

# US CENTCOM chief 'has to do Israel's bidding' -John Mearsheimer

International relations scholar and "The Israel Lobby" author John Mearsheimer explains how Israel steers NATO and the US military to enact its agenda, even when its interests are divergent. ||| The Grayzone ||| Find more reporting at <https://thegrayzone.com> Support our original journalism at Patreon: <https://patreon.com/grayzone> Facebook: <https://facebook.com/thegrayzone> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/thegrayzonenews> Instagram: <https://instagram.com/thegrayzonenews> Minds: <https://minds.com/thegrayzone> Mastodon: <https://mastodon.social/@thegrayzone> #TheGrayzone

## #Max

I want to bring in Aaron Maté, who's been backstage and is my co-host here at The Grayzone. Aaron has a question for you, Professor Mearsheimer.

## #Aaron

Hello, Aaron. Hey, John. Good to see you. I want to bring in the other major conflict the U.S. is involved in, which is the proxy war in Ukraine. I was curious to get your response to these two clips, which I think are very revealing. Just a week or two before Trump launched this regime-change war in Iran alongside Israel, the Secretary General of NATO, Mark Rutte, said this about the purpose of NATO.

## #NewsMax

This is exactly why NATO exists. NATO is there to protect us collectively against any adversary—be it Russia, whoever else, or terrorism. But it's also a platform for the United States to project power on the world stage.

## #Aaron

So there's Mark Rutte, the head of NATO, saying that the goal of NATO—yeah, sure, it's about defending us—but it's also for the purpose of helping the U.S. project power on the world stage. So the goal of NATO, according to Mark Rutte, the NATO Secretary General, is for the U.S. to project power. And then, hearing the Trump administration's rationale for trying to carry out regime change in Iran, we've heard all these lies that we don't even have to get into because they've been so incoherent—nuclear weapons, missile threats to the U.S.—everyone knows that's not true. But

finally, just yesterday, I think we got an actual report with some truth. And this comes from Admiral Brad Cooper, who's the military commander of the war on Iran. And this is what he said about the purpose of this regime-change war.

## **#Army**

And we remain focused on very clear military objectives: eliminating Iran's ability to project power against Americans and its neighbors.

## **#Aaron**

I just thought that was such a revealing contrast. According to Mark Rutte, the goal of NATO—and therefore the Ukraine proxy war—is to help the U.S. project power. And the goal of the war on Iran, according to the commander heading it, is to stop Iran from projecting power in its own neighborhood. So we can have military alliances and proxy wars to project power, but other countries like Iran can't even project power in their own region. I'm just curious about your thoughts on that contrast.

## **#John Mearsheimer**

Well, I think what's going on here, just with regard to NATO, is that NATO is desperate to find a rationale for its existence. I think NATO leaders like Mark Rutte fully understand that the United States would like to pivot out of Europe and pivot to East Asia. And furthermore, the United States is really more concerned about Israel in the Middle East than it is about Europe. So what Mark Rutte is saying is, in effect, that Europe is a giant aircraft carrier the United States can use to project power into the Middle East. And I would note that Israel and its supporters fully understand this.

It's important to emphasize—and this point is rarely brought up in public discourse about Israel and the lobby—that Israel and the lobby are deeply committed to the United States being militarily involved all over the planet, having a military that's a cocked pistol. Because Israel and its supporters want that military to be ready if Israel gets into trouble. The last thing they want is a policy of restraint, where the American military comes back to the Western Hemisphere in large part and isn't engaging in wars here, there, and everywhere—because then you don't have the cocked pistol. And if Israel gets in trouble, what are they going to do? So it's very important to understand that Israel and the lobby are very aggressive in their ambitions.

And this includes NATO. Israel is perfectly fine with NATO expansion, perfectly fine with the idea that the United States uses Europe as a platform—an aircraft carrier. And Mark Rutte understands this. Rutte understands the power of the lobby in the United States. There's nobody you talk to, anywhere in the world, who doesn't understand that. In fact, I've talked to some people from the Gulf states who say that if you want to have influence in Washington, you go through the lobby. So anyway, that's what's going on with Rutte. And with regard to Brad Cooper, who's the CENTCOM

commander, he of course understands full well that he has to do Israel's bidding—that he has to see Israel's interests and America's interests as synonymous. And therefore, if Iran is a threat to Israel, it's a threat to the United States.

People like us like to argue all the time that Iran does not represent a threat to us. It's not a threat to the American national interest. Our vital interests are not at stake here. But you can't say that—you have to equate our interests with Israel's interests. Therefore, we have a vested interest in making sure that Iran is defanged and has no power projection capability whatsoever in the Middle East. This is why the present war is a nightmare for us, because it demonstrates that Iran actually has significant power projection capability, and it's tying us into knots. This is bad news. This is not the way the world is supposed to work. The way the world is supposed to work is that no country in the Middle East, except for Israel, is allowed to have power projection capability.

And any areas of the world, like Europe or NATO, that have power projection capability can have that as long as that capability supports American and Israeli interests together. And of course, again, for the lobby and for many Americans at this point in time, there's no daylight between Israel's interests and America's interests. Just my final point on this: if you're Brad Cooper or any American policymaker and you try to put daylight between Israel's interests and America's interests, you're either going to be fired immediately or fired within a week. That's the only interesting question. You just can't make those kinds of arguments. You have to toe the line—and toeing the line means saying that Israel's interests are synonymous with America's interests.

## **#Max**

Yeah, or supersede America's interests. This is Bradley Cooper's predecessor, Michael Kurilla, in the Adelson-owned \*Israel Hayom\*. Kurilla forged unbreakable military bonds that proved decisive in the Iran confrontation and regional defense operations. "My mother always told me that for my support for Israel, God will repay me," he once said. And they called Kurilla Israel's favorite general. He recently spoke, I think, at the Israeli-American Council run by Miriam Adelson. So it's like the head of CENTCOM basically bowing before this tiny little apartheid colony 6,000 miles away. Bradley Cooper has to follow in his footsteps.