see as adversarial targets. So what we've got is, we've actually unleashed a regional war. And the thing to remember about all of this is that the government of Iran now has absolutely nothing to lose and everything to gain—nothing to lose and everything to gain.

And people need to really let that proposition sink in, because once your back's against the wall and you understand that the other side is going to seek to obliterate you—regardless of what you say or do—then there are absolutely no limits, no fears, and everything becomes a target. What the outcome of all this will be in a week's time, or three days, or three weeks, or three months, is hard to predict. But what we can be very confident of is that the government in Iran is not going to fold without putting up a very, very serious fight. And that fight is going to put at risk the lives of many people across the region, including civilians.

And it will also, I think, ultimately lead to the stretching of American resources in ways the Americans probably don't want to see happen—but which, ironically, analysts in the Pentagon actually warned about only a few days ago: that American arsenals are simply not up to a sustained conflict with Iran. Unless there's a quick decapitation and a quick regime change, the consequences for the United States as a military power—remember, President Trump just bragged about the American military being the biggest, the best, or what have you—that is now on the line as well. And when the government of Iran has reached the conclusion that it has nothing to lose, it's going to fire everything it has in its arsenal.

#Pascal

Yeah, because why wouldn't you? Why wouldn't you do everything you can, and why wouldn't you shoot at anything that's possibly there if you know you're going to die anyway if you don't try? I mean, you just created the logic in that speech by Donald Trump. And for everybody who just joined the livestream, we watched earlier the eight-minute speech by Donald Trump in which he made some of the dumbest remarks ever—or the smartest remarks, if you really want to pin yourself into a corner from which you'll have no escape whatsoever.

He officially declared that the goal of the United States is the utter, complete obliteration of the Iranian military—and the police force as well, by the way. He mentioned the police force and all of

the armed structures, along with the complete destruction of its nuclear and missile capabilities, right? Those are now the official goals of the mission. If those aren't achieved, then anything short of that is obviously going to count as a failure. I mean, this is an insane goal to set. He basically envisions a Berlin-1945-type ending to this mission, right?

A complete, utter eradication of the Islamic Republic. He also said—and I have to emphasize this—he's counting on the help of Iran to achieve that, right? He said the people of Iran now must step in and, once the bombing is over, take over the government. So the entire battle plan, at least according to what he shared with the world, is that the U.S. goes in, bombs everything to smithereens, and then the people who were bombed—the very people on whom the bombs were dropped—are supposed to go and finish the job and overthrow the government.

#Warwick Powell

It seems to me—and to welcome in those who did the bombing.

#Pascal

And welcoming those, yeah.

#Warwick Powell

Further reports say there was a direct hit on an apartment complex in Ashkelon, Israel. What that tells us again is that Israel's air defense capabilities are clearly being stretched.

#Pascal

We know they don't work.

#Warwick Powell

Well, I think we saw that in the 12-day war, right? And so, you know, the risk—and this is a difficult thing to contemplate—is why this risk was taken, because the military risk and the political risk that come with it from Washington's point of view are huge. In fact, one could argue that Washington doesn't have a lot to gain in the short term by actually pursuing this particular line and taking on these kinds of risks. But when you're as intertwined with the interests of the Israeli lobby and facing political difficulties in a midterm election year, then obviously the administration, in a desperate position, is willing to do desperate and dangerous things.

#Pascal

Yeah, and quite insane things. So, just from my side, an update here is that apparently, according to the Qatar News Agency, Qatar has just suspended civil aviation—or all aviation—over the country.

So Qatar Airways is probably grounded by now. We have a video shared by Hussein Dogru showing some smoke over a city somewhere in what looks like the Middle East. He's claiming that it's Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar—that this is actually showing a strike on a military base in Qatar, which is what you mentioned earlier. Yeah, so we know that these places are not defensible. We know that the whole idea of missile defense was a highly optimistic kind of "maybe we can shoot down 50%" calculation from the start.

So what we have now is the exposure of the entire region to what's happening there. We're also getting reports that in Holon, something fell and exploded in the city. So, I mean, here we are—explosions in Iran, explosions all over the Middle East—and now we're getting reactions from around the world. Al Jazeera is broadcasting a list of those reactions. Donald Trump, of course, said that he would "obliterate the enemy." Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abbas Araghchi, just announced that the United States, a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, has committed a grave violation of the UN Charter, international law, and the NPT, the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

He's not forgetting about that one—by attacking Iran's peaceful nuclear installations. Apparently, we have confirmation from Iran that its nuclear facilities have been attacked. And, you know, if you drop bombs on facilities that host nuclear fissile material, you're risking a huge fallout, right? Let's hope those materials have been well enough protected, because a nuclear plume or whatever would really be in nobody's interest. Araghchi says that the events this morning—on Sunday, or actually, it should be Saturday. It's Saturday today, isn't it? Yeah. The events this morning on Saturday are outrageous and will have everlasting consequences.

Each and every member of the UN must be alarmed over this extremely dangerous, lawless, and criminal behavior. He added that Iran reserves all options to defend its sovereignty, interests, and its people. Unsurprisingly, from Israel we get, uh, of course, massive support from Mr. Netanyahu. I don't even want to listen to what he says, but apparently he's saying, "Congratulations, President Trump. Your bold decision to target Iran's nuclear facilities with the awesome and righteous might of the United States will change history." Interesting that he uses the word "righteous," right? This, uh, immediate moral framing of the situation.

And, um, well, he seems to be having the time of his life. I mean, uh, he seems to have a really happy face. The United Nations is saying that they are gravely alarmed by the use of force by the United States against Israel today, said António Guterres. It's interesting that he's mentioning the US directly, because others are not doing that. We'll come back to this map in a moment. Let's go down a little bit, because here we have Qatar—the foreign ministry of Qatar—saying it warns that the current dangerous escalation in the region may lead to catastrophic consequences at both regional and international levels.

I mean, here we have people who do not name the perpetrators. Also, if we go down to Russia and China—the Russians, Mr. Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy head of Vladimir Putin's Security Council—said the irresponsible decision to subject the territory of a sovereign state to missile and bomb

attacks, whatever arguments it may be presented with, flagrantly violates international law. We have to take this with a little bit of caution because they are currently in a missile war with Ukraine. But the Russians are condemning it. The Chinese are condemning it.

The Foreign Ministry of China says China calls on all parties in the conflict—Israel in particular—to reach a ceasefire as soon as possible, ensure the safety of civilians, and start dialogue and negotiations. Interesting that they're not mentioning the United States right away. The United Kingdom, unsurprisingly, starts—Keir Starmer starts with—Iran's nuclear program is a grave threat to international security. Iran can never be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon, and the U.S. has taken action to alleviate that threat. So, unsurprisingly, the United Kingdom is firmly behind this travesty. Warwick, you want to say something?

#Warwick Powell

Well, I was going to say, who really cares about what Keir Starmer says at the moment? He couldn't even hold a constituency in Greater Manchester in the last 48 hours, which has been in Labour's hands for over 50 years. His level of standing politically in his own country is at rock bottom, and this sort of grandstanding from the United Kingdom is largely meaningless. Look, I think there are some important things for us to be mindful of. Firstly, obviously, is what the very, very short-term situation is likely to look like, because that will create some dynamics that will have some medium-term consequences.

If the government in Iran is able to hold its position over the next 48 hours and into the following week, the attacks launched by the United States will start to lose impact. That's probably the first thing to be mindful of. The second thing to consider is that even if there's political fragility within Iran, it doesn't necessarily mean there will be a smooth transition to something else. In fact, it's just as possible that the political environment in Iran could descend into significant, long-term chaos. There are plenty of forces within Iran that would see this as an opportunity to pursue their own interests and advantages in a chaotic environment.

The third thing I think we need to be mindful of is, if the government actually does hold on over the next few weeks, where does this leave the United States and Israel? Firstly, as their military arsenal depletes and their missile defense systems begin to really show their limitations, where does this leave them politically, at a global level? I think we're starting to get some hints already. There is clearly some concern—and for good reason—from around the world about this attack on another country's sovereignty by a permanent member of the Security Council. Clearly, this is a worry for people everywhere.

The second thing, though, is that if this spills over into creating longer-term instabilities in the United States itself, it could open up a Pandora's box around the world for all sorts of reactions that are quite unpredictable. And, well, who knows what will happen? But this is the kind of risk the United States has taken with this move, which is incredibly—well, the fact that an administration would take

this kind of risk says something about the way it's evaluating the world at the moment. Yes, it must have a view that its position is perilous. Its standing as the legacy hegemon of the post-war, post-Cold War period is—well, if not under threat, already undermined by circumstance and the passage of time.

And it is seeking to assert itself in ways that will preserve a position of some sort, because what country undertakes these actions when the risks are not foreign to them? It's not like the military heads in the Pentagon haven't warned of the real risks involved in not being successful. And despite all of this, the president has gone down this path. You know, I think this tells us something about where the White House and the American political elite are in terms of their own headspace—how they think America is standing in the world and how they think they need to respond at the moment. It's almost like a wounded animal lashing out.

#Pascal

Yeah, I mean, it goes so far that I really wonder if, you know, when you back yourself that much into a corner like Trump just did—were you personally threatened? Was this, for the Trump administration, kind of a last-ditch effort to somehow save themselves? I mean, it doesn't make sense that even with this speech, you'd back yourself that far into a corner from which you'll never, ever get out again unless you achieve the total obliteration of the enemy—something your own staff told you is almost impossible to achieve. And, you know, we don't have the means to actually pull this off. That was in the news just two days ago. Yeah.

#Warwick Powell

Well, I think there are two other points to bear in mind. As horrible as this is for the people in the countries directly affected, there are many others around the world who are also aghast at America's behavior. I'm thinking particularly about how the countries of the Global South might be viewing all of this. We've obviously had the problems with the tariffs as a result of the Supreme Court decision within the last week, and now we have this. America is clearly behaving in ways that don't engender a sense of calm and stability in the world. And if you're anyone else—put aside the usual suspects like Starmer and the rest—I think everyone else will be very alarmed by this kind of behavior.

So that's the first thing. I think the other thing that will alarm people—and they'll be watching this very, very closely now—is what this does to the short-term and medium-term global energy markets, because we haven't yet seen any serious reports on what's happening in the Strait of Hormuz. But we know that in the weeks leading up to tonight's events, the government in Iran made it quite clear that it was preparing to close the Strait of Hormuz, not just to Iranian oil but to everything else that comes out of that region. Now, broadly speaking, that's about 60% of global oil. Sixty percent of global oil. Again, let that sink in for a moment. And the other thing to remember about global oil is that, you know, folks in the United States will think, well, we've got plenty of shale—we'll be okay.

But not all oil is the same. The qualities and attributes of different oils matter for different kinds of fuel. The material coming out of this part of the world is particularly suitable for things like diesel, which ultimately underpins most of the machinery of advanced economies, including that of the United States. So the United States itself won't be unscathed, but the global diesel market is going to be affected by this. The last thing I'll say on this broader set of questions—and perhaps it's one we can just leave for people to think about themselves, and maybe comment on in the comments—is that only a few days ago, India's Prime Minister Modi visited Israel and described India as the motherland and Israel as the fatherland.

And I think, given these attacks—these pre-emptive, quote-unquote, unprovoked attacks on another country—it does raise big questions right across the globe, and particularly in the Global South, about India under its current administration and ultimately where it stands on these pivotal questions of global war and peace. Now, I'll just leave that hanging there, because I think it's a much bigger topic than one we can cover today or tonight. But those are some of the broader ramifications that, frankly, Donald Trump, in his eight minutes of, well, quasi-religious speech—the righteousness and all that sort of stuff—has literally opened this monstrous Pandora's box.

And I'm not convinced that, in fact, there's been any serious thought about this in Washington at all. Sitting here in Australia tonight, I'm waiting for the Australian government to react, and I won't be surprised if it responds in ways similar to Keir Starmer's—right?—which will itself lead to domestic reactions, because there are many people across the Australian community who, I think, won't accept a national government that just shrugs its shoulders and says, "Well, you know, Iran was going to have nuclear weapons. Well, you know, we had the American president six months ago tell us that he'd obliterated the Iranian program."

And the idea that somehow, within six months, an obliterated program can suddenly reappear and be the kind of threat it's claimed to be is absolute nonsense. So I think we're going to see a whole range of public reactions across the world that perhaps were never quite anticipated either, leading to more stresses—particularly in the West—where I think people are tired of political elites who prioritise the things that seem to animate them, but at the same time lose sight of what matters to ordinary people on the street.

#Pascal

I mean, how is this going to improve the lives of Americans? How is this—? I mean, this will kill Americans. This will suck up even more resources. It's just hard to see how this is, in any way, shape, or form, in the interest of Americans. And, you know, let me just show you this comment here. "MAGA is over." I think Mr. One Boston—yeah, this is the end. This is the end of MAGA. I mean, unless Donald Trump wins this war within the next three days—and honestly, I just don't see how they would do that. But then again, they also did Maduro. But, yeah.

#Warwick Powell

Well, he talked about Iran endangering America. I don't think there's anyone who seriously agrees with the idea that Iran today, in any shape or form, poses a danger to America. So, you know, from the get-go, the entire rationale for this intervention is dubious. And because it's dubious, it raises a lot more questions about what the loyalties actually are. If it's not really about defending America—and it's not—then what is it all about?

And, well, again, I'm sure there'll be plenty of people with many views about what it could be about, but I don't think there's any credibility at all in the rationale articulated by President Trump overnight, in the last six or seven hours or whatever it is. And I don't think the majority of people across the world have accepted that as the rationale either. So, in some respects, not only does the government of Iran, I think, have a view that it has nothing to lose, it perhaps also has a view—and maybe this is a bit of an unusual position for the government—that it might even think it has plenty of support around the world, which would be an unusual experience in some regards.

#Pascal

Yeah, certainly for Iran, which has been under so many threats. And, you know, it is under UN sanctions, right? It's under UN sanctions because, back then, when they were imposed in the 2000s, Russia and China did not oppose them. That time is definitely over now, right? You can't get rid of these sanctions anymore because the mechanism is such that the five permanent members would need to agree to lift them. And, of course, that won't happen. But so—just let me show you what they chose to buy it off. I mean, Iran is even larger than it looks. I like this little map thing here, but just look at the size of it—three or four times the size of Germany.

#Warwick Powell

It's a big, complex place—geographically, geologically, and demographically complex. It has tens and tens of millions of people.

#Pascal

Ninety million people.

#Warwick Powell

This is not some walk in the park, and I think people often forget that. The other thing people forget is the sense many in this region and in this country have of being part of a long, continuous civilization. It's a civilization-state. Now, why does that matter? Well, it matters because it's baked into the bones of people—a kind of motivation that makes them fight for their civilization, fight for their identities, fight for their history, and fight for their futures. Especially in an environment where it's now clear to them that the United States views this particular engagement as a do-or-die battle. And when you have nothing to lose, and you have the strength of thousands of years of civilization

to draw upon for motivation, then there will be, I think, more people than imagined who will rally around the government of Iran. That's my suspicion—more than many people in the West could imagine. It's something I think many find difficult to grasp.

#Pascal

Because... but this is going to be a hard sell. This is going to be a really tough sell—to say, like, “OK, we condemn the unprovoked attack of Russia on Ukraine, da-da-da-da.” And then you had this 12-day war eight months ago, and da-da-da-da. And now another one—another one. And the buildup has been long. This was three months of buildup and negotiations, etc., and now an all-out attack, with a U.S. president announcing a war through his Department of War. This is—I mean, even in the West, even in Europe—this is going to be very tough to sell. And let me just show you for one second.

#Warwick Powell

Whatever shreds of moral foundation there may or may not be on some of the other issues you touched on—that's over. The hypocrisy this embodies, this attack on Iran embodies, has destroyed the already shaky moral foundations of Western interventions. It's over. They can't point fingers at anybody, because nobody can take it seriously anymore.

#Pascal

So far, the only two countries that gave a statement clearly in support of what the United States just did are Israel—which is a co-belligerent by now—and the United Kingdom, which said, like, yeah, I mean, Iran's nuclear program needs to be struck down. Everyone else either condemns it or uses this kind of neutral language. Even the European Union—even Kaja Kallas, of all people—Kaja Kallas frames her statement as, “I urge all sides to step back, return to the negotiating table, and prevent further escalation.”

Even Paris and the French—the French foreign minister actually said that the parties should exercise restraint to avoid any escalation likely to lead to an extension of the conflict. In a post on X, he added that France was convinced a lasting solution to this issue requires a negotiated settlement within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. I mean, this is as close as it gets to an actual condemnation of these acts, because it... this is exactly what Donald Trump didn't do, right? This is exactly the opposite of what they did.

And while, of course, the French and Kallas should have now condemned this attack, the fact that they don't applaud it—because remember how they applauded the kidnapping of Nicolás Maduro, how they basically applaud every action under the sun that the United States takes—the fact that they don't stand up and clap as they did in Munich, literally, tells us that even they are now aware that if they praise this kind of stuff, well, it might just not fly with their populations. It'll be

interesting to see how Western media try to spin this—probably by always introducing what happened with one or two paragraphs about all the evil deeds Iran has done over the last fifty or so years. But there's just no way—you can't put enough lipstick in this world on this pig.

#Warwick Powell

Yeah, look, I think it's a great description. It's a pretty ugly pig—there isn't enough lipstick. The rhetoric and the case clearly aren't based on solid ground. And look, I think it's fair to say, in fact, that this attack on Iran is motivated largely by Israeli concerns and Israeli interests. And these aren't the interests of North America, of America. These aren't the interests of Americans at large that are at stake. Yet this decision, made largely in the interest of Israel and at the behest of Israel, is going to put at risk the lives of many Americans—not just people serving in the defense forces stationed across the region, but it will actually create greater risks for people who are either Americans or who people mistake as Americans in the years ahead. After the, well, in the early 2000s, I remember many people traveling around the world as tourists and travelers would wear T-shirts, Pascal, which said, "I'm not an American."

#Pascal

Right.

#Warwick Powell

And they did that because being an American made you a target.

#Pascal

Yeah.

#Warwick Powell

Now, unless you can actually fully obliterate the memory of a civilization—in other words, successfully commit genocide—the risk you run with these kinds of escapades is that there will be a lingering sense of resentment and anger that carries on for generations, making the world less safe not only for Americans but for many others as well. This is the irresponsibility of a regime in Washington that puts its own interests ahead of everyone else's. And in fact, in doing so, Pascal, it undermines its own interests as well.

#Pascal

That's why I cannot believe this is done in the interest of the United States. There's no interest in this. I mean, Mearsheimer and others are just proven right time and time again about the influence

of certain interest groups. And, you know, here's one from one of our viewers—the Trump regime leader says it's all about the freedom of the Iranian people. That's why he's bombing them. It's just insane, isn't it? I mean, it's an insane kind of thing. And I really wonder how many people this will stick with—how many people believe that the freedom of people is at the heart of someone who ships prisoners to Central America to have them imprisoned there, from his own homeland.

#Warwick Powell

It's the embodiment of an oxymoron, right? None of this fits together. It makes no sense. But unfortunately, for a country that's addicted to military intervention, it doesn't really have any other tools available anymore. Its diplomatic capabilities have been stripped bare over 30 or 40 years of being the unipolar hegemon. It didn't need any of those skills. And so, without the skills, attitudes, and aptitudes that actually enable the United States to exercise diplomacy, it has no other capability than to do what it's doing at the moment.

And when you have a president who, I think, is also someone not known for having much finesse, we see, of course, it's either on or off. So being able to turn on the American military seems to be the only resort that President Trump and the administration around him have available to them. It's amazing to see a hegemon with so many resources at its disposal behave as if it actually has no capabilities whatsoever, other than to act like a bully.

#Pascal

That's why I seriously wonder if somebody physically threatened Donald Trump—like, "You do this, or else you're gone," or something like that. I mean, it's just so hard to see how this serves any interest. But we have an interesting question from one of our viewers: any thoughts on the number of potential casualties from U.S. bases? Some of the missiles looked like they hit barracks. And let me just tell you, I found this one here right now—wait, I'll make this go away again. To talk about this, it seems we have no pictures of Bahrain being struck. Some of the U.S. military installations there—although I'm not sure this looks like military, but how would I know?—but we do see these pictures from Bahrain.

#Warwick Powell

It's hard to know at the moment. Obviously, there'll be some consideration about how much information is released, especially regarding the number of American casualties. The American people, for understandable reasons, really don't like the idea of young Americans coming home in body bags.

#Pascal

Why should these young people go and die for the hegemonic interests of Donald Trump and the anti-hegemonic interests of Mr. Netanyahu, who just smiles about it? And we have this new report—this is from The Guardian—saying the U.S. Navy fleet has been subject to missile attacks in Bahrain. Just a second... Navy fleet subject to missile attacks—yeah, I mean, yeah, after attacking the others. Bahrain has confirmed that the U.S. Navy 5th Fleet in Manama has come under attack. In a brief statement via the Bahrain News Agency, the country's National Communications Center said that the service center of the 5th Fleet has been subject to a missile attack.

Further details will be provided in due course. The public is urged to follow instructions. So we have official recognition that in Bahrain, the Fifth Fleet has been attacked. And you know, this is surprising—well, not surprising, sorry—this is new, because Iran, over the last two decades, was exceedingly careful not to actually kill U.S. service personnel, even when it struck U.S. installations, like when Mr. Soleimani was killed. Do you remember how they got out of that? Soleimani's killing had everybody up in arms, and Iran then targeted a U.S. military installation, making sure that nobody died, and called it quits. And they did the 12-day war again—they call it quits once the U.S. off...

#Warwick Powell

This is why this time is different. This is why this time is different. And this isn't an orchestrated tit-for-tat. This was an unprovoked attack on Iran during the course of negotiations, when Iran had made it clear that if it was attacked, it would treat it as a full-on assault and respond accordingly. This is not an unexpected reaction. And, you know, we're going to need to watch closely now—what happens in the next 24 hours, of course, and then perhaps the next 70. The two things I think we need to be really watching for are, first, the extent to which Iranian attacks are actually penetrating and having an impact. That's one, because that obviously has a material effect on, well, on a few things.

One is obviously the capacity of Iran's adversaries—the United States, Israel, and others—to continue attacking them. But it also affects the morale of the people in Iran, which leads to the second issue I think it's important to keep an eye on now: the extent to which a regime change operation could kick into gear on the ground, leading to domestic instability in Iran that may create its own problems. Now, I'm going to—well, I know it's a live broadcast, but I'm going to need to go in a moment, I'm afraid. So, yeah, look, we hastily put together tonight's discussion because, you know, this incident isn't an isolated event anymore. Its ramifications are global, and everybody in the world needs to be very, very concerned about it.

#Pascal

Can I just ask you one last question? Because your specialty is economics. What do you expect this will do? I mean, if the Strait of Hormuz gets closed, of course that's going to be huge for oil and

energy markets. Anything else you expect? And also, about the timing—Saturday—do you think Donald Trump is hoping that by Monday, when the markets open again, things might already look a bit better?

#Warwick Powell

Well, that's always the American hope, isn't it? To do the dirty work when the markets are closed and then come back on Monday and it's business as usual. The real risk, of course, is that well over half of global oil supplies come through those straits, and it's going to be incredibly disruptive. Now, it will be uneven in terms of its effects—prices will rise. The question is how well prepared different countries are, in terms of their stockpiles, to cope with the situation over, say, the next four weeks or even longer. You know, I've written quite a bit about China and the Strait of Hormuz—actually last year, when these issues unfolded—and I had a good look at the situation. It will affect China, of course, but China's got about six months' worth of stockpiles, possibly a little more now. But it's going to have an incredibly disruptive effect. And what that will do in the midterm elections will also be very, very interesting, right?

#Pascal

Very last question—really the last one. Do you think, if this war isn't over within a week, the Trump–Xi meeting will still take place in April? Or in March?

#Warwick Powell

End of March. Well... look, it certainly puts a spanner in the works, because I think it would be undesirable from President Trump's point of view to have this kind of meeting with the issue clearly unresolved. But worse than that, it could make the United States appear incredibly weak, having launched this particular regime-change attack now. Should the meeting be postponed, I'm sure the Chinese side will ensure that the United States and President Trump have a reasonable off-ramp to delay it without, officially speaking, extensive embarrassment. But look, I think it really puts a spanner in the works of the meeting—not because the Chinese wouldn't be happy to entertain President Trump while all this is going on, but because I think President Trump would be concerned that the situation leaves him vulnerable, without a solid position for whatever discussions he wants to have with the Chinese side.

#Pascal

Great. Um, Warwick, thank you very much. I really appreciate that—you took a whole hour out on a Saturday evening.

#Warwick Powell

Thank you so much. Pleasure being with you. Cheers, Pascal Lottaz. Cheers.

#Pascal

That was Warwick Powell, a good friend of the show who's been very gracious with his time. I thank him for that. I have a few more thoughts I'd like to share with you. One is about the reaction of China toward the Russian-Ukrainian-US-NATO proxy war, which has really been one of neutrality, right? A colleague of mine, a Chinese scholar—Dr. Yu Bin—once actually called that “principled neutrality.” Not in the sense that they declared neutrality, but that they've tried to maintain all the diplomatic, trade, and other channels open to all sides: to Russia, to Ukraine, and to the United States and NATO. They didn't condemn anyone; they condemned the conflict itself and hoped it would end, while trying to maintain ties with everybody.

Now, this time they're in a very similar position again. They're strongly supporting Iran—they even sent ships and troops to train with the Iranians. The health of Iran, the Islamic Republic, is very important for China, but at the same time they have no interest in getting directly involved in a conflict with the United States, even if one might think that what's happening with them in the Pacific would entice them to support Iran even more. The main interest of China, as I see it, goes in both directions: maintaining the relationship with the United States and maybe even acting as a mediator, if that ever becomes possible. For now, as we've seen, Donald Trump is thinking exclusively in terms of obliterating and annihilating Iran.

He said so in his speech. How far this will go, we'll see. We don't know. We have no news yet out of Iran itself—who got struck, whether Ali Khamenei, whether the Ayatollah is still alive, or who was targeted. We have these statements by Mr. Arakchi, the foreign minister, so we can suppose that he is alive and that the Iranian government hasn't been hit. We're now getting news via Telegram—sorry, via Twitter—that apparently, in Dubai, their installations were also struck. And again, if we look at this map of Iran, you understand, right? I mean, this entire region hosting U.S. military bases is now heavily under fire as well. Again, I do hope that the U.S. attacks on the nuclear facilities in Iran will not produce any kind of nuclear fallout.

That would be absolutely horrible. So far, the pictures we've seen coming out of Tehran show smoke plumes, so we must suppose that military installations in the city were probably hit. It wouldn't surprise me, though, if the Americans also tried to take out the communication facilities—they've done that before as well, especially in the Yugoslav war, when they immediately went after TV stations. Maybe they did so last time too; in the 12-day war they bombed the national TV broadcaster, with Muhammad Marandi still being there at the site and almost getting killed back then. So this is certainly going to be a very dirty war, and a very ugly one. That's very much to be expected. I would add at this point again that this unleashing of a war—which now, according to Trump's own statements, has the goal of regime change, right?—this little speech, for those who haven't seen it yet, I strongly recommend you go and listen to those eight minutes.

They are quite unhinged. It's a declaration of war, and he uses the word "war." The goals declared are the complete destruction of the current government, the government structure, and the military forces of Iran, as well as the complete demilitarization—including the police forces of Iran. I have very serious doubts that any of this can be reasonably achieved. Because, again, the United States was already running low on missiles and will now expend even more of them. And Iran, as we've seen before, has a huge territory, with its missile capabilities distributed all over the country. One of the first targets, I think, that the United States will go after is the production facility.

So the installations—the missile production sites—right, in order to stop the Iranians from building more missiles. But the ones already in place, we can expect, will be launched toward Israel. And this will be a bloody affair. I would not be surprised if Israel again closes its borders, not just to keep people from coming in, but also to prevent people from going out. If it's true that there have already been explosions in some of the larger Israeli cities, then we shouldn't be surprised if the Iranians this time went after Israel's economic infrastructure. That's something they didn't do in the Twelve-Day War. They didn't try to cripple Israel's civilian infrastructure.

They attacked targets that were either direct military installations or linked to the military inside the cities. But if this time—this all-out war, this existential war for Iran—is about crippling the enemy as much as possible, then the whole rationale is a different one. The goal will be to also go after the economic lifeline of Iran and to make the cities as unlivable as possible. Pretty much, you know, what Israel did with Gaza—although they did it, of course, on a scale so massive, so complete, and so total that we've never seen anything like it before. The genocide that was created there was, of course, carried out by completely obliterating the necessities to sustain life.

This is something we really cannot expect Iran to be able to do to Israel, because the amount of conventional bombing that would be needed—the only way you could achieve that would be through nuclear bombs. And we know Iran doesn't have those, right? It's utterly clear they don't. So if Iran goes after the economic lifeline, the problem is, of course, that the Israelis have nuclear weapons. And Iran's calculation now will be to inflict as much damage on Israel as possible without giving the impression that it's about to annihilate Israel from the map, right?

Because as soon as Israel gets the impression that it is under existential threat, well, it will use the weapons that are designed to prevent that. So Iran itself is also in a very difficult position, naturally. And the objective of the United States now, in these first days, will be to achieve regime change as fast as possible. Again, let me just mention that they said what's going to unfold now will be an attempt to motivate the people of Iran—which Donald Trump believes is a large majority of the country—to empower the forces that were protesting back in January against the Iranian government.

Of course, by now we know that a large number of the pictures we saw of the protests were actually of demonstrations in support of the Iranian government. But nevertheless, we also know there are quite a few people in Iran who want the government changed. The whole calculation of Mr. Trump is

that once the bombing is done and over, the opposition can take over, chase away the Islamic Republic, and create a new one. I mean, Mr. Pahlavi, the son of the previous dictator—the Shah—is already prepared. We've already seen reports of him saying he's ready to go back in an instant.

There were reports that he already announced he would join the Abraham Accords and recognize Israel. So, you know, the entire spiel of the people who now want to replace the Islamic Republic government with a puppet regime of the United States and Israel is in place. And they seem to be—well, they seem to be enthusiastic about this, obviously. Otherwise, I suppose Mr. Trump wouldn't have started this war, although it's really hard to see, again, for me, how he came up with the calculation that this would help him. I think John Mearsheimer is quite vindicated in his analysis of the Israel lobby. On the other hand, we've seen Mr. Mearsheimer just recently on a podcast saying that he thinks the likelihood of a war with Iran is slightly lower, because a lot of the military top brass in the United States actually came out officially and said a war with Iran is not a good idea.

The United States is not in a military position to do so. Where does this leave us? It leaves us in this new environment where we now indeed have a large-scale, all-out war. This is probably going to be, somehow, the tag team—the handing over of the staff from one war to the other—the ending war in Ukraine. There, we've got the Ukrainians on the back foot, the Russians advancing, the Ukrainians getting ready to defend even Odessa, and the United States clearly having grown tired of that war. Here, now with Iran, we've got something brand new. We don't know where the fault lines lie militarily; we just know that everybody can hit everybody. Again, I just must emphasize, for a country like the United States to be struck like this...

We have these images now coming out of the Middle East—U.S. bases, a picture from the newswire showing the blasts in Bahrain, in the capital, Manama, where the U.S. Navy's fleet is based. We don't know if the fleet itself was struck, although this clearly looks like a strike on the mainland. There are probably U.S. military facilities there. Iran would have no interest in actually striking the civilian infrastructure of Middle Eastern countries. At this point, I suppose Iran will try to use its military capacities as precisely as possible, going directly after the U.S. enemy without this idea of "let's punish the states that cooperated." But that's definitely relevant for Qatar, for Bahrain, for Abu Dhabi.

This will be the moment of truth, right? Are you going to keep allowing the United States to be stationed on your territory if those installations are the very reason you're being attacked? The United States attacks Iran and, in doing so, invites attacks on these states. I mean, this is the very opposite of what the Qataris and others invited the United States for, right? The U.S. was supposed to bring them security—and it did. But now it's doing exactly the opposite. This, my friends, is why you want to declare neutrality. This is why you don't want the military troops of one or another great power on your territory, because if you do, you'll become a target if that power goes to war with another state.

So instead of Qatar, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, and so on—and Doha being able to just wait it out, to take the French position and say, “Everybody, we should calm down”—instead of being like Oman, which has been able to try to mediate between these sides, instead of having that position, instead of being neutral and safe as a neutral country because nobody wants to attack you—no, now you are a target, because you must be. Because the enemy of your friend has to take your friend down, right? And if your friend is stationed there, at home, at your home, then your home will be attacked. This is the whole rationale for why neutrality can and does deliver security—because you don’t make yourself willy-nilly a target in a great power conflict.

The outcome of this—how badly the U.S. forces will be hit, how many people will die, how many U. S. citizens, how many Bahraini and Qatari citizens, how many Iranians—nobody knows. We just know it will happen, because these are now real strikes. These are not token strikes like before. This isn’t like when Donald Trump killed Mr. Soleimani. This isn’t just retaliation to save face; this is retaliation to survive. And it’s going to be a missile war. I haven’t heard anyone talk about actually sending troops to Iran—that would seem an even more insane scenario. I should also point out that this strike started in the morning in Iran, during daytime, not at night. So it was a surprise attack, but it happened in broad daylight.

I wonder what the rationale was behind that—and for not doing it at, like, 4 a.m. when people are asleep. I must also emphasize that this is an attack during Ramadan, during the most holy month for Muslims, and that waging a war on a Muslim country in the Muslim region of the world is another one of these travesties, you know, adding insult to injury. But this is what we’re now living with, and I very much regret that we’re in another war—one that’s even less defensible, one that makes even less sense, and one which, in my perception, is just going to... It’s this all-or-nothing moment for the United States. Either win a large-scale war against a primary enemy, right? Because they have three, right? The United States—they have China, and Iran is definitely number three on that list, right?

So you pick that one, and if they win—if they manage to get their regime change, get Mr. Pahlavi in, and win over the entire Iranian nation—well, best-case scenario, they’ve proven they’re still the top dog. If the second-best thing happens, and they manage to sow so much chaos and destruction that Iran itself, as a political entity, breaks up into little parts, that’s the second-best outcome from the United States’ point of view. Then what it would prove is that you can still plunge an entire region into chaos and also create the refugee streams and so on. What this will do to Europe is anyone’s guess. Let’s not go that far yet—it would be absolutely horrible.

Again, Iran is a country of 90 million people, and most of them—the great majority, more than 80 percent, OK, I must be careful with my numbers—but the great, great majority of them are, of course, civilians, with every right to live a life of tranquility, decency, and the pursuit of happiness. All of them are now impacted, and all of them have to weigh their options and what’s going to happen next. I have my Iranian friends. I pray for them. I pray for their families. I hope that people there are fine. But what the United States is now doing here might, of course, end in the third

option—and the third option being that the Iranian regime, that the regime—sorry, by the way, “regime” is just a way in political science to classify governments, to talk about governments. It’s also a technical term, but of course it has negative connotations.

What I mean is the Iranian government structure. If that remains in place—if the Islamic Republic, as a governing body, maintains control—even if the country is damaged, even if its infrastructure is weakened, and the United States is forced to stop its attack and withdraw, even if there aren’t many casualties on the U.S. or Israeli side, then it just proves that we are not only in the post-unipolar moment. We would be far away from the United States still being a superpower; it would have just fallen one step down to a great power.

It would be one among others. And that’s the great geopolitical risk they’re running here—that they’re basically losing and proving they’ve lost their status as the unquestioned global hegemon. This is an incredible folly, and it’s incredibly dangerous. It’s not just dangerous—I mean, you’re already killing people. In these strikes today, I wouldn’t be surprised if a couple of hundred people had already died, because these bombs are just insanely powerful. And it’s a travesty. It’s forbidden under international law. The United Nations Charter forbids the threat of the use of force and, of course, the use of force itself. Both of these are forbidden.

Both of these can’t even be classified as a preemptive strike, because again, I must emphasize, a preemptive strike is something that happens in immediate response, right? Not as a response later. It’s when the other side’s weapons are already locked on you, and you strike first. That, under international law, counts as a preemptive strike. What we’re seeing here is a preventive strike—to prevent that somewhere down the road, maybe in a couple of years, Iran might have missiles or weapons that could somehow threaten the U.S. homeland, and therefore they must be taken out now. There’s no excuse for this under any kind of international law. Anyone who tells you otherwise, under whatever kind of abstraction, is an idiot and a liar.

There is no excuse, neither under current law nor under previous ones, for something like this—an unprovoked attack. And all the outrage and indignation we’ve seen in the past over the war in Ukraine—well, we’ll now see how this goes, and over the next couple of days we’ll see how the Europeans position themselves toward it. For them, a lot is at stake as well: again, refugee streams, and also the embarrassment that the United States is now pulling off something like this after having, for four years, cried foul over Russia’s attack on Ukraine. Now they’ll be forced to somehow grapple with the United States again attacking Iran. Last time they did that, in June, of course, Chancellor Merz famously said the United States was just doing the dirty work for the NATO alliance.

But this, and also the death toll that’s going to come out of it—the death toll on the side of the United States as well—can’t be something Paris, Berlin, or Rome will look at with joy. It seems to be really only Keir Starmer who has the guts to actually support this. But he’s already basically out. I mean, Keir Starmer has so heavily degraded his own position, also with the Epstein files, that, well, he can basically say whatever he wants. His days are numbered. Anyhow, there’s no political future

for that person. But the political establishment in the UK—that will be something to watch, how they position themselves. But yes, my friends, I do believe we are now seeing again a new kind of reality.

I do think this reality will, in the end, somehow make sense together with the Ukraine war and the last four years. I see this as something like a global handover—unless it ends very soon, unless the US is very quick. But again, the way Donald Trump, with his speech, pinned himself in, anything short of regime change is going to be a failure—a loss of face and a loss of credibility on the global stage of US military power. Not just the economic might, but the military might of the United States—that he's gambling the military might of the United States in this Iranian roulette game is astonishing, especially after his own military advisors told him, "We shouldn't do this. This makes no sense for us."

We might not have the capacity to actually pull this off. Donald Trump, of course, says, "No, that's not true." The neocons, of course, say, "No, that's not true. The power of the United States is limitless. We can achieve whatever we want. We have the strongest military on earth." And, well, he is now actually putting it to the test—but it will cost many, many innocent lives, as so often happens in these US wars of aggression. I pray for the innocent people, for the lives of the Iranians. I pray for the lives of the people in West Asia in general, for all the civilians, that they may come out of this unscathed. I pray for the families of my friends in Iran and all around it. And with these words, I bid you good night, and we will talk about this again. Thank you very much.