# Iran BLOWS UP US-Israeli Strike Plan! Russia Joins War | Aguilar & McGovern

Trump & Israel are scrambling to launch a massive strike plan but Iran has other ideas. New reports suggest that Iran has blown up the attack but that hasn't stopped the masters of war in Washington and Tel Aviv from building up toward a new round of war that could begin at any moment. Former Lt. Colonel Anthony Aguilar and former CIA analyst Ray McGovern join to break it all down. Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis!  Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel:  Patreon: https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong Telegram: https://t.me/DannyHaiphong Support the channel in other ways: https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: $Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: https://paypal.me/spiritofho #iranwar #nuclearwar #trump

## #Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. Danny Haiphong here. I am joined by Anthony Aguilar and Ray McGovern to go over the latest developments. I wanted to begin with the big push by Netanyahu to renew strikes on Iran. These strikes were supposed to begin far before the Israeli election, and Netanyahu was still pushing for them. But an original mission on October 10th was supposed to occur, but it did not happen, owing to, according to the Financial Times, Donald Trump's reluctance to reignite the conflict before next month's midterm election. This was also reported in the Times of Israel. Iran, though, has been preparing quite intensely for this. According to Iranian officials, Iran is shifting its tactics in preparation for this renewed conflict with the United States and Israel, saying that it has upgraded weapons and targets that will reach beyond the first rounds of the fighting.

And according to former IRGC Commander Hossein Moghadam, he said that they're not going to only target U.S. bases and Israeli positions, but also they're going to target cities, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Dimona nuclear facility, and use new weapons, including electromagnetic bombs and a new missile called Resurrection, which is slated to be more intense and more damaging than the prior round. Anthony, let me begin with you. What exactly is going on here? It appears that a renewed round of war is just around the corner, like it could happen before the Israeli election. It could happen. But it seems that Iran's preparations have definitely scared Trump a bit, delaying these attacks before the midterm elections, which Donald Trump and his party are doing quite poorly in. And your thoughts on what's going on right now?

## #Anthony Aguilar

Well, as we enter the 234th day of this conflict, since the U.S.-Israel war against Iran started on the 28th of February, we now find ourselves six days away from the elections in Israel on the 27th of October. And, sequentially, we find ourselves 13 days away from the U.S. midterm elections on the 3rd of November. I am quite certain that escalation—we will find ourselves in another phase of kinetic escalation with Iran, unfortunately. And we have heard Donald Trump stating that it would not start until after the midterms. We have heard Donald Trump talking about the use of the massive ordnance airburst penetrator. That's the U.S.'s GBU-43 penetrator, 21,000-pound bomb. We have not used this in Iran yet. We used the massive ordnance penetrator during Operation Midnight Hammer.

The first and only time we have used the massive ordnance airburst was in Afghanistan in April of 2017. But we've heard Donald Trump using that rhetoric. Now, the wild card in this is always Israel. And for Netanyahu, it would benefit him personally, politically, to reinitiate hostilities, to be at war, so to speak, with Iran going into these Israeli elections in six days from now. So I'm quite confident that what we saw about eight days ago on the 10th of October was Israel preparing to execute a planned set of strikes on Iran. We now know that Israel is continuing to prepare for that with their rehearsal, their sorties, their flights over Iraqi airspace and then returning to Israel, basically conducting three-quarters of what the sortie would be for strikes on Iran. So Israel is committed to doing this. Now, Donald Trump has spoken to Netanyahu.

We know that they speak, and has conveyed his concerns about not reinitiating hostilities before the U.S. midterm elections. But the problem with that is that as we go six days before Israel's elections, 13 days before the U.S. elections, at the end of the day, Netanyahu cares about himself more than what Donald Trump would have to say. So I do think we're going to see initiation or reinitiation of hostilities soon, before the U.S. midterms, right around the time of the Israeli elections. And we've heard that from the president. We know that in Iran, the IRGC and the Artesh—the Artesh is the Islamic Republic of Iran Army, separate from the IRGC—so we've seen that the IRGC and the Artesh are preparing for such a strike to defend, but also to counter. The weapon that Iran has threatened or has alluded to is the Sajjil-2. The Sajjil-2 is a long-range

## #Anthony Aguilar

Hypersonic ballistic missile. They call it the dancing missile because it has the ability that, upon re-entry, upon its terminal strike, it can maneuver and change direction. So you can imagine, if you don't intercept it or hit it at launch or before it exits its ballistic trajectory, back in the terminal, it can maneuver as it's coming to its final target. Makes it nearly impossible to intercept that with Iron Dome or Theater High Altitude Air Defense, THAAD, or the Patriot missile system.

So going into another round of escalation where the United States and Israel are critically low on interceptors, critically low on the ability to counterstrike, with the capability that Iran possesses with

not only the Qasem Basir mid-range anti-ship ballistic missile, but also with the Karamshahr-4 and the Sajjil-2, that's a formidable threat. But unfortunately, I do anticipate that we are on a course towards escalation once again, and that Israel is going to strike soon, and that the United States will then follow suit, much like we saw when we decided to preemptively preempt the strikes on Iran vis-à-vis threats to Israel, based on what Israel may do on the 28th of February. I feel we're on that same trajectory.

## #Danny

Yeah, and you know, Ray, there is a déjà vu almost, because I remember back in January of 2026, there were all kinds of talks about the Trump administration speaking with Israel, trying to figure out if a strike was even necessary—diplomacy. We saw some of that in the last two days. Pakistan, Qatar, they're coming with these plans, and Iran is rejecting them, saying they can't trust this process after all that has transpired. And then we hear reports now that it seems like a strike is all planned and ready to go. It's just a matter of when. What are your thoughts on this?

## #Ray McGovern

Well, Danny, thanks for referring to history. That's really important. The history is that the Israelis sucked us into this unnecessary war on the 28th of February. That's part of the history now. How does Trump feel about that? How do Trump's advisors feel about that? I suppose they're saying, "Oh, I wish we had spoken up when Netanyahu was here and he had that nice little show-and-tell by the Mossad guy. I wish we had said something." Maybe they'll say something now. So let me play the devil's advocate here. There's not only that history, but there is the history of October 10. If that scenario, I guess, in the Wall Street Journal, if that had any real substance to it, it didn't happen. What's changed since October 10th? Has Trump changed his mind? And if he changed his mind, why?

Why did he deny permission on the 10th, if those reports are accurate? You know, what Tony says about critically low ammunition and missiles and air defense, I mean, to me, that's the operative thing here. I think that if the Joint Chiefs were asked by Trump to have another go at it, or let Israel together have another go at it, at any time, I think, is this not an inhibitor? Is this not when they say, "Mr. Trump, yes, sir, we can easily do that, but just for four days or five days, or actually right now, we don't have any air defense at all, and Israel is not air-defended at all"? So I'm just wondering why it's different now from the way it was back in February, where it was October 10th. And what else did I make a note here about? Well, another big factor is whether Netanyahu thinks he really needs this right now.

With the full-throated endorsement of Donald Trump. My God, it was an endorsement I couldn't believe, you know. I think that he's feeling more confident now and less willing to do what he did to Trump in February. In other words, drag him in, or not even tell him, but start this thing again. So those are the facts, or the observations, that I have. The other thing, of course, is the Dancing

Missile. The Iranians have shown that they can not only hit U.S. carriers, aircraft carriers, if they want to, but they have these missiles that can wreak havoc in Israel itself. So would Netanyahu want to do that before the election? I would have to be persuaded that he saw that the advantages of that were better than the disadvantages, and I'm not persuaded. But I confess that I know a lot less about this than Tony does.

## #Danny

Well, I mean, Pete Hegseth, Anthony, was in Israel recently. And I'm wondering your thoughts on this. There were all kinds of reports about so-called diplomacy happening yesterday, but the Qatari delegation reportedly went to Iran and left 30 minutes later. And there are now reports that Pakistani mediators essentially handed Iran the U.S.'s ultimatum, saying that they had to just get rid of their entire nuclear enrichment program or face these strikes. What do you make of this? You mentioned the dancing missile. This almost feels like a dance towards war.

## #Anthony Aguilar

This is a dangerous course towards escalation and kinetic war once again. Since the 28th of February, we've now been at war for 234 days. And though not every day of that war has been kinetic, or missiles striking, or explosive kinetic activity, that does not mitigate the fact that we are still at war. The war that started on the 28th of February, there has been no negotiated settlement, there has been no peace, there has been no permanent ceasefire. There have been intermediate ceasefires that have been immediately violated by the United States in considering what the conditions of those ceasefires were. So we are still very much at war and very much on the path towards escalation once again.

Now, as I look at the situation and the facts as they are, do I find it irrational, on the behavior of Israel and Donald Trump? Absolutely. Do I find that it would be unsuccessful? Absolutely. I find that it will be unsuccessful, but I'm looking at it in terms of what is reality, what is likely. Certainly, I hope that there is no escalation and that there is no more kinetic war and that we find a resolution to this conflict. But when you look at the facts as we know them, we have the United States presenting maximalist demands: get rid of all of your nuclear capability. And when you consider Iran's national interests, why would they? They've already demonstrated and have said time and time again that they are not pursuing a weaponized nuclear program. They're pursuing a civil nuclear program.

The amounts of enrichment, the type of enrichment, and what they have certainly suggest that. Now, could a civil nuclear program or the enrichment of uranium progress into the percentages or the yields needed for weapons? Well, of course, but any nation that has nuclear capability, civil or military, obviously has that capability. Another point that was made by the Iranian president in talking this week was that Iran would welcome inspectors to their sites to continue to monitor the

production of enriched uranium if Israel would be willing to do the same in their Dimona nuclear facility, where not only does Israel also produce nuclear capability for energy, they also do so for weapons. And yet they are beholden to no inspections and no oversight.

So Iran is not in a position of complete abstinence from any type of negotiation. They're simply making conditions known to where if you're going to hold us to that standard, you should certainly hold Israel to that standard. Now, in terms of peace talks or negotiations or diplomacy, we are further away from that than we were when negotiations broke down in April with consideration towards the Islamabad Accords. That was the 14-point MOU that we attempted to close the deal on that fell apart once again because of Israel. Israel was not willing to leave Lebanon, to leave Gaza, to stop the war on all fronts.

And that ultimately led to the breakdown of any further discussion. So, you know, when you look at Iran's perspective, why should Iran give up nuclear enrichment in totality? Why, if they're using what they have towards civil infrastructure? And they're also open to once again having inspectors inspect Fordow, Natanz, Isfahan, under the condition of, well, Israel should be under those same conditions too. Oh, by the way, Israel is a belligerent in this conflict. So if we're talking about conditions being established, why not for Israel as well? And that continues to be the Achilles' tendon, or the mistress, that the United States cannot break up with.

Israel continuing to drag us further into escalation and war. And I do think that the discussion of Israel going at it sooner than later was had with Donald Trump, and that there was manipulation, blackmail, tit for tat, quid pro quo between Israel and the United States. Between, okay, well, we're not going to—we'll hold off on our strikes now, but I expect an endorsement from you, Donald Trump. It wasn't, you know, it wasn't until a couple of days ago that Donald Trump decided to endorse Netanyahu. Why? Huh? Seemingly around the same time that Israel was planning to strike Iran. And now they're not. Of course, there were deals made.

## #Danny

Yeah, great point, Anthony. Ray, I have one question for you before you comment on anything that Anthony just said there. I wanted your thoughts about Russia's role right now, because Sergey Lavrov was just in Iran, and there were a lot of gestures toward increasing support for Iran, especially in the humanitarian and economic realm. But this is what Russia's prime minister had to say. He said that not only do they condemn military aggression against Iran, but they are sending more medicines, more equipment and, of course, expanding economic and trade cooperation. Of course, this contradicts what Trump said, which is that Russia has had absolutely nothing to do with this war. What do you make of Russia's role, in particular its relationship to Iran, now that we are on the brink of this war?

## #Ray McGovern

Well, the Iran situation is critical for Russia. Look at the map. Look at history. Persia, or Iran, right in the soft underbelly of Russia, is a strategic asset or threat. Now, I'm glad you mentioned Russia, because Russia is not going to let Iran lose this one. Neither is China. The stakes are high for Russia, and they have the capability to support Iran. Not that Iran actually needs extra capability with respect to their weapons. One fly in the ointment here, or actually one straw in the wind, is that Russia and the United States are together now as never before on Ukraine. Okay? They've worked out an arrangement where Lavrov, two days ago, said, "Look, the United States and Russia are agreed on the necessity for regime change in Ukraine, that Zelensky has to go." Wow, that's pretty demonstrative.

What am I saying here? I'm saying that since there's this very close relationship on this one other area of conflict, it's altogether possible that I think Lavrov could be approaching the White House and saying, look, we keep saying that if you're really worried about that enriched uranium up to 60% or whatever it is, we'll take it. I mean, we took it last time. At the JCPOA, I think we took 90% of it. So we could take that uranium. The Iranians will probably let us do that. You know, it's not like giving it up to you guys. And the business about Iranian nuclear weapons—well, Mr. Trump, they're not working on a nuclear weapon. And actually, your previous CIA director, Bill Burns, said if they started working on a nuclear weapon, not the same as nuclear enrichment, okay?

They started working on a nuclear weapon, we would find out right quick because we have the collection capability, the intelligence collection capability, to determine that right quick. And at that time, of course, we had cameras all over the place. Right now, I think the IAEA is no longer in Iran, but there are other means of collection that are almost as good. And so what I'm saying here is there's a nuclear deal for the making. The only embarrassment attaches to the fact that, you know, this is pretty—it looks very much like the JCPOA, which Trump got out of. But, you know, it's a deal that he can advertise as, "We prevented them from getting a nuclear weapon. Look, they signed on this paper."

## #Danny

They're not going to work on a nuclear weapon anymore.

## #Ray McGovern

Sotto voce, they never have been since 2003, if then. So the deal is okay, and Russia can facilitate that. I think the Russians are leaning on the United States now. Look, don't go the Israeli way again. That's a no-good end, right? And besides, you're going to run out of weapons again. Let me just ask Tony, am I wrong in thinking that these reports about using up weapons helter-skelter, are they wrong now? Do you think that that's not a problem anymore for the U.S. and Israel?

## #Anthony Aguilar

So I'm actually reaching for it now that you ask me. It is not helter-skelter. It is not fake news. It is not propaganda. We saw in the report that came out, and days within it coming out, I read it, printed it, and read it. The lead inspector general report to the United States Congress on Operation Epic Fury.

## #Ray McGovern

Right.

## #Anthony Aguilar

And this was through August. So that report did not include the losses or the assessments of September, which we know we used a lot, especially in the attempts to intercept the strike on Jordan in September. So this was only through August. And in this report, it reports to the United States Congress that the United States has used a considerable amount, which is government talk for we're screwed, to using, you know, we've used a lot of our THAAD altitude air defense systems.

And remember, here's what's important to remember about when we talk about Patriots, when we talk about THAADs, when we talk about interceptors: the interceptors that we have in the region that we provide to Israel. The Iron Dome is nothing more than a THAAD system, a Patriot system with some Israeli AI tech in it to help predict predictive models of where the munitions may come in, utilizing the THAAD system, interceptions by the Patriot system. That's all it is. So when you look at that worldwide, globally, the United States military, under the United States Army, only has eight THAAD batteries. Now, battery—I'm talking about the battalion equivalent of battery, like a cannon battery, artillery battery, the size of the unit. So, eight batteries worldwide of THAAD. We have some in South Korea. We have some in Europe.

We have some in AFRICOM. Each combatant command has some. So when you consider what we have in the region, those have been greatly depleted. Some have been destroyed because with the THAAD system, you not only have the radar system, you have the Patriot integrated into that as part of the interception piece. But those systems don't provide counterstrike. So you can intercept and see it and strike it, but if you aren't doing anything to then counterstrike, well, then they maintain the ability to continue to strike, whether launching drones or launching Sajils or launching Karmashans or launching, you know, whatever missile that they're launching. So not only are we critically low in interceptors and radars, many of our radars have been destroyed. You can have Patriots lined up for days, the missile itself.

But if you don't have the radar to see it, it does you no good. We're short in terms of radar destruction and on the number of actual Patriot interceptor missiles that we have. But we're also critically low, which is dictated in this report, on our long-range precision strike missiles to then counter or hit where Iran is launching these from. Whether that's the PRSM, whether that's the ATACMS, whether that's our Tomahawks, et cetera, we're critically low on those as well. And those

are very expensive to reproduce, and they have a long lead time in the production chain to make them. You're not just kicking out Tomahawks a couple a day. They take years to produce en masse.

So yes, the truth is that we are critically low in interceptors for defense and then precision strike missiles for counter-strike, which is kind of a really bad recipe if you're on the defending end after you reinitiate hostilities. But then also, when we consider that Donald Trump talking about wanting to use the GBU-43 Massive Ordnance Air Blast, and, you know, this one, this one is very familiar to me because we've only used this one time in combat, and it was in Afghanistan, and I was there when we launched it, when we used it. And people call this the mother of all bombs. It's like the babysitter of all bombs. It's not that amazing. It's not great. It's big. It's 22,000 pounds. It has a massive burst, but it's an airburst. So if you're trying to use it against something subterranean, it doesn't work. So if we're going to use the MOAB, the Massive Ordnance Air Blast, GBU-43,

## #Danny

What are we going to use it against?

## #Anthony Aguilar

It's not going to do anything against Fordow, Isfahan, or Natanz, or Pickaxe Mountain. So it's going to be used against a surface facility, i.e., an urban area, i.e., civilians. So we're already signaling that we're ready to commit more war crimes, because that is not going to destroy a cave. Now, this, the Massive Ordnance Penetrator, the big one, this is the big one. This is the 30,000-pound bomb that we used in Operation Midnight Hammer. We used 12 of these, or excuse me, no, we used 14 of these. So, as was in this report, what we only have in terms of these, we only have 20 of them. And, oh, by the way, they can only be deployed being pulled out of the back of a C-130. These don't get dropped by an F-35 or an F-22 or an F-16 or a B-2 or a B-21. They get dropped out of the back of a C-130, which is very, very slow.

And after you drop it, because it's not being dropped by an aircraft that can initiate against a target, that thing is guided by satellite. It comes out of the back of the aircraft, big parachute, it comes down, and a satellite then has to link in and guide it. Well, if you're Iran, you know that. And if you have support from Russia and China, well, the number one way to help defeat this is electronic warfare interdiction to cut off any satellite link. Then you can't use it. So if you're going to use this, well, then the only thing that can drop it is the B-2. So Iran is sitting there saying, "You want to get it? Come and get it. Come and get it." Because now we know that if you're going to fly your B-2s with MOPs, you got to do it from the United States.

We're going to be tracking you. If you're going to use the MOAB, like the president has already been running his mouth talking about, well, the only way to deploy it is a C-130, and C-130s aren't stealth, and they're not fast, and they require multiple refuels even to just get across the Persian Gulf into Iran, where you might drop that. And it's very unlikely that they'll make it out. A C-130 is

very slow. It's propeller—it's a propeller aircraft. It's not even a jet engine like a C-17. So if you're Iran and you're looking at how the United States is posturing and saber-rattling and what we're going to use, you're like, okay, bring it. Bring it. It is not going to end well for you. Same for Israel. What are they going to do in terms of what they're going to strike?

Israel doesn't have MOAB GBU-43s or MOP GBU-57s. They don't have those. So what they're going to use, it comes down to, okay, what's Israel got? They got tactical nukes, which can be fired at or dropped out of the F-35, which they do have. The United States has them as well. So I fear for the way this is escalating now. When you look at, you know, when Donald Trump talks about, "We're going to use the mother of all bombs," and people are like, "Oh, man, this will end the war. It'll be great." I'm telling you, I was in Afghanistan when we dropped that on an ISIS Khorasan cave complex in northeastern Afghanistan on April 13th, 2017. And it did nothing to the tunnel complex.

And unless you knew that it was dropped and where it was dropped, you could have gone out there the next day and wouldn't have known that there was any bomb that was dropped, because it's not made to destroy hardened facilities. It's made to destroy, you know, like a surface facility, like I said, a city, a power plant, water purification facility, perhaps destroy a bridge, which now we're getting into the realm again of committing war crimes against humanity. And, you know, Pete Hegseth going to Israel was there to carry the message by Trump. Look at the timing of this. Israel wants to strike. Trump doesn't want him to.

Days later, Trump comes out with an endorsement of Netanyahu in this election, which is horrible politically. And then we have Hegseth visiting Israel. He's carrying the message from the president directly to Netanyahu, face to face, with what is going to happen. Don't catch us off guard like Midnight Hammer. Don't catch us off guard like the night of the 28th of February, where we had to roll the president out of bed with his white MAGA hat, the business MAGA hat, in Mar-a-Lago, and he had to come up with some concocted story of why we were fighting this war. Like, don't catch us off guard again. What's the plan?

So I am very confident that Israel has a plan. The United States has a plan. There is no space in between it and that. What's going forward is going to happen because the United States and Israel are complicit in it. And I do not think that the military operation will succeed in getting us any closer to negotiations with Iran than where we are now, or where we were back in April with the Islamabad Accords. In fact, Iran is more enabled now by China and Russia. In fact, when Lavrov was in Iran speaking to Pezeshkian, he even said to the world, the U.S.-Israel war against Iran is illegal. So of course they're going to continue to back Iran and not let Iran fail.

## #Ray McGovern

Hey, let me, Danny, if I could interject here. Tony, at the very beginning, you talked about this kind of escalation being irrational and unsuccessful. Everything you just said about the capabilities of our weaponry suggests to me that it's certainly irrational. It will certainly be unsuccessful. And given the

history of the last two years, don't you think that General Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whom you know personally, have had professional experience with, don't you think that by this time he'll tell the president all the things that you just mentioned with respect to how ill-prepared we are and how ill-prepared Israel is and how this is going to be irrational and unsuccessful?

Or do you think he'll just salute like he did last time, like all good Air Force generals do, and say, "Yes, sir, we can do it, but we may... we may not be able to do it for more than four days, and Israel might be obliterated, pardon the word, Mr. President, because we have the air defenses and their Iron Dome, and all this Mickey Mouse structure is porous and has been demonstrated to be porous. So you're going to lose a lot of Israel. You're not going to win Israel."

What do you think the chances are this time, Tony, that either General Dan Caine is listening to you now as he listened to you once in Syria? You can tell that story. It's a wonderful story, if Danny wants you to. What are the chances that they'll stand up and say, "Mr. President, we'd really like to do this, but we're not only going to not win, we'll be embarrassed, we'll be irrational, seen by everybody, and worst of all, we'll be unsuccessful, and we may be reduced to having to resort, or Israel will, to their ace in the hole, namely these little miniature nuclear bombs."

## #Anthony Aguilar

Well, you know, yes, my personal relationship and my personal working experience with Dan Caine goes back to the Operation Inherent Resolve days, Iraq and Syria. I was the Joint Task Force Deputy Operations Officer, and he was the Deputy Commanding General for Operations. So I worked directly with him every day in that deployment. And one thing that stood out to me at the time, one-star General Dan Caine, was that when President Trump, in December of 2018, sent out a tweet saying that the U.S. was done with ISIS and were leaving Syria, that was certainly a surprise to everyone in Syria and at the joint force headquarters in Iraq because we were nowhere near having defeated the physical caliphate.

In fact, we were still fighting them through Raqqa. They still held substantial terrain. They still do, as a matter of fact. ISIS is still present in northeast Syria. The U.S. is still present in northeast Syria. So when we were anticipating, like, what do we do? Is this tweet now policy? Usually, these things come down through orders, through the SecDef, the Secretary of Defense order book. They come down through that, not through tweets. Is this—are we going to plan off of this? And of course, from four-star General Votel, the CENTCOM commander at the time, through the CJTF commander, three-star General LaCamera at the time, went on to be a four-star general, by the way.

Everybody was like, well, you know, we got a plan for it. And all of us in the staff were asking, like, can't someone simply ask the question to the president, either from CENTCOM to the Joint Chiefs? Somebody be an adult and ask the question, did you mean that? Did you mean we're leaving? Can someone confirm that? And it was crickets. Nobody wanted to ask the question. And then on

December 18th, when, at the time, U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis was scheduled to come to Iraq to get a brief on this withdrawal plan, he resigned. Mattis resigned. So Trump came in his stead. Trump kind of filled in on the already planned trip, and he came.

And we briefed him in Al Asad Air Base—or excuse me, Ali Al Salem—in Iraq. And as all these generals are sitting around, you have the CENTCOM commander, you have the CJTF commander, you have the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, you have the Secretary of Defense, you have the CJTF commander, General LaCamera, you have the Joint Task Force commander, Major General Roberson, Dan Caine. And as everybody's briefing, it was Dan Caine that kind of asked the question, like, "Hey, sir, you know, we have options available. We can do X, Y, and Z. But, you know, when you said in your post that we're leaving Syria, did you mean that?"

"Is it like, no questions asked, we're leaving?" And at the time, President Trump said, "Well, you know, I'm certainly open to options and to, you know, what the plan could be. You know, I'm not necessarily committed to that or not." And so, you know, all of us staff planners in the room were like, "Couldn't someone have just asked him?" It was that easy. Could have just asked him. Now we have some clarity going forward on what we're actually planning for. So the experience that I have with Dan Caine as a one-star—and remember, in that time period, he then went on to DTRA in D.C. as a two-star, and then he retired. Remember, Dan Caine, the current chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is a National Guard Air Force officer who retired as a two-star, who then was appointed by the president to come back into service.

Remember, Dan Caine was not a sitting general officer that we promoted into position. He was retired. He was a good year out of the military at that point. Brought him back in, made him a four-star, and made him the chairman of the Joint Chiefs. So he's in a position now where he's out of his element. So what I anticipate with those conversations that are happening between Donald Trump—and here's what I've noticed. You remember in the early days of this conflict, February 28th, March timeframe, every day, or at least a few times a week, Dan Caine, Pete Hegseth at the podium in the Pentagon giving these fantastic briefings of success. Dan Caine would go up there with a daily anecdote of, you know, hey, Airman so-and-so did this or Sailor so-and-so did that.

And it was this pageantry of success where we haven't heard from Pete Hegseth or Dan Caine in months, other than the ridiculous things that Pete Hegseth does in his own little pet projects with the Department of Defense. We haven't heard anything from Dan Caine. So when you look at that in terms of, I think that Dan Caine, as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, because we know he pushed back against Donald Trump wanting to utilize the nuclear option back in May, that he has been sidelined or mitigated. Not fired, but sidelined. And now Pete Hegseth and Donald Trump have a direct line, or maintain a direct line now, with Central Command Admiral Brad Cooper. Because Admiral Brad Cooper is very much a warmongering zealot for this administration and for the continuation of this war as a shooting war. It's his war, right? He's a Central Command commander. He's a four-star admiral. This is his war.

Of course he wants to win. Of course he wants to show that the U.S. Navy and the U.S. military and U.S. Central Command can't be messed with. Of course he wants that. So I think now, because of this visit that Hegseth made to Israel, Admiral Cooper was there with him, that now the president and Hegseth are just going directly to Cooper. And of course, Cooper, Admiral Brad Cooper, wants this shooting war to continue. He has said it. The U.S. Navy is locked and loaded. U.S. Central Command is ready. We're more ready than we've ever been. And, oh, by the way, in addition to the USS George Washington, the USS George Bush, the USS Boxer, and the carrier strike groups with each, he has those in theater. He also has the USS Theodore Roosevelt and the USS Makin Island with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit en route. They're in Japan right now.

And here's my concern about their little stopover in Japan. The narrative is that they stopped in Japan for a couple of days because you're thinking, hey, you left San Diego on October 4th. It's going to take you three weeks to get to the area of operation. The Washington needs to be relieved. You're just stopping off in Japan to do some training exercise. What? Well, that's a nice narrative because right now the USS Theodore Roosevelt and the USS Makin Island are participating in a joint exercise with Japan in Japan on their little stopover coming into the Indian Ocean, into the Arabian Sea. But what's in Japan, right? If I tell my wife, hey, I gotta make a grocery stop, and she's looking at my phone and I stopped at Home Depot, she's like, okay, you're not buying groceries. You're going to buy tools, and you're not stopping off at the grocery store.

But they happen to be close, so the excuse fits right in this case. What's in Japan? The United States Defense Logistics Agency has major munitions depots in Japan, to include where we keep some of our MOABs and some of our MOPs and some of our tactical nuclear weapons and some of our attack munitions: the Kawakami Ammunition Depot, the Akizuki Ammunition Depot, the Hiro Ammunition Depot—major logistics hubs for ammunition, feeder ammunition, global ammunition in Japan to support both Pacific Command and Central Command. It's a major global depot for ammunition. So what do you think the USS Theodore Roosevelt and the USS Makin Island, on their little stop-off to conduct this impromptu training mission on their way to relieve forces in U.S. Central Command, are loading up on while they're in Japan? A lot of ammunition.

## #Danny

Hmm. Oh, sorry, Ray. There you go. Good.

## #Ray McGovern

Restart. When do they get there, Tony? How long does it take to get from Japan into the Persian Gulf area?

## #Anthony Aguilar

So here's the thing. The total trip from San Diego to link up with the carrier group in the Indian Ocean, because remember, the USS Washington, et cetera, they're not sitting in the Gulf of Oman. They're in the Indian Ocean, split between Diego Garcia and the Strait of Hormuz. So to get from where they are now to link up with the Washington and the Bush in the Indian Ocean, about five days. So that's coming from—they're right here off the coast of Japan. They're kind of in the South China Sea here. So, you know, they come south around here and then, you know, through the Strait of Malacca, and there they are. Doesn't take long. But the overall journey from San Diego to the theater would have taken about, let's say, three weeks, 21 to 22 days at a good pace, okay? Which would have put them there around the 26th of October.

What happens on the 27th of October? Israeli elections. So I do think because of this, the timing of the Israeli elections, the timing of the U.S. midterm elections, for Donald Trump to be pulled into doing something before the U.S. midterms at the behest of Israel would show his weakness. But I think Donald Trump knows that Israel is going to go at it no matter what. So in doing so, he's delayed the Roosevelt by this training exercise in Japan. But let's say they leave tomorrow. They could still then be there by the 26th or the 27th, right in time for if the United States thinks that Israel is going to do something, that at least we then have another carrier in theater.

And it could still be the plan for the USS Theodore Roosevelt to replace the USS Washington. But it could also very easily be in the plan that once the USS Theodore Roosevelt gets there, if hostilities have resumed, it's not too far of a logical leap to then say that the USS Roosevelt may add to. And then you're going to have the Washington, the Roosevelt, and the Bush. Because let's not forget, there's also a heck of a lot going on in Yemen and potential control of Bab al-Mandab.

## #Danny

Ray, any comments?

## #Ray McGovern

Well, I guess I'm just kind of fixated on what we infantry intelligence captains used to call an estimate of the situation. And if we're going to run out of ammunition maybe just a few days into the quarrel, I would not tell my troops to go off on a fool's errand. In other words, I guess I'm attributing more emphasis to what I see as the real problem: the lack of preparedness vis-à-vis Iran, which has shown itself incredibly resilient and incredibly in possession of wonder weapons that we never, ever anticipated. So again, I've made a real bad analysis by projecting rationality behind what Trump would condone or what he would do. You can't apply logical reasoning to what Trump will do. And that's why Tony was right off the bat when he said this would be irrational and we would lose.

It would be unsuccessful. So I'm still in this frame of mind of the old McGovern that used to think, well, if it's irrational or unsuccessful, they're not really stupid. They won't do it. Well, that's passé.

That's all the analysis, and we have to adapt to what's going on today. And thanks, Tony, for filling in the blanks here. This is incredible, not only the arrival of these ships, but the state of the ammunition and what you perceive as Netanyahu's gain by starting this thing right before or during the election. I just don't think he needs that anymore with the endorsement he has from Trump. And it looks like he's going to win anyway, my guess. So I don't know. We'll see. And if rationality prevails, you'll be right again, Tony. You've been right.

## #Anthony Aguilar

Well, I'm simply looking at it from experience and what I know the reality on the ground or at sea is. And, you know, here, let's take it down, you know, to the tactical level. As an infantryman, when I was in the infantry before I went to Special Forces, I'm not at home with my basic load of ammunition and my grenades and my mortar. My mortar sergeant isn't at home with his mortars in the garage, and when it's time to deploy, we just grab our stuff and go. In fact, all of those munitions that we use stateside to train with, we don't deploy with. You get that when you get into theater. So, you know, my very first deployment as a second lieutenant to Iraq, you know, before you deploy, you coordinate with the unit that you're replacing.

Hey, how much on-hand 5.56 millimeter do you have? How much on-hand mortars? How much on-hand Javelins? How much on-hand 203? Whatever your ammunition needs are. And the unit comes back and says, "Hey, we've got this, this, and this." And so you do an assessment and you say, "Okay, well, we're going to be there a year. It's this much ammunition per soldier per basic load, or this much ammunition per weapon system over X amount of days. We're going to need this much." And they only have this much. Either we're good, they have enough, or we need more. You don't just then go to Walmart to buy that. You don't just bring it with you.

You then have to request it through the ammunition depots in theater. There are theater depots to say, we need X amount of munitions shipped to port whatever that we can link up with when we get into theater, so we have the munitions we need for our deployment. It's not the unit that you're relieving's responsibility to do that. It's the unit coming in. Same thing happens in the Navy, in the Air Force with big bombs. You know, these jets aren't sitting on airfields in the United States with bombs on them. They're not even sitting on the airfields in the theater with the bombs on them. The bombs get loaded for mission purpose, what the mission is.

So, same thing. The USS Theodore Roosevelt and its carrier strike group, to include its destroyers and its missile cruisers and its littoral combat ships, et cetera. There is coordination between the logistics officers. Hey, how many Tomahawks do you have? How many whatever do you have? How much of this do you have? We're low on all these things. Okay, well, our allotment based on the DODAC, the Department of Defense Ammunition Accountability System, DODAC, is, well, we have this much. So we're going to need more. So you then notify the depot. Well, in this case, if you're traveling from San Diego to this theater, you would go through Japan, which has all these depots. So that could be one of two things.

Either you're loading up extra because you know you're going into a fight or you're going to soon start a fight, or you're having to get more munitions because what you're replacing is critically low. Both of those situations, both can be true. They can be low, and you could be loading up extra because you know you're going into a fight. You're going into a shooting war. So when you're looking at that, it would be irrational to think, "Oh, we got a war going on. There's a carrier strike group that has to be replaced. Why would they make this stop in Japan? What? Why?" But then when you look at it, oh, Japan is the regional ammunition depot. So either they didn't leave with enough ammunition, or in their time since the 4th of October up until two days ago, the situation changed and they were ordered to load up extra because there's going to be a shooting war.

So when I put those pieces together of the puzzle, I look at that and say, okay, they're not in Japan doing a little training mission while they're en route to a war. They're loading up, whether it's to meet the gap of the critical shortage that we already have in theater, or they're loading up more because they're going in to sustain an already happening, by the time they get there, or soon to happen after they get there, on or about the 26th or 27th of October, going right into a shooting war. Because what do you need on these aircraft carriers and these ships if you're going to go into a missile war? You need a lot of interceptors so you don't get shot out of the water. And you need a lot of missiles to counter-strike, because our counter-strike isn't coming from batteries on land. It's coming from the Navy.

## #Danny

Those are great points. And, you know, Ray, I've also—you mentioned earlier about, okay, well, maybe Netanyahu doesn't need the war. I also think about just after the election, if there's a calculation that he and his coalition are going to win. A war with Iran could certainly be a kind of a big-bang reentrance, another validation of everything that, you know, he's been wreaking on the world since, you know, at least 2023, but his long political career. So I also have been thinking about that, like, okay, well, why start it now, even if it's not necessary for an election victory or to delay the elections or anything like that? Well, it could be a feather in the cap, another war to reunite or unite even further the population around him. But final thoughts—we have four minutes left—but to you, Ray, and then final thoughts.

## #Ray McGovern

Let me just pick up on that. So let's say Netanyahu wins big, or at least he can put together a coalition, right? What would be his incentive to try to achieve what he could not achieve in previous go-rounds vis-à-vis Iran and face the inevitable consequences of Iranian missiles raining down on Tel Aviv, West Jerusalem, and the whole...? In other words, you know, if we're talking about irrationality, or Netanyahu thinking he can mousetrap Trump into supporting this kind of thing again before the U.S. election, yeah, again, I'm from Missouri. I'd have to be persuaded, but I've been wrong so many times before by applying logic or rationality to this that I defer again to Tony.

## #Danny

Yeah, Tony, final comments as we begin to close out here.

## #Anthony Aguilar

Yeah, for those of us that have experience in the military and military planning and operations and intelligence, such as Ray and I have, we look at some of these things and we think, well, that doesn't make sense. But I always remind myself that, you know, that hubris plays a big part in how decision-makers make decisions. I think that Hegseth is way in over his head, but he is also very full of himself. He is very overconfident, and he serves a president of the same. And it kind of goes back to, you know, the way we see things. I try to put myself into the position of how they see things from their position of irrationality to understand their logic, right? Which is hard to do sometimes because you kind of have to detach from reality. But it's the old, you know, that old study, the bat and the ball puzzle, right?

With heuristics, when the question was asked, "A bat and a ball cost $1.10. So how much does the bat cost?" And, you know, 50% of the students, educated students, answer it. They immediately say, "Oh, 10 cents." And, you know, the correct answer is 5 cents. Because when you try to think fast for things that require, let me break that down and think, it seems simple. So it's a, "I got it. Boom." No, no, no, no. You stepped in it now. And that's what we're doing. We went into this conflict, which we shouldn't have gone into. But even then, we went into it fast, heuristically, without thinking through all of those steps. And we came to the quick answer of 10 cents. No, no, you're not right because you didn't study the problem. And you're like, "Oh, of course, of course it was that."

Now, by the time we're figuring it, like, of course, of course we shouldn't have started a shooting war with Iran. Of course. The end state of this is only a treaty that looks a lot like the JCPOA that we already had in place years ago. That maybe the best opportunity to off-ramp off of this was the Islamabad Accords in April. Of course. Of course. But when you're looking at things through the lens of hubris, fool yourself with heuristics, you get to where we are now. And president or secretary of defense or not, no one is immune to that. So I always have to remind myself in the same way that Ray was saying, like, why would you do that? But then I think about, well, if I was Pete Hegseth and the way I looked at things, oh, okay, you know, a washout TV anchor alcoholic. Well, yeah, he may think that way.

## #Danny

Yeah, he literally sees himself as a modern-day crusader.

## #Anthony Aguilar

Even the Crusades took planning. He would have been a horrible crusader.

## #Danny

Gentlemen, this was an amazing show. I look forward to having this conversation with you again, hopefully on better terms than we often have to speak on. But I want to make sure everyone hits the like button before we head out of here. That helps boost the show after we've exited the Center Live stage. In the video description, all the places that support this channel are there too. And tomorrow I'll be back, 1 p.m. Eastern Time, same time, with Lawrence Wilkerson and Larry Johnson. All right, everybody. That's it for us. Show your support for these two.

## #Ray McGovern

It's great. Support the conversation by hitting the like button.