

Scott Ritter: Israel Declares EMERGENCY, Trump's MOAB Bluff BLOWS UP

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#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. Danny Haiphong here with Scott Ritter, former U.N. weapons inspector, U.S. Marine Corps intelligence officer. He's here to help us break down the latest developments. So, Scott, I wanted to start out with a state of emergency being declared in Israel, as the Israeli military is on high alert after these missile tests that have occurred within the last 36 hours in Iran. Thirty-plus missiles launched in preparation for what Israel is saying could be a surprise or preemptive strike on Israel, shockingly, and maybe not surprisingly, very close to the Israeli election.

There have been images coming out of Israel preparing what seems to be for a large-scale war with Iran. These mobile bomb shelters that have been going around Tel Aviv, there's also movement of air defense systems across Israel, getting ready for what they say is a coming strike. Now, there's also, as Israel Hayom, Bibi Netanyahu's favorite media outlet, has said, there's also tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, where Israel is almost telegraphing that the United States is also preparing for a possible strike before the midterm elections, as the USS George Bush makes it back from Thailand, the USS George Washington remains in the Arabian Sea, and the Theodore Roosevelt is on its way.

Iran is on alert itself, with 72 hours declared of full military mobilization, with ballistic missiles, air defense systems, and the like being deployed. Now, CNN has reported, Scott, I know you've been talking about this, the mother of all bombs is being considered to be used by the United States against Iran, possibly on Pickaxe Mountain. And much has been made of it. But maybe we can begin with the Israeli situation. These elections are coming. Are these preparations for war and these alerts about a preemptive strike by Iran, are they a prelude to some kind of false flag or an Israeli strike? What do you make about these alarm bells coming out of Israel?

#Scott Ritter

Well, first of all, I can't speak for the Iranian government. I wouldn't want to. I wouldn't want to try. But preemptive strikes aren't their thing. You know, if there was reason to believe that Israel was

getting ready to launch a strike, one could articulate, you know, a cognizable case for preemption under international law. And Iran is a nation that firmly believes in international law. And there's no reason for Iran to throw the law book out now that they've established, you know, a de facto case against the United States and Israel regarding, you know, unprovoked war of aggression that they've waged against Iran. Iran has had plenty of opportunities to launch preemptive strikes in the past, and they haven't. Past patterns tend to repeat themselves.

I don't see any reason for Iran to break their past patterns, no matter how much justification we in the blogosphere and the internet might bequeath Iran. So this is just posturing on the part of Israel. Now, it may be posturing designed to create a smokescreen that could lead to an Israeli-American attack on Iran. And I think all indications are that the United States will attack Iran sometime around the midterms, either before the midterms or shortly thereafter. Pickaxe Mountain seems to be a likely target, and the weapon of choice, you know, I would concur with the mother of all bombs. It's a visually pleasing weapon. It goes boom in a big way. It makes a lot of flash, a lot of smoke, a lot of clouds. But it's not going to do anything to Pickaxe Mountain, but it doesn't need to.

It just has to create the perception of decisive American military intervention that would allow Donald Trump to declare victory. But as far as Israel is concerned, I don't see Israel launching any attack against Iran on its own. At this juncture, given the political sensibilities that exist in the United States and the sensitivity of Donald Trump to the whim of the electorate at this point in time, I don't see Israel gambling its relationship with the United States, meaning that if Israel were to engage Iran decisively, unilaterally, there's a good chance the United States might leave it hanging. So I'm not saying that there can't be Israeli-American cooperation, but I think right now the determination whether or not military force is used against Iran will be an American determination. And Israel will probably sit it out. There's no reason for Israel to get involved at this juncture.

#Danny

Then what does the repositioning of these aircraft carriers—there's possibly three by the end of October that are going to be in the so-called CENTCOM area of operations—do? And do these aircraft carriers replace the losses that the U.S. has incurred in the region in terms of its military power? What kind of issues or strengths does this posture have for the United States in this coming attack, which I agree with you, Scott? I don't see Israel—I don't even know how it's possible for Israel to conduct a strike on its own without U.S. involvement. But your thoughts on this?

#Scott Ritter

I mean, three aircraft carriers gives three embarked carrier wings, potential of around 200 combat aircraft. This amount of aircraft would be needed for a short-duration campaign, given the fact that the United States has lost its forward-basing capabilities. The United States would continue to sortie aircraft out of Jordan, I believe, but the aircraft carriers provide more operational flexibility and depth to any potential American strike. Again, keep in mind that I don't think we're talking about a

30- or 40-day campaign here. I think we're talking about a three-day campaign. So, this is sufficient aircraft carriers to give you the ability to launch these aircraft. We may have an event taking place shortly that will get the dogs to bark, but hopefully we can manage that.

#Danny

Yeah, I think so. I think so. You know, Israel has been quite quiet in terms of its involvement in the latest stages of this war on Iran. Why do you believe that Israel now is being the most active, especially with regard to signaling? Even in the Israel Hayom article I put up, that whole article is almost a premeditative mapping of exactly what might happen in the coming days. What do you make of Israel right now and why it's becoming so much more vocal at this very moment in this world politics?

#Scott Ritter

I mean, we have an election coming up that, you know, the literal physical survival of Benjamin Netanyahu hinges on. It's not just political survival, but if he loses and his party, his coalition, is disenfranchised in the Knesset, he loses the immunity that he's accrued over time. You know, this man is a corrupt fiend who would go on trial and be found guilty, most likely, of corruption and spend the rest of his life in jail. So, you know, we are living through a time of existential import for Benjamin Netanyahu. And so he and his allies are going to continue to play on the posture that he's been grooming himself for decades: that of a security guru.

He's the only one in Israel that the Israelis can trust to deal with the myriad of threats that face Israel today. And, you know, what he also wants to do is not create a period of relative quiet that allows his opponents to reflect deeper on the reality of Benjamin Netanyahu. For instance, maybe he doesn't want people to reflect on what was going on in September of 2023, before the October 7th Hamas attack, when hundreds of thousands of Israelis were in the streets protesting against him and his corruption and his manipulation of the Israeli legal system. They don't want to reflect on the fact that the president of Israel was saying in September that there's a real risk of a civil war in Israel, that Israel was fundamentally divided.

And then they may not want people to reflect on what happened on October 7th, the fact that Benjamin Netanyahu received, you know, very credible advance warning from his neighbors about what Hamas was planning to do and that he did nothing in response, that he allowed October 7th to take place. And when you reflect on this reality, which appears to be fact-based, then you have to call into question: if he knew this was going to happen, you can't say he was taken by surprise, which means that the Hannibal Directive wasn't so much a panicked reaction of Israel, but premeditated murder of Israelis by an Israeli leader designed to jack up the death toll and then combine it with stories that we now know are total fiction.

Zero beheadings of babies, zero sexual assaults. The United Nations had come out and acknowledged there just simply is no evidence whatsoever of a single sexual assault taking place as a result of the October 7th attacks. And it's all hype, speculation, secondhand information, but no evidence whatsoever. So, you know, people start thinking about that, then they wonder, well, where have we gone? Our reputation abroad is destroyed. We are now labeled, correctly so, as a genocidal state. You know, we talk about, you know, expanding the conflict in Lebanon. That hasn't exactly gone well for Israel. What's happening in Syria today has put Israel on a collision course with a war against Turkey, a NATO ally of the United States.

That's something that, you know, bodes well for Israel's future. Then, of course, there's the failed war against Iran, and also, by extension, the failed conflict against Yemen, the Houthis. If people reflect on this too much, they'll realize that Benjamin Netanyahu, rather than being the security prime minister, is the insecurity prime minister, the man who got Israel in a situation now that could possibly lead to the extinction of the Jewish homeland known as Israel. So I think what he's doing right now is using his friends and allies in the media to gin up distractions from the reality he doesn't want the Israelis to focus on in the lead-up to the elections.

#Danny

Well, part of these alerts, Scott, that Israel has been putting out through its media and, of course, across open-source intel, is that Iran has supposedly informed Hezbollah to get ready for attacks and that they should essentially join in in the fighting when it renews. What do you make of this? It feels like what you just outlined there almost word for word comports and aligns with what Israel is putting out there in terms of this red-alert situation they're describing.

#Scott Ritter

Right, but I mean, is the Hezbollah, is the Iranian information coming from Iranian sources or from Western sources? Which, if it's from Western sources, then it's part and parcel of the same narrative-shaping entities that are talking about the threat posed by Iran. It's just a furtherance of that. You know, I'm not saying that Iran isn't in contact with Hezbollah, and I'm not saying that Iran hasn't asked Hezbollah to join. I don't know. But I would just be cautious about embracing a narrative coming from entities that are sympathetic to Israel, because both Israel and the United States have a proven track record of being less than honest and forthright about current and future situations.

#Danny

Now, Scott, what do you know about the mother of all bombs that now the Trump administration seems fixated on? There are even reports that the so-called bunker busters that the United States used in 2025 are in very short supply. What is the mother of all bombs? What does it do? And why would Donald Trump use it in this context, or CENTCOM use it in this context?

#Scott Ritter

Well, first of all, let's just talk about the GBU-57, which is the massive bunker buster. They're difficult to make and expensive to make, and so they're made in small quantities. A massive number of these bombs were used in Operation Midnight Hammer. And so I don't imagine that we've had time to, you know, build new ones, at least not in the quantities that would be desirable. There's a political imperative on the part of Donald Trump to be seen as doing something decisive to break the, you know, to break the impasse that currently has settled in over the U.S.-Iran conflict. A key aspect, while a lot of people focus on the Strait of Hormuz, I believe that that issue would be resolved overnight if we didn't have the Iranian nuclear issue.

Donald Trump, as you know, in reading all of his posts, has said that, you know, always concludes, Iran will not have a nuclear bomb. You know, where does the mother of all bombs fit into this? Again, go back to Midnight Hammer and the extensive use of the GBU-57. It was the strike, particularly on Fordow. Trump has bragged about it, about bomb after bomb after bomb going in the ventilation shaft and causing damage. He even bragged that he had solved the nuclear problem because the 60% enriched uranium had become nuclear dust because of the effectiveness of the American attacks.

We now know that that's a lie. How do we know? Well, the Iranians, in the negotiations leading up to this current round of conflict that were concluded on the eve of the bombing, said—basically said—that they will turn over the totality of the 60 percent enriched uranium, which Trump said had been turned into dust; that they are in possession of it. It is intact. And part of the deal would be to bring that under control and dilute it down, which means that the Iranians hadn't lost control, that this stuff still existed in its original form, and that Donald Trump was misinformed.

It's one thing to say that you've turned the Iranian program into nuclear dust. The American audience is, without exception, the most ignorant audience in the world about the world we live in, and they'd be willing to accept at face value anything that is believable, that is negative or detrimental to Iran. So Trump could have articulated that he had turned the 60% enriched uranium into nuclear dust, and therefore we had won the war. But then we had the negotiations, and now we have the unfortunate negotiation record, which proves otherwise. So Trump is going to have to recreate the destruction of the Iranian nuclear program.

He needs to make new nuclear dust, and this is what the mother of all bombs is supposed to do. It's a fuel-air explosive, thermobaric-type weapon, meaning that its primary effectiveness comes from the overpressure generated by the large blast that is produced when the cloud of ignitable material ignites rapidly. Generally, if you go back in time, we used fuel-air explosives, which basically meant that we dropped a bomb on the ground which aerosolized a highly flammable, you know, material. And then it was ignited, and it just rapidly expands.

The idea is it creates massive overpressure that could collapse, you know, concrete structures, buried structures, et cetera. We've used the mother of all bombs in combat against the Taliban, or against, actually, ISIS-K, Islamic State in Khorasan. Under Trump's orders, we dropped the bomb. It was supposed to have taken out all of ISIS-K's capabilities in a given area. It turns out that mainly it just killed civilians. It's an overhyped weapon that doesn't do well against mountainous targets, et cetera. It doesn't generate the kind of overpressure necessary to collapse a target like Pickaxe Mountain.

Maybe he's going to use several in succession. Who knows? But I think that the reason why they're using the mother of all bombs is to create a sound and light show. It's going to be filmed extensively. You're going to see the bomb drop. You're going to see it impact. You're going to see it blow up a giant cloud of dirt. And next thing you know, Trump will say, "I've created nuclear dust." And then he can leave Iran because he has solved the nuclear problem. So that's what I think we're seeing. We're seeing a bit of theater designed to create the political conditions that allow Donald Trump to declare victory and leave Iran.

#Danny

Are there any problems with this potential scenario that the Trump administration, CENTCOM, might be putting together now? Because oil now is at \$110, spiked actually in the hours before this program. And Iran has already said that they are noticing the activity of the United States. They see that the aircraft carriers are getting closer, and that in the coming days they may conduct an operation which will repel them further back. What kind of problems could the United States face with all of this activity that is building up to another strike?

#Scott Ritter

Well, I mean, you know, first of all, we don't know the exact nature of whatever military strike plans are being considered. The media suggests a three-day war. Who knows what it'll be? Look, the Iranian Speaker of Parliament, who's also their lead negotiator, traveled to Iraq a couple months ago and, upon arrival, said that it's the Iranian position or belief that the Trump administration is looking for an elegant face-saving mechanism out of this war. So the Iranians understand that there has to be an act of theater that takes place that creates a perception of strength on the part of Donald Trump. It doesn't mean that there has to be reality attached to it.

And so, I'm not saying they'll coordinate in advance, but they have a history of doing this, as you know, Midnight Hammer. So I think we may see a carefully choreographed series of events that has the United States dropping these bombs, hitting some other targets, has Iran retaliating with ballistic missiles, hitting targets, and then both sides stopping, and the United States declaring victory,

declaring it's going to exit stage right, and Iran doing nothing to prevent them from exiting stage right. This is the most logical course of action for both parties. That doesn't mean that that's what's going to happen.

#Danny

Hmm. Yeah. Yeah. Well, I guess we'll have to see what happens then. Scott, you know, Iran also comes in the context now of what's happening with Saudi Arabia. Strikes by Yemen, or retaliation to Saudi aggression, have happened, quieted down a bit. But nevertheless, there are still a lot of concerns, even by Israel in these recent alerts, that Saudi Arabia is in big trouble and Ansar Allah is not necessarily going to tap out just because Saudi Arabia is striking them in Yemen. What's your thoughts on where this is now and how it might impact any future attacks by the United States and Israel against Iran?

#Scott Ritter

Well, I mean, I don't see any indications of Ansar Allah surrendering or giving up. I see the exact opposite. We have reached a situation where, you know, it was Saudi Arabia that provoked the most recent round of fighting. If you remember back in August, Saudi Arabia attacked the Sana'a airfield after an Iranian airliner had returned Iranian pilgrims from the funeral of Ali Khamenei. Saudi Arabia declared an air blockade. Ansar Allah has responded successfully with its own air blockade, and now we see Ansar Allah doubling down, punishing Saudi Arabia by deliberately targeting the thing that's most important for Saudi Arabia: their oil production infrastructure. Saudi Arabia is dropping bombs, but none of these bombs are having a meaningful impact on Ansar Allah, nor could they. You know, you're dealing with people who believe that they're on the right side of history and have embraced the concept of martyrdom, should it come to that.

So threatening to kill Ansar Allah isn't going to take you in the direction you want to go. So I don't think there's anything Saudi Arabia can do to alter this outcome. The question is what pressure can be brought to bear, if any, by Iran on Ansar Allah to stop actions that could lead to the fall of the House of Saud, because that's what we're talking about here: the elimination of Mohammed bin Salman and the total demise of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. And at this point in time, if things are left to their own devices, I think Ansar Allah is committed to the fact that the conflict with Saudi Arabia is existential in nature, and that Ansar Allah has no choice but to see this through to the bitter end, which means either be destroyed or take down Saudi Arabia. And I think Ansar Allah is fully committed to taking down Saudi Arabia.

#Danny

Saudi Arabia, their decision-making process has been very curious. And I was looking at Al Arabiya today, and they have a report from a deputy minister of public diplomacy in Saudi Arabia who is blaming Iran, saying that it is backing and encouraging Ansar Allah's Houthi attacks, and even goes

so far as to say that Russia and China are involved in providing intelligence capabilities that have benefited both Iran and Ansar Allah. What do you make of this? Because Iran has said that they are willing, as part of their brokered agreement in 2023 that was brokered with China, they are willing to be a mediator in this conflict and help de-escalate. But here, Saudi Arabia is accusing Iran of breaking their agreement, normalization agreement. Your thoughts on this? You know, sometimes it's very baffling to me, this kind of political play amid a war that doesn't seem to be going very well.

#Scott Ritter

Well, I mean, again, we have to reflect on certain realities. It was Saudi Arabia who started the current conflict with... In fact, we can go all the way back to 2014, 2015, the decision by Mohammed bin Salman for Saudi Arabia to engage the Houthis directly. It was supposed to result in a rapid Saudi victory and allow Mohammed bin Salman to claim his military spurs as he maneuvered to seize power in Saudi Arabia. It turned out to be an unmitigated disaster, and it in part led to MBS, Mohammed bin Salman, carrying out a de facto coup in November of 2017, where he arrested 11 royals, including the man who commanded the Saudi Arabian National Guard, who was considered to be next in line for the throne.

He eliminated his political viability, that of his brother and others. You know, but this means that he came to power, you know, not through the grace of the Saudi people, but rather through, you know... Now, this muscle could be excused if he is able to retain Saudi Arabia's ability to enrich itself with oil. But now we see that Ansar Allah is crippling that. And that means that now Mohammed bin Salman's failures are becoming more obvious. And the likelihood of people holding him to account is quite high. And so now you're an Iranian. How do you balance this? Saudi Arabia facilitated the U.S.-Israeli attacks against Iran. That's without a shadow of a doubt what happened.

And Saudi Arabia continues to provide support to the U.S.-led coalition that's confronting Iran. So from an Iranian perspective, Saudi Arabia is the problem, not the solution. And the Saudis haven't done anything, I believe, that would convince the Iranians that Saudi Arabia has peaceful intentions. Yes, there was the 2023 China-brokered rapprochement. But since that time, Saudi Arabia seems to have sided openly with the United States and Israel against Iran. So I don't think there's any love lost there. And I would fully expect at this date and time that, as long as Saudi Arabia continues to align itself with the United States and seek American assistance to problems, Iran will view Saudi Arabia, rightfully so, as an enemy, not a friend.

#Danny

And how is this, all of this now, the totality of what's happening in West Asia, from the fears, which are having immediate impact on the oil prices and everything that goes along with that, the fear of war continuing with Iran and the United States and Israel, and Saudi Arabia and Yemen now added into this mix? How is this affecting the rest of the world? I know you recently spoke about Ukraine and how Zelensky has made very public his dismay of the Trump administration and Donald Trump's

deal with Russia around this. It seems like this war in West Asia, or this multi-front war in West Asia, is having ripple effects across the world. What's your take and thoughts on this?

#Scott Ritter

Yeah, I mean, first of all, I think there's a direct cause-and-effect relationship between what's happening in West Asia and what's happening today in Ukraine. It wasn't always the case, but, you know, the United States made a decision to go to war against Iran, backed by Israel. They lost that war. Iran has asserted its control over the Strait of Hormuz. The United States doesn't have a military solution to that.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia, some say with the backing of the United States, reinitiated enforcement of its so-called air blockade back in August, bombing Sana'a airfields, setting in motion a series of events that now have resulted in Ansar Allah attacking Saudi Arabia on almost a daily basis, attacking airfields, political targets, and economic targets. You know, this is—there's no debating what's happened here. As far as—Danny, you've got to re-ask the question. I'm sorry. I'm exhausted. I haven't gotten any sleep. I was answering the question and I lost it.

#Danny

Well, the question hopefully is simple enough regarding the impact that the wars are having in West Asia on the rest of the world.

#Scott Ritter

Okay. So now what we have is this war that the United States started that's now expanded beyond the Strait of Hormuz into Bab al-Mandeb, is having a severe economic impact on the world. And, you know, this is playing out at the pump for the American electorate. You know, James Carville famously noted in 1992, "It's the economy, stupid," meaning this is what politicians need to focus on. And Donald Trump seems to have taken that to heart because we're talking about, you know, him losing... I want to take a quick pause just for a second.

#Danny

Sure, sure. All right, Scott's going to take a quick pause as he takes care of matters at home. But yeah, what we're talking about is the massive impact that these wars in West Asia are now having on the rest of the world. It's been building up and cascading to the point where just today, oil jumped. Brent crude jumped to \$110 mysteriously. Nobody understood what actually happened, why it is peaking now. And many suspect it's because what happened in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Ansar Allah's attacks on Yanbu, on the East-West Pipeline, on Iran, are actually far more extensive than

what is being reported by the Saudi regime and, of course, the Western mainstream media that is in collusion with it. So we are getting these huge spikes in oil prices. I don't know what it was the day before. Oh, here we go. Scott is back. All right. Yeah, it's cool. It's cool.

#Scott Ritter

The reality of a Friday afternoon in the Ritter household.

#Danny

Yeah, no worries. Kids and things happening.

#Scott Ritter

Anyway, getting back, this Iran conflict has resulted in an economic crisis for the United States. And now the question is, what can the United States do to resolve this? And specifically, what can the Trump administration do to resolve this in a way that doesn't damage him politically? You know, Clausewitz famously noted that, you know, war is politics. What is it? Von Clausewitz said, "War is..." I'm missing the phrase. Bottom line is war is an extension of politics. And there's another American saying that all politics is local, meaning that the local issues are what matter. And right now the most local issue for most Americans is the price at the pump, what they're paying for gasoline, because this resonates, especially diesel.

Even if you don't have a diesel car, understand that the truckers who do have diesel trucks, they have to pay this price, and that price gets passed on. So there's a reason why your vegetables cost more. There's a reason why milk costs more, cereal costs more, et cetera. There's a reason why my grocery bill is three times more expensive right now than it was this time last year, and that's because of high prices. Now, and so Trump has to resolve this. He has critical midterm elections. And there's a belief that if he can demonstrate his ability to control prices and actually get them going in the right direction, that the Americans, when they go to the polls, will vote the economy and the perception that Donald Trump is the solution and not reflect on the fact that Donald Trump is the problem.

And so he's doing that, but he can't do it in a way that says, "The reason why we have high prices is Iran," because the Americans will say, "But you made the decision to attack Iran. It was a war of choice. You didn't have to do this." And so what he's trying to do is create the impression that the reason for the diesel prices is something else that he doesn't have any control of, like Ukraine's ongoing attacks against Russian refineries. He says it's the Ukrainians' fault that we have this because they've been attacking Russian refineries and Russia had to stop selling diesel on the world market. Now, in a way, it's true. Ukraine attacked Russian refineries. Russia stopped selling diesel on the world market. But this isn't why there's a diesel crisis. There's a diesel crisis because of Donald Trump's attack against Iran.

But, you know, what Trump is trying to do here is solve the diesel crisis. First of all, there's three things that Donald Trump's doing to try and create stability in the market. First, he said, "I'm not going to bomb Iran until after the midterm." We now know that's probably a lie. But he said it to bring calm to the market, to get the traders to say, "Oh, we have a period of relative calm, so there's no need to worry about oil shortages, at least not until after the midterm, so we can bring some calm to the market." Two, he needed to alleviate the pressure on diesel pricing. So he got the Europeans to dump 50 percent of their strategic diesel reserves on the market, which they did. But when you look at that, you know, we're talking, what, two weeks' worth of diesel. That's it.

It's not a game changer. And when they run out of diesel, there's nothing happening that's going to, you know, make things better. It's just going to go back to being bad. And then what he did is he got the Russians to enter this diesel deal, which has a potential for some long-term aspects to it. But again, the diesel deal doesn't move the needle on diesel availability. It's to create a perception. And this is what Trump's doing. He's trying to create a perception of decisive intervention on his part to resolve the diesel crisis before midterms. After midterms, when the reality of the insufficiency of Russian diesel and European diesel hits home, it's too late.

The vote has been cast. So this is what he's trying to do, ignoring the fact that the Ukrainian attacks on Russian production, energy infrastructure, is a CIA program that Donald Trump has ordered. He doesn't want you to think about that. He's going to blame it on Zelensky. But Zelensky is simply implementing a plan written in Washington, D.C. The CIA has openly bragged about their role in attacking the refineries. And Donald Trump is pretty much taking credit for this. Scott Bessent is taking credit for this. But Trump wants you to believe this is purely a local initiative on the part of Vladimir Zelensky. And so he said to Zelensky, stop the attacks.

You see, now that's Donald Trump being decisive, intervening. They stop the attacks, the diesel gets on the market, and Trump can say everything's under control. The problem is that Zelensky's not playing that game right now, because Zelensky can't play that game. Zelensky's in an existential crisis of his own. He has a collapse in Ukraine's air defense capabilities, a collapse in Ukraine's performance on the ground, a collapse in their economy. He needs—I mean, he's just literally in the European Parliament today saying that, I forget the numbers, but he needs, what, \$90 billion right now and \$155 billion over the course of the next year to continue this conflict.

And he's telling the Europeans, you have to do this. Now, Europe isn't going to give money away to an entity that is collapsing, that is failing, that is not going to be here. And if Zelensky were to go along with what Donald Trump is saying and stop the massive propaganda campaign that is his ongoing drone attack against Russia—just last night, over 600 drones were fired against Russia, over 100 of which went to Moscow. Now, they were all shot down, but that's not the point. The point is that Zelensky is maintaining this high-profile pressure campaign against Russia, launching drones to convince Europe that he can resist, that he is capable of resistance.

Donald Trump wants him to back down, end that propaganda campaign, and therefore, you know, leave himself doing nothing while Russia literally bombs Ukraine into submission. So Zelensky's not playing that game, and Europe doesn't want him to play that game. Europe needs him to be the new Winston Churchill. So with the crowding of Europe, Zelensky is opposing Donald Trump verbally, openly. And this has created a very interesting divorce between Trump and Zelensky right now. And I think that we're basically looking at the end of Zelensky as a politically viable leader of Ukraine.

#Danny

Are these consequences that were factored into all of this, Scott? Because before the Iran war started, there were rumblings about the Strait of Hormuz and what would be the consequences if the United States decided to engage in a large military campaign against Iran. Right now, all of that seems to have come to a head. And as you said, it's impacting another conflict that the Trump administration has tried, it seems, to ignore, at least in terms of how directly involved the Trump administration gets. And you just outlined all the ways it has been involved anyway.

And there was a long period in this conflict with Ukraine where it seemed that the Trump administration was just quietly supporting the Ukrainian regime and without any attention to it because of all that has happened in West Asia. And now the global economy is overheating. Iran just highlighted how inflation is going up in the United States. And these are reports that you don't have to look toward Iran to find. They are being released right here in the United States. Your thoughts on this? Are these consequences—do they just not care, the planners, the war makers, the so-called strategists in Washington, about these consequences? Because all signs seem to point to they don't. And then why not? Who's benefiting from all of this?

#Scott Ritter

Well, to answer that question, first, we have to go back in time to the Biden administration. I was highly critical of the Biden administration. Many people were. But the Biden administration functioned from a policymaking standpoint in a comprehensive and logical fashion, meaning that a direction would come from the White House. That direction would be taken by the National Security Advisor to the National Security Council, where the principals and then later the deputies of the various departments and agencies that constitute the U.S. government would come together and be told, "The president wants X, Y, and Z," or, "Here is a directive from the executive branch."

Then they would parse out assignments, and then those would work their way down to the bottom, where you'd have interagency working groups at the junior level dealing with specific issues. And they'd bring those issues together in a more comprehensive fashion at a mid-level. Then they'd bring it up and brief the deputies, who might ask questions, go back, rework it, and bring it up. The deputies would agree on something, take it to the principals, who would take it to the president, who would sign off on implementation. And now everybody's working off the same game plan, a

game plan that they are all knowledgeable of because they helped write it. That's how policy is supposed to be made and implemented.

It doesn't happen this way in the Trump administration. In the Trump administration, none of that system works. What happens instead is the president gets up in the morning and, with his inner circle, comes up with social media postings that become declarative policy. And once he makes a declarative policy statement, then the various agencies come together and say, "How do we respond to this? What do we need to do?" But there's none of that in-depth analysis. It's all knee-jerk reaction, instant gratification, as opposed to long-term planning. And so to sit there and say that, you know, the Trump administration has thought this thing through is wrong.

The Trump administration inherited policy from the Biden administration. Now, with that policy, because I told you the way it's coordinated, it creates a certain momentum because these interagency working groups, et cetera, what are they? They're not elected officials. They are part of the permanent bureaucracy, what we call the deep state. So the deep state has already been conditioned to move policy in a certain direction. Now, to stop that, normally the president would issue a directive, and they'd work that through and figure out how we bring this ship to a stop, to a halt, and then redirect it. But what's happening now is the president's up at the top saying, "Stop the ship."

And everybody is keeping the ship going, and nobody knows how to get the orders down to the engine room. And there's confusion and all this stuff. This is what we have with Ukraine policy. This is what we have with Iran policy. This is what we have with energy policy. It's all haphazard. Where we do have some coordination strategically is the concepts at the top about, for instance, American energy dominance in the world, how to leverage America's energy position into a global strength, especially vis-à-vis China. Simplistic analysis that says if we cut off China's access to energy, we can then control China's economic growth by being the one who determines how much energy China gets.

This is what led to what we did in Venezuela. And this, I believe, is a large part of the driver of what we were doing with Iran, why we went into Iran, and a large part of our Russia policy: the idea to strangle Russia, strangle Iran, and take control of Venezuela to control the flow of energy to China. So that's big-picture stuff, but it hasn't had the chance to be worked through the system. So there's nothing happening at the bottom. And oftentimes you'll find that what's happening at the bottom, because it's dealing with the momentum generated from the Biden administration's directives, is in conflict with the strategic direction coming from the top.

I do believe that there is a vision within Scott Bessent and other administration officials on trying to control China's access to energy. I do believe that it impacts our policies vis-à-vis Iran and vis-à-vis Russia. The Lindsey Graham Act is something that's been in the works for a long time. And when you look at it, the strangulation of the Russian economy, the Iranian economy, this is part of a larger policy objective that had been worked over during the Biden administration. This act has been in the

works for some time now. The president just signed it into law. But now to implement it, this is one of those rare occasions where policy appears to be going from the bottom up, meaning that under Biden, they pushed it all down.

It was all agreed to. Now they had the policy, but the policy push didn't come from Trump. It came from the bottom. And now Trump is confronted with a law that he doesn't want to implement because it's inconvenient for the things that he's trying to accomplish. And this is why we have a situation where Trump signs off on the Lindsey Graham Act that prohibits Russia from being able to sell diesel fuel, and then turns around and cuts a diesel deal with Russia that directly violates the Lindsey Graham Act. I just think there's a lot of confusion right now in the Trump administration because there's an absolute policy disconnect between the executive and the various branches that have to implement policy.

#Danny

And with this broader goal of trying to cut off China from the energy markets, and that shaping foreign policy at the top of Washington, has it panned out? I mean, the energy crisis appears to be hitting the United States, hitting the collective West in at least far more apparent degrees than it is China. What do you make of the consequences, then, of this policy? Because, I mean, it was written out in the National Security Strategy of the United States when Trump came in. It was written out that it didn't say isolate China from global energy, but it definitely did say isolate China from the Western Hemisphere. Let's shore this up, and then let's make sure that the world is far more connected to the U.S. than it is to anyone else. Your thoughts on how this is all shaping up now that we are where we are.

#Scott Ritter

One of the problems is that the United States hasn't—we don't have an effective Russia policy, to be frank. You know, one of our goals and objectives is to control Russia's energy sector, to deny Russia access to income, and also block Russian energy from making it to China. We failed across the board. And because of the way that we've done this, you know, with the sanctions being imposed in February right off the bat, you know, it's a clean break. And so Russia's had no choice but to make radical actions in response and for its own survival to create some connectivity that might have taken longer to create.

But today, Russia has a very firm energy relationship with China because of, again, the policies of the United States, because they've been implemented in a very haphazard, uncoordinated fashion. You know, we didn't provide India with any options. And so India has a growing economy in an energy-deficient world, and it had to turn to Russia. And it's very difficult to get India to unplug from Russia in that regard. You know, Russia has become a major supplier of energy to the world outside of the European-American framework. China has bought a lot of energy from Iran and Russia. Iran has found ways to get that energy to China. Yes, we're blockading Iran today, but anybody who

believes Trump when he says we have an absolute blockade simply doesn't know anything about the realities of the region.

Let me introduce you to smuggling and smugglers' routes, and the fact that smugglers have always played a very critical role in creating the so-called gray economy or even black economy that governments rely upon during times of economic difficulty—systems that operate outside of legalistic frameworks that are susceptible to influence from outside parties. So today, Iran largely functions in a gray economy or black economy mode, which means the United States doesn't have a clue what's going on in Iran, and Iran is surviving. And a lot of this involves how to get oil from Iran to a market that generates income and meets the needs of the people buying it. So, yeah, the United States wanted to strangle Russia, strangle China, strangle Iran, but we've not been able to do so because, you know, our policies, again, aren't well thought out. They're not very well coordinated, oftentimes in contradiction to one another.

#Danny

Yeah. Well, in the last 10 minutes or so that we have here, Scott, maybe you can talk about the role of Europe here. There's, of course, France, the UK—they've all saluted to the Saudi regime that they are willing to support them, but they're having huge problems with Russia. And not least because the European countries and the UK, I guess you'd say outside of Europe, they are all doubling and tripling down on a very aggressive posture towards Russia, even though the situation in Ukraine appears to be deteriorating. What is the role of Europe in all of this? What function, what purpose do they serve in all of these escalations and setbacks and all of the developments that we've been covering here?

#Scott Ritter

Well, let's just be clear about one thing. Europe doesn't exist in terms of a meaningful military power without the United States. Europe doesn't operate independently. It can't. It's not configured to do so. And to get it to transition from where it is today as a subordinate member of a collectively subordinate-to-the-United-States alliance that was established, you know, created by the United States for the United States—that's NATO—to get them to transition to something independent is a mission impossible. They don't have the resources. They don't have the leadership. They don't have the unity. They have nothing. So, yes, the Europeans can get together in Brussels at the European Commission, and they can bark loudly.

Chihuahuas do bark loudly. You hear mine bark on occasion. So do Pomeranians. Small dogs like to bark. But small dogs don't generally, you know, stop armed robbers unless they alert a bigger dog. Europe is just a small dog barking right now. They've got no power, no capability, nothing. They are able to generate some money, but Ukraine's financial woes go beyond the ability of Europe to prop up. But the real problem Ukraine has is that they don't have any ability to defend against Russia, and they won't have any ability to defend against Russia. I always find it interesting that France is

saying that they're going to come to the assistance of Saudi Arabia, but they can't come to the assistance of Ukraine because they don't have anything.

And they don't have anything to give Saudi Arabia as well. I would just ask people to take a look at the map. Imagine the target deck. Now imagine air defense. Air defense isn't a blanket that covers the entire region. Air defense is points on the ground that have little circles around them that represent coverage for that area. But when you take a look at something like the Yanbu pipeline and how extensive it is, having little points on the ground is meaningless because the drones just fly between them and hit where it's not, or come in from a direction the air defense isn't oriented. Saudi Arabia is just a massive target. It's impossible to defend it. And there's nothing France can do or Great Britain can do or any nation can do to change that outcome.

They simply lack the resources to do that. And remember, there's a competition for their resources too. Ukraine is begging for air defense resources. So, you know, what signal does France send to Ukraine when they send air defense to Saudi Arabia but refuse to send it to Ukraine? I just think we're in a situation right now where, because of the advances of ballistic missiles, both in terms of Russia and Iran, you know, the Western ability to respond effectively is diminished to the point of zero. There's no air defense system out there right now that can defend against the kind of missile-drone combined attack that Russia can bring against Ukraine and Iran can bring against Saudi Arabia.

#Danny

Zelensky is saying that over 20 million Ukrainians could be heading to Europe if the war is eventually lost. Your thoughts on this? I mean, Europe has absorbed a lot of the refugee crises that have emerged in recent years, upwards of 15-plus years of U.S.-NATO wars. What do you make of these comments and thoughts? How much of a ball and chain is Ukraine on not just Europe, but really the entire collective West right now in terms of what's happening, what's going to happen from here?

#Scott Ritter

Well, keep in mind, at one point in time, in the not-so-distant past, Ukraine's population was over 50 million. Today, Ukraine's population hovers over 20 million. Many of them are pensioners. Yes, there have been refugees going to Europe, but you know where the bulk of Ukrainians went during this crisis? Russia, where they've been peacefully absorbed, and they live in peace, and they get health care, they get jobs, they work. It's amazing how Russia, the enemy of the Ukrainians, is what they've done for the Ukrainian people. You know, Russia didn't start this war. We also need to understand that NATO expansion and Ukrainian national prejudices combined to create this.

People can never forget about Minsk, the fact that Russia was seeking a peaceful outcome rejected by Ukraine, Germany, and France, all of whom now have admitted that Minsk was just a smokescreen for time to build up a Ukrainian army to attack the Russians in the Donbass. So, yeah. You know, we just need to be realistic about where we are. Ukraine today is a pariah state. You

know, in 2022, I guess Ukrainians were the coolest accessory. I mean, you couldn't be a European unless you had a Ukrainian on your arm. You know, do you guys have a Ukrainian? I have a Ukrainian. I have three Ukrainians. I have four. I'm so cool. I got you. Then 2023 rolled around and the Ukrainians were great.

Not so sexy anymore. 2024, people just outright despise them. Today, they hate them. Ukrainians are the most hated people in Europe today because they bring nothing. They're a cancer that sucks from society. They're arrogant. They're obnoxious. And yet here we are. This winter, you're probably going to see 50% of the Ukrainian population become refugees again as they flee because they can't live anymore. Ukraine—Kiev will be depopulated, most likely. The mayor of Kiev, Klitschko, says this. And so will other major cities. They can't absorb refugees, so they'll head to Europe. You know, what's interesting when we speak about Ukraine, the tragedy of Ukraine is, you know, this depopulation.

The confirmed deaths, or certified deaths-to-live-birth ratio, in Ukraine today is four to one, meaning that for every four certified deaths—and I'm not talking about the battlefield. I just came from Russia, and somebody who is in a very good position to know has said that the number of Ukrainian casualties is 3.5 million. Just keep that in mind. That's the true number, not the fakeness that comes out of the West. By the way, the Russian numbers are significantly less than that, well below a million total casualties. Still a lot. I'm not pretending that it's insignificant, but this notion that Russia—right now Ukraine's saying, "We're killing seven Russians for every Ukrainian." No, it's the other way around.

So, you know, this is the reality. But for Ukraine to repopulate, they need a female population capable of bearing children, so women of a certain age. Right now, what is the future of Ukrainian women? All of the women who have fled to Europe, many of them have become sexual slaves. They're being exploited sexually, part of the sex industry. In short, they become prostitutes. And what happens? They become drug addicts. They become criminals. They end up dying on the street of disease or drug overdose. That's the future of Ukrainian women who flee to Europe. The Ukrainian women who stay behind are instead going to be drafted, mobilized. They'll become drone operators. But the most dangerous job in the Ukrainian military today is drone operator.

This means that Ukrainian women will be either killed on the battlefield or become prostitutes with no future in Europe. Ukraine needs children. They're denying access to the one thing that can give birth to Ukrainian children. That's Ukrainian women. We are looking at the literal extinction of Ukraine, the extinction of Ukraine, not the defeat of Ukraine, the extinction of Ukraine. And it's happening because the world continues to view Ukraine as a proxy in a larger fight against Russia. To the last Ukrainian seems to be the battle cry. Listen to Keith Kellogg and his ridiculous daughter, Megan Mobbs, and what she says. They want the Ukrainians to fight to the last Ukrainian.

She made \$100 million off of the suffering of the Ukrainian people and selling people out. I mean, we should have no sympathy for these warmongers and these war profiteers who cry, "Slava

Ukraini," but what it really means is, "Keep dying while I make money off your suffering." This is the real tragedy of Ukraine, that the very people who are supposed to be helping them are the ones encouraging their extinction. And the people that the West is accusing of bringing harm to Ukraine are the only ones who help them. Ukraine has one friend in the world, one friend in the world, and it's Russia. And yet, here we are in a situation where the West is turning Ukraine against Russia, and the end result is the extinction of Ukraine.

#Danny

Scott, it was a great show today. I want to make sure everyone knows that they can find your website, ScottRitter.com, in the video description below, and to check out all your work and support you there. Everybody, hit the like button before you go. Be sure to check out all the places in the video description to support this program. But Scott, do you have any final words before we hit end here?

#Scott Ritter

No, I mean, just to, I guess, reiterate that the discussion we're having today is not being had anywhere in the mainstream media. Let me—excuse me—in the corporate media. You want to know why I don't want to call them mainstream? Because, Danny, you and I are the mainstream. You and I and Judge Napolitano and Garland Nixon and people of this nature, we're the mainstream. We are the outlets that people who are hungry for fact-based information and unfiltered and unbiased analysis go to. But you know what we do, because we don't take corporate money, we're not corporate-controlled.

We rely on the support of our viewership. And I would just encourage people to support Danny Haiphong and support the work he does, and support others as well. If you have somebody on, an independent journalist, you see, support that independent journalist because without your support, the independent journalist tends to go away. And I don't think we want Danny Haiphong to go anywhere soon. So I would just encourage people to support you and support other voices they like, including me, if you want. Go to ScottRitter.com, and there's some opportunities there as well.

#Danny

Exactly, yes. Everyone, check out ScottRitter.com after the program. Hit the like button before you go and do that. And then all the places where they're showing the video, description below underneath that. So I'll be back tomorrow, 2 p.m. Eastern Time. I'll let you know what's happening very soon.