

"Prove Me Wrong" – Scott Ritter: This Could End US Power

We interviewed Scott Ritter on the ongoing US-Israeli attack on Iran and the risk of a wider regional war. Support Independent media to remain bold: <https://patreon.com/IndiaGlobalLeft> Link for donation: <https://paypal.me/sankymudiar> Ritter calls this conflict a repetition of the "12-day war" — but warns it has now become an existential struggle. He argues Iran appears positioned to outlast the United States, and that Washington risks being pushed out of the Middle East. In this explosive conversation, we discuss: Is this war a strategic miscalculation by the US? Intelligence failure or misunderstanding of Iran's political structure? Iran's military strength and ammunition stockpile What is the US exit strategy — if any? Does "all options are open" signal weakness? Will rising casualties shift decisions inside the US ruling elite? The role of Russia — and whether Moscow seeks stability or leverage Will Arab states accept Russian mediation? Why regime change could be a double-edged sword Could countries like Bahrain face destabilization? As the conflict escalates, this interview examines the geopolitical stakes, military realities, and the possibility of long-term regional transformation. Watch till the end and share your thoughts in the comments. Follow us on Substack: <https://substack.com/@indiagloballeft> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Indiagloballeft> Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/indiagloballeft/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559411353392> Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/69Y9iCWUv8ha3ATsPWtWk0?si=ee1f0de3de094f17> Telegram: <https://t.me/+WNlqoiv1Rhg5NjEx> #Iran #USIsrael #ScottRitter #MiddleEastWar #Geopolitics #Russia #RegimeChange #WestAsia #USForeignPolicy

#Mudiar

Hello, and welcome to another episode of *India and Global Left*. If you're new to the show, please hit that subscribe button. Also, consider becoming a YouTube member, a patron, or donating a small amount using the link in the description box. Let me welcome our guest tonight, Scott Ritter. Scott is a former U.S. Marine Corps intelligence officer, former United Nations Special Commission weapons inspector, author, and commentator. Scott, welcome back to *India and Global Left*.

#Guest

Thank you very much for having me.

#Mudiar

I wanted to start by asking for your assessment of the ongoing conflict between Iran and the U.S.-Israel alliance.

#Guest

Well, first of all, it's a conflict that never should have happened, but I guess it was inevitable that it would. This is more than just a repeat of the 12-day war; this is an existential war of survival, and the stakes are as high as they can be. There will only be one winner in this war. And as I look at things right now, Iran looks like it's on the inside track to win. That means the United States will be defeated, humiliated, and compelled to retreat from the Middle East. Israel will be left alone, and the Gulf Arab states will have to purge their soil of American military bases. Now, people can sit here and say that's pie in the sky, but I dare you to contradict me on anything I just said.

If you're the emir of any of the Gulf Arab states, and you've been promised the guarantee of American security, and you're watching your cities, your docks, and your airports go up in flames while there's nothing the United States can do to stop it—prove me wrong. If you're the emir of Bahrain, watching the Shia population rise up in the streets threatening to overthrow you, prove me wrong. If you're the king of Saudi Arabia, looking at your eastern oil fields ablaze, prove me wrong. If you're the emir of Qatar, looking at your liquefied natural gas fields, unable to produce, prove me wrong. If you're an energy producer in the Middle East, unable to ship your energy out of the Strait of Hormuz, prove me wrong. If you're Israel, watching your cities get pummeled every day, every hour, prove me wrong.

And look at Iran. They lost Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and all that did was strengthen them. There aren't people in the streets demanding the overthrow of the government. The Iranian people are rallying around their nation, and they've shown they're more prepared for this war than anybody. So prove me wrong. I know it's not a popular position to take, but it's a fact-based position. It's based on years of geopolitical and military analysis. Unless something fundamentally changes in the way this war is being prosecuted, the United States and its allies will run out of ammunition in a few weeks' time. Iran will not run out of ammunition. Prove me wrong.

#Mudiar

Can you tell us a little bit about the ammunition stock? There are reports of around 3,000 to 8,000 missiles for Iran. Analysts are also saying that Iranian drones in particular—but also missiles—are cheaper and quicker to produce compared to U.S. interceptor and anti-ballistic missile systems, which are much more expensive. So could you give us a better sense of the ammunition stockpiles and the military strength of both sides?

#Guest

Well, first of all, you need to understand that the Iranians have been preparing for this conflict for years. So we're not just talking about the need to produce. In fact, I don't think the Iranians are producing anything right now. I think their production capabilities have been evacuated from the facilities and hidden away because they recognize the inevitability of the physical destruction of

those facilities. But you can always pour new concrete—you can't replace the equipment. So if the equipment is safely hidden away, the United States and Israel will be bombing empty facilities. That means Iran is not relying on weapons that still need to be produced.

They've already produced them and stockpiled them. They've already factored in attrition. They've produced the Shahed-series drones, which, surprisingly, have been very effective against targets everywhere. They've also produced advanced missiles. They have stockpiles of older missiles and a strategy for how to employ them to maximum effect. The Iranians have already built this stuff, so it's a sunk cost—it's done. But it didn't bankrupt them to do it, by the way. The United States, which is the premier supplier of interceptors, for example—the United Arab Emirates apparently bought \$2 billion worth of missile interceptors, and they're out.

Done. Finished. Gone. Zip. And who replaces them? There's no production line functioning right now to replace them. The United States hasn't gone into war production mode. We've already strained the entire system supplying air defense systems to Ukraine. And now the Middle East has just shot through its load—there's nothing left to replace it. The United States itself has stripped bare other theaters. I mean, when the president has to say, "We have plenty of ammunition all around the world," what he's really saying is, "So sad, too bad, South Korea and Japan—we're taking the missiles meant to defend you. Too bad, Taiwan, those missiles are gone too. And Europe, sorry, we're taking those missiles as well."

You know, this is the reality: Iran fires a drone that costs about \$20,000 to produce, and we shoot it down with three interceptor missiles that cost \$3 to \$4 million each. I'm not a genius—I'm just a simple Marine. I have trouble balancing my own checkbook at home. But that's a cost equation that isn't going to be sustainable. And that's the fact. The most important thing to point out is that Iran has prepared for this war. It's already built all the weapons it's going to use. The United States did not prepare for this war. In fact, the U.S. was warned off by both Israel and Saudi Arabia back in January not to start this war unless it could finish it and guarantee an outcome. But we started the war nonetheless.

It's a regime-change war designed to bring down the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. But we don't have sufficient resources. And as we saw, our dreams of what decapitation constitutes—constitutes nothing. Because the planners seem to believe that Iran functioned as a dictatorship of one. Ali Khamenei was it. And when you remove the Supreme Leader, the system goes away—which means they've never read the Constitution of Iran, and they have no respect for Iran as a constitutional republic. Instead of collapsing, Iran immediately went in the direction that the Constitution mandates. The president, the head of the judiciary, and a jurist appointed by the Assembly of Experts formed an emergency committee that will operate as the Supreme Leader until the Assembly of Experts selects a new Supreme Jurist.

And it looks like by Wednesday of this week, there will be a new Supreme Leader. The country and the people have rallied around the Republic. So not only has there been no decapitation, but the

government is stronger now than ever before—which means the major objective of bringing about the end of the Iranian regime has failed. In fact, it failed with the very first missiles that hit Tehran. The first six missiles killed Ali Khamenei, his 14-month-old granddaughter, and some others. We tend to say that means we won this war. It actually means we lost this war, because we didn't achieve what we wanted to achieve—we achieved the exact opposite.

#Mudiar

If this situation is so revealing on just the third day, I wonder what led the U.S. to attack in the first place. Was it a total misunderstanding about the layered structure of Iranian forces and administration, and how it functions—assuming that the decapitation of one leader would lead to some kind of uprising and regime change, quote-unquote? Or is it the hubris of U.S. generals who overestimate their strength? Or is it an intelligence failure? What is it that led to this attack, if just on the third day everything is so revealing?

#Guest

Well, I mean, what we know is that there's an unprecedented level of ignorance in the senior leadership of the United States about Iran—about what Iran is, who the Iranians are, what the Islamic Republic is, and what role Islam plays in Iranian society. When you have Jared Kushner, fifty percent of the negotiating team, meeting with the Iranian diaspora in the United States to create a committee to pick the next leader of Iran—while he's negotiating with the Iranians, by the way, about resolving the nuclear program—that sort of proved at the time that we weren't serious about negotiations. But that's a different issue.

But the fact that we're turning to the diaspora for guidance on what the future of Iran will look like means we don't understand anything, because the diaspora is made up of people who are either the descendants of, or the actual people who fled Iran in the late 1970s, when the Shah of Iran, Reza Shah Pahlavi, was removed from power by the Islamic Revolution. And these people know nothing of Iran. They have no support in Iran. And yet we're listening to them and believing them because we've fallen victim to our own delusional ignorance about Iran. We hate the Islamic Republic so much that we allow ourselves to ignore the fact that it is the single most effective functioning democracy in the Middle East. I'll say that one more time so the audience really understands what I'm saying.

The single most effective functioning democracy in the Middle East is the Islamic Republic of Iran. And if you don't acknowledge that and recognize that, then, you know, I've always said you can't solve a problem unless you first accurately define the problem. If we're defining the problem of Iran as a dictatorship—where eliminating the supreme leader means the collapse of the regime—then we don't have a solution to the problem, because we've defined it inaccurately. So there is this

ignorance. Now, that ignorance should be overcome by an intelligence community whose job it is to accurately inform leadership. But our intelligence community has become permanently crippled by the politicization of the intelligence process.

We saw this cancer infect the intelligence community back in the lead-up to the Iraq War, during the 1990s, as we manufactured a case for the sustainment of economic sanctions against Iraq based on weapons of mass destruction. We failed to acknowledge the role played by the United Nations weapons inspectors—of whom I was a member—in achieving the disarmament of Iraq. Instead, we pretended that Iraq had reconstituted a weapons capability and was posing a threat, and we went to war. The intelligence community, instead of telling their bosses what they needed to hear—the truth—told them what they wanted to hear. That's not your job as an intelligence officer. And the intelligence community has been infected with this disease ever since—the disease of politicization.

So now we have an American president who very much wants to go to war against Iran—looking for any justification and for support for the fundamentally flawed theories that underpin this military campaign. And the intelligence community, instead of telling him the truth, lies to him. You saw what happened when Tulsi Gabbard, the director of national intelligence, tried to tell the truth about Iran's nuclear program—testified before Congress, speaking the truth. But when the president was confronted with this, he said, "She's wrong. I get my information from somebody else." Who? That's your director of national intelligence. There's no one else—no one higher than her—which means he's getting his information from Israel.

So there's the other problem: Israel is fundamentally corrupting the policymaking process here in the United States. Lastly, you mentioned the generals. Here I'm going to push back. American military men are professionals—you're talking to one. When I went to war, I kicked your ass because I was better than you. I was better than you because I was professional, because I was prepared, because I studied you. I studied me. I knew my weaknesses. I knew my strengths. I knew your weaknesses. And I would do everything I could to close with and destroy you through firepower and maneuver. And if I couldn't accomplish the mission, I was honest enough to tell my boss, "I can't do that with the resources available," because my job wasn't to make policy. My job was to execute a military plan of action.

And the generals today have told this president that they cannot accomplish the mission the way he wants it done—on the timeframe he wants and with the objectives he wants. They've straight up said, "We don't have the resources to do this." The director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was fired because he insisted on that. As we speak, there's apparently a revolt of generals taking place in the Pentagon, and there may be mass resignations, according to some news sources, because these people are saying, "We're trying to explain to you, Mr. President, that what you want to be accomplished—what your Secretary of War is up there proselytizing as religious dogma—isn't going to happen. Just because Pete Hegseth says it's so doesn't make it so."

There's a harsh reality here: we don't have the resources to accomplish what you want, in the timeframe it needs to be done. So I don't blame the military. The military has to obey lawful orders. Even if you tell the president, "We can't do this," if the president says, "Do it," then you must do it—unless it's unconstitutional. There's no legal framework under international law to carry out this war, because Congress has punted on its constitutional responsibilities when it comes to declaring war. The president has assumed unilateral executive authority that the Supreme Court has not contradicted, and the generals must obey the lawful orders they're given, even if they know that by obeying them, they're going to lose the war.

#Mudiar

Given this ignorance at the level of the political class, and given the politicization of the top brass—including the intelligence community and so on—and the lack of filtering up, let's say, information coming from the generals and the military to the political class... And I'll add, given that Iran has officially stated it's not willing to negotiate at this stage because it wants to advance revenge, what could be a way out? If you were within the U.S. political class, would you double down and go down this path? Because Pete Hegseth and General Dan Kane said that, no, there are no boots in Iran at this stage, but all options are open. What do you make of that? What could be a way out for them, or the path they would follow?

#Guest

All options are open. I would remind both of those gentlemen that—well, you know, Pete Hegseth just cracks me up. Secretary of War—although that's not a lawful term—he's the Secretary of Defense. In his rather embarrassing speech to about 800 generals and admirals last October, I believe it was in Quantico, Virginia, he said that his ideal warrior was a captain in 1993, or a staff sergeant in 1993. And the reason why, he said, is that to become a captain in 1993, you would have joined in the early or mid-1980s and gone through training in a military that was designed to win wars.

And the same thing with the staff sergeant, the E-6—you were there as a troop supporter. Um, Pete Hegseth was describing me, because I'm that person. That's my rank in the time frame that I was in. That's my experience base. But literally you—literally you, literally me. And I'll remind Pete Hegseth that, unlike him, I have won a war. He hasn't. He's lost two, and he's about to lose a third one. But, you know, I am the epitome of the professional standard that Hegseth is setting out there. And so what I'm going to be telling him is that you don't win wars by bluster and by words—you win them by being prepared.

#Guest

Repeat your question, because I got so caught up in 1993 that I forgot it. Just remind me what your question was.

#Mudiar

Yeah, just the way out for—oh, the way out, an off-ramp.

#Guest

The off-ramp is always victory. I mean, you don't go into a war planning to lose. The only military operation that actually plans for a retrograde is a raid. We go in, we land, we do our thing, and we plan for withdrawal. But no military plan includes a plan for retreat, because we just assume we're going to succeed. If we're called upon to retreat, that means we've lost—and we don't like to lose. The way out here, though, isn't going to be through victory. We don't have the capacity. You want to deploy troops—boots on the ground. That was the point I was trying to make. That was my war.

I was part of the team that planned an operation to send 700,000 people to the Middle East, including hundreds of thousands of boots on the ground to defeat Iraq in Desert Storm. You know, it took us many months of planning and deploying. We landed at airfields that were open—no interdiction, no problem. You could just land there, park your airplanes, get your troops off, assemble them, and move forward without any interference. Our ships landed in ports and were able to offload at a normal rate so we could build up the force on the ground. How does Pete Hegseth envision getting American forces into Iran? What airfields are you going to land at, Pete?

Because last time I checked, every international airport in the region was closed down and under attack. All the military airfields have been struck by the Iranians. The operational environment is so unstable you'd have to flee and leave all your airplanes. So where are you going to land, Pete? Where are your ships going to dock, Pete? Because the last time I checked, the ships in the ports we would use are being hit and sunk. Pete Hegseth is a moron. And anybody advising him that we can transition to boots on the ground in Iran is likewise a moron. We can't do it. Physically, we cannot do it. We lack the amphibious assault capability to do this.

General Berger, former Commandant of the Marine Corps, warned about this when he took the job. When he became Commandant, he reviewed his responsibilities to ensure the Marine Corps could fulfill the missions assigned by the National Command Authority. He read the National Defense Strategy and the Department of Defense directives, and he said, "We can't do this because we're tied to a legacy system of large amphibious assault ships. We put hundreds of Marines on them, sail them close to shore, and if they sink one of those ships, we're screwed." Yet that's exactly what would have to happen here.

We would have to forcefully seize an Iranian port—forcefully seize an Iranian port—then forcefully seize airports, and then try to offload hundreds of thousands of troops under fire. Now, this is something we did, for instance, at D-Day in Normandy, but it took a long time to prepare. These are things we did during the island campaigns in the Pacific, but those were very bloody operations—very bloody operations. And with the exception of Normandy, we never invaded a space as large as Iran. So let's say we land in Chabahar. Then what? You see, Pete, I'm the guy who actually helped plan that very operation—the op plan for Americans to put forces into Iran to respond to a Soviet invasion. So I've actually done this, Pete, and I'm telling you, it's not going to work. You can't do it. So stop talking as if you can.

You're going to war with what you have—and what you have isn't enough. You were told by your generals it wouldn't be enough. Moreover, there are two clocks ticking here. The first is the availability of resources. As I said, they're running out of ammunition very fast. But there's another one, too, because as we speak, Aramco facilities are ablaze. As we speak, Qatari gas terminals are under attack, and Qatar has stopped shipping liquefied natural gas. As we speak, the Strait of Hormuz is shut down. By the end of the week, Europe is going to be screaming. By the end of the month, Europe is going to be dead. By the middle of the month, Americans are going to be screaming. And that's the reality.

This president will not be able to withstand the political pressures brought on him at home—domestically—and abroad—globally—over the consequences of this illegal war of aggression. And this is why it's so important to keep pointing this out. Because people say, "Well, who cares? Trump doesn't care." The world cares. Because, you see, if Iran actually had a nuclear weapon threatening international peace and security, the world would tighten its belt and be willing to do what it takes to get rid of Iran. But this was a war of choice. It didn't need to be fought. Iran was already conceding everything necessary to ensure they would never have a nuclear weapons breakout path. And yet we went to war.

So, you know, Pete Hague said this thing—you're talking the big talk, right? But even if we had 500,000 troops that we could ship to Iran, by the time we got them ready to go, we'd run out of ammunition, and the world would be screaming to bring this war to an end. So the only way this ends is for the United States to acknowledge that its presence in the Middle East is no longer viable, and that it will withdraw permanently from the military bases it has assembled. And this will coincide with the Gulf Arab states likewise saying that the United States is no longer welcome on their territory. And when this happens, Israel will be isolated and compelled to rein in its greater Israeli ambitions, because the United States won't be there to hold its hand.

And then, and only then, do I believe Iran will step down—because Iran can't step down for anything short of that. This is a war of existential survival. Iran can't allow this war to stop, especially after the harm that's been inflicted. To stop and allow the other side to rebuild its strength and capabilities would be impossible. Iran will win this war because the United States doesn't have

enough ammunition. If Iran stops this war and allows for a ceasefire, the United States won't make that mistake again. Right now, Iran is going to win because we started something we're not in control of. Iran wins by continuing this effort because they are in control. They've prepared for this. They have enough missiles to keep firing even after the point when we run out of ammunition.

And because it is existential, their people are going to be willing to pay a heavier price than, for instance, the population of Europe, which can't justify this war, wasn't prepared for this war, and is already reeling economically from the consequences of their support for another illegal war in Ukraine. So Iran has all the advantages here. Militarily, they're better prepared than the United States and Israel. Economically, they're killing the world economy right now if this continues. And politically, they are on the right side of history. They have legitimacy for everything they are doing. So this war ends with the strategic defeat of the United States—or the United States destroys Iran and collapses the regime. But I don't see that happening.

#Mudiar

Does American public opinion play any role in this? Back in 2003 and 2005, when the U.S. invaded Iraq, most Americans rallied behind the flag, and it was only gradually—painfully—after the resistance in 2007 that public opinion started to change. This time around, there's a Reuters poll showing that more than 75 percent of Americans oppose the war. I wonder, as more bodies start coming back home, will that shift even more dramatically against the war? And more importantly, will that have any impact on the ruling elites?

#Guest

Well, first of all, when we talk about the ruling elite in America, we're talking about a nation that has given up its status as a constitutional republic. We're now functioning as a cult of personality, with a dictator—Donald Trump—firmly in charge. The only way you can threaten Donald Trump at this point is by defeating him at the polls in November, in the midterm elections, and empowering a Congress that's capable of impeaching and convicting him. He's well on the path to accomplishing that task because, right now, Americans are still waking up in the morning and thumping their chests about Maduro—how wonderful that was, how easy that was, how quick that was.

And they're still drinking the Kool-Aid about how wonderful and quick and beautiful this will be. Yes, we lost four Americans. Yes, that's horrible. But, oh my God, we killed Ali Khamenei and we killed forty-six members of the Revolutionary Guard. And they're going to collapse. The Iranians are going to quit. They're going to quit. And then the next morning we realize they're not quitting. In a week's time, we realize they're not quitting. And then, when we start paying more at the gas pump, when we see disruption in our own commerce—I mean, what happens when the price of diesel goes through the roof and we can't afford to ship those fruits and vegetables and electronic equipment across the country, and the Walmart shelves go empty?

Then people are starting to wake up, and they'll finally see that the words being spoken by Pete Hegseth, the president, and others are empty—lies, that they've been lied to the entire time. They'll realize there was no need for this war, that it was a war of choice, not a war of necessity. And they become enraged—will become enraged. They'll vote for anything but Trump, or anybody who supports Trump, in the midterm elections. And then we'll have regime change. This is a regime-change war that's being waged right now. But unfortunately for the American people, they think that by killing Ali Khamenei, we changed the regime in Iran.

We haven't. We just strengthened it. And for Trump, what he's going to realize is that when you run on a platform of peace—when you call yourself the peace president, when you promise not to get us involved in a never-ending war—it doesn't matter what Pete Hegseth has to say today, where, you know, "this isn't an endless war, this war has an end." No, this is an endless war, and the only end it has is your surrender. And the American people didn't vote for you to get us involved in a war where we lose. So I do think there will be horrific political consequences for this president if he loses this war.

And again, unless something dramatically changes—the one thing we don't know, and now we have to take a step back—is, you know, I think I've said it on here before: the American military is very capable. I mean, if you don't think it is, then you don't know anything about war. Iran is getting pounded right now—pounded. The harm being done is unreal. The infrastructure being destroyed is, you know, between the United States and Israel, billions of dollars of damage are being done. The Iranian government has prepared for this, but no plan survives initial engagement with the enemy, and the enemy always gets a vote.

And so what we don't know is: are there unseen possibilities, consequences of this action? Is the Iranian government as guilty of throwing out empty words as the United States? Are they promising a lengthy campaign of ballistic missile launches while hiding the fact that the United States blew up the vast majority of the missiles in storage? There's a lot that we don't know. But I will say this: the Iranian government has a history of telling the truth. The American government does not. And so, at this juncture, I'm more inclined to believe those who tell the truth over those who lie repeatedly.

#Mudiar

I wanted to ask you about Russia's role in this. There are some reports about Russian statements in support of the UAE—these are indirect statements cited by Al Jazeera—saying that the Russians have spoken out against the Iranians in favor of the UAE. I have no way to verify that, since I don't read Russian. But overall, could you tell us about Russia's role and how they see this conflict playing out?

#Guest

Well, I'd just like to point out that Russia has a strategic security framework with Iran. Russia doesn't have a security framework with the United Arab Emirates, so it would be very strange for the Russian government to take the side of the UAE in this regard. Russia does have a financial link to Dubai. As we speak, there are thousands of Russian tourists stranded in Dubai who are apparently having a grand old time—skydiving in the midst of UAV attacks, because why not? They're Russians, and they don't care. But with Russia, we have to think about the big picture. First of all, Russia does not benefit from global catastrophe. Russia does not benefit from chaos. There are a lot of people out there right now suggesting that, because the price of oil is about to go through the roof, this was Russia's goal all along.

No, because that's reversible. Russia doesn't play the spot market; Russia plays the long game. I've spoken to a number of Russian ambassadors who have said that what Russia looks for is stability, which brings about predictability. The world can be bad, tough—but if it's predictable, then Russia is capable of formulating policies to deal with those issues. What makes life tough is when you have unpredictability, when the situation is yawing back and forth, all over—chaos. That's not what Russia wants. Russia doesn't want chaos with Europe. Russia doesn't want chaos with the United States. Russia isn't even looking for the defeat of the United States, because the defeat of the United States would create a global vacuum that generates chaos. And that's problematic for Russia.

So Russia's job in all this, from a strategic standpoint, is to engender stability—but to do so in a way that ensures the continued survival of Iran as it currently manifests itself, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Not only has Iran been an ally and a friend of Russia in its time of need, but Russia has this north-south economic corridor that it's seeking to develop, which is very important for it—not only in terms of short-term economic benefit, but strategically—because it allows Russia to operate on interior lines of communication instead of being tied to sea lines of communication that could be interdicted by a superior American naval power.

China also—the new Silk Road linking western China by rail through Central Asia into Iran—they have a vested interest. Their goal is the survival of Iran and stability in the region. So I believe what they're going to do is recognize that Iran has been placed, not by anything it did or wanted, but by the actions of the United States and Israel, into a war of existential proportions. Just as Russia has said it can't accept a ceasefire in Ukraine that doesn't resolve the root causes of that war, Iran cannot accept a ceasefire in this conflict if all it does is sustain the root causes of the conflict, because that would only guarantee the conflict will happen again—and next time, the sides will be better prepared.

So I think Russia understands that this conflict has to run its course—a course that results in a fundamental change in the geopolitical alignment and reality of the Middle East, one that encourages the withdrawal of the United States from the region. Russia also, I believe, will be seeking to restrain the Iranians in their use of the economic weapon. It's not in Russia's interest to see energy security go out the window. So I think the Russians are making a lot of phone calls, doing a lot of diplomacy

behind the scenes, and they're waiting for the moment when the United States says, "We've got to get out of this thing. We've got to get out of this thing."

And when they say that, Russia will say, "Okay, we can help you with that." Because Russia is not looking for the strategic defeat of the United States. Russia is looking for the termination of this conflict on terms that are favorable to their ally and friend, Iran. But they don't want to burn the house down to get that. So I think that's Russia's role right now. I mean, they didn't want this war to happen. They prepared Iran as much as they could to survive the consequences of a war. But now their job is basically to manage the chaos, try to bring order and stability, and be there to provide a diplomatic off-ramp if and when the opportunity presents itself.

#Mudiar

And will the Gulf states be in a position to accept this kind of Russian mediation, if you like, and accept not being a vassal of the U.S.? Or are they too dependent on the U.S. and unable to tell the Americans, "Go get lost"?

#Guest

Well, we don't know how this ends. It's still just day three. We do know there are large crowds of Shia in Bahrain cheering every Iranian missile that hits. What is the future of the Khalifa family? We also know that the United Arab Emirates is staring at economic disaster. So if you're looking at the collapse of your status as an economic hub, a banking hub in the Middle East, because you've aligned yourself with the United States—and it's incapable of defending you—do you think maybe it's time for a policy realignment, a policy adjustment? We're early in this stage, but I think what you're going to see are nations realizing that the United States is no longer capable of providing the security that was once guaranteed.

And once that becomes a statement of fact, a statement of reality, you'll make the right decision. I also don't believe that the United States is going to be in a position to remain in the region. Its bases are being dismantled. By the time this is done, over a hundred billion dollars' worth of American military infrastructure will be eliminated. Where are we going to get the money to rebuild? So it becomes a kind of self-solving problem—we leave because there's nothing left to fall back on. And then the other thing is, regime change is a double-edged sword. I'd point out that some of these regimes in the Gulf Arab states may not survive this war. Bahrain very well could fall. And if Bahrain falls, what kind of passions will be unleashed by that? What happens to Kuwait? What happens to Saudi Arabia?

I mean, never forget that if Yemen—if the Houthis—become strategically engaged, they're fully capable of invading Saudi Arabia and occupying up to a quarter of it, claiming that territory as theirs, justifiably under history, because it is theirs. The Saudis stole it. So the potential dismantling of Saudi Arabia, the weakening of the Al Saud family, the loss of control over the eastern provinces

where the oil is—I mean, this is a problem. We can say the same thing for the United Arab Emirates. These spoiled, perfumed princes who've been governing the Gulf Arab states for so long, able to live their ostentatious lifestyles because of the security umbrella provided by the United States, able to secretly plot behind the backs of the Iranians to stab them in the back—these are the same people who made phone calls telling Donald Trump, "Do it, do it, do it."

Just win. Do it, but make sure you win. You know, they're now confronted with the fact that Trump did it, but he's not going to win, and they've got to pay the price. So there's a lot of uncertainty in the result. I'll throw in one more thing—they talk about the unintended consequences of conflict. The British, in all of their imperial stupidity, have decided they want to play a role in this conflict, that they've suddenly decided they are pro-Israel. And so Iran has fired missiles against British bases in Cyprus. What did the Greek government do this morning? They're sending F-16 fighters, they're sending air defense, they're sending naval ships. Now, what do you imagine Turkey's response to this is going to be?

Because the last time Greece deployed military forces to Cyprus, Turkey invaded. And Turkey is not going to sit back and allow Greece to do it again. So we may very well see, in the very near term, a new regional war—between Turkey and Greece. And ain't that going to be pretty? NATO fighting amongst itself. And this will be a war of existential proportions, because Turkey will go for the knockout blow against Greece. They're not going to put up with this. And then what is NATO going to do? NATO's already distracted and weakened by Ukraine. I mean, you know, again, Pete Hegseth is a moron because he started something he didn't understand. He got pieces rolling—it's out of control. And chaos has broken out all over.

#Mudiar

Who would imagine that some Iranian missiles in Eurasia would open the door to this kind of chaos? We'll leave it there.

#Guest

The Iranians imagined it, because they know the world better than we do. The Iranians are better prepared than we are. The Iranians are smarter than we are. So I think the Iranians understand everything they're doing. Ask yourself this question: why hasn't Iran struck Incirlik Air Base yet? Incirlik Air Base is the American military facility outside Adana, in southern Turkey. It's home to the E-3 AWACS that are flying over, providing command and control support for the defense of Israel. Why hasn't Iran struck Incirlik? The answer is because Iran struck Cyprus. And if you put two and two together, you'll know exactly what's going on. The Iranians are smarter than everybody. That's just the way it is. Indeed.

#Mudiar

We'll leave it there, Scott. This was really helpful for understanding the developments that are going on. Thank you so much for your time—appreciate it.

#Guest

Well, thank you very much. And let's just hope that I'm wrong about everything—that peace breaks out, the war comes to an end, stability returns, and people stop dying. But I do want to remind everybody that the opening salvo sent against Iran hit a girls' school and killed over a hundred young girls. So if there's ever going to be revenge, just remember which side has the greatest justification for inflicting it on the other.

#Mudiar

Indeed, indeed. And this comes after the genocide in Palestine that we've seen. We know one side is fully capable of committing genocide. So, Scott, thanks again—have a wonderful rest of the day ahead. You too.

#Speaker 04

Hi, my name is Ayushman. I, along with Mudiar Jyotishman, have started this platform. Over the last two years, we've tried to build content for the left and progressive forces. We've interviewed economists, historians, political commentators, and activists so far. If you've liked our content and want us to build an archive for the left, I have two requests for you. Please consider donating to the cause—the link is in the description below. And if you're not able to, don't feel bad. You can always like and share our videos with your comrades. Finally, don't forget to hit the subscribe button.