

Amb. Chas Freeman: Ground Troops in Iran? This Could Collapse Netanyahu's Strategy

#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Friday, March 20th, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Ambassador Chas Freeman, is here with us. Welcome back, Ambassador.

#Chas

Thank you. I'm very happy to be here with you, Nima.

#Nima

Ambassador, today is a very special day for Muslims and for Iranians. You know, for Muslims, it's Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan. And for Iranians, it's the New Year, what they call Nowruz. Yeah, exactly. So I want to congratulate all our Muslim and Iranian audience, because this is a special day for all of them.

#Chas

Eid Mubarak!

#Nima

Yeah, Eid Mubarak. Exactly. Ambassador, let me start with the current situation in the war between the United States and Iran. Yesterday, Benjamin Netanyahu finally held a press conference in which he mentioned the possibility of sending ground forces into the conflict. This comes after the new escalation following the Israeli attack on the South Pars gas refinery, and then the Iranian response targeting Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Haifa. And here's what Netanyahu said about ground forces.

#Speaker 03

Exploit those conditions at a certain point. It's often said that you can't win—you can't do revolutions—from the air. That's true. You can't do it only from the air. You can do a lot of things from the air, and we're doing that, but there has to be a ground component as well. There are many

possibilities for this ground component, and I'll take the liberty of not sharing all those possibilities with you.

#Nima

Are we heading toward new cycles of escalation?

#Chas

Well, I think what we're hearing is a recognition by Prime Minister Netanyahu that his regime-change operation has failed. In effect, Israel—unlike the United States, which has been focused on regime change—wants to collapse the Iranian state, not just the regime. And I don't think he has... he says he has options, and I'm sure he has ideas in mind, but I don't think they're any more likely to work than the approach so far. With regard to the use of ground forces, we do know that there are U.S. Marines headed from the Pacific coast toward Iran. There's a lot of loose talk about Kharg Island, but I don't think that's a feasible target. It's too far up the Gulf from the Strait of Hormuz.

There's also talk about assaulting the north shore of the Strait of Hormuz, which is heavily defended by Iranian forces who've dug in there over the past 20 years. There's an artillery barrage, in effect, going on that appears to be designed to prepare that as an option. That is, there are heavy earth-penetrator bombs being dropped on that side of the Strait of Hormuz, on Iranian positions or suspected positions. But I think, actually, the more likely use of the Marines is the Lesser Tunb Islands, which are contested between the United Arab Emirates and Iran. The Shah—remember him—when he was in charge of Iran and the UAE became independent from Britain, seized those islands.

They had been in dispute for some time. He took them for Iran. So I suspect there are planners in Washington and in the UAE who imagine that if the Marines took those islands and gave them back to the UAE, it would please the UAE and cement that relationship. They're essentially defensible if the UAE backs their defense. So that's the only option I can see for the use of U.S. Marines that might make some strategic sense. I suspect Iran is alert to that possibility. I don't know how they would counter it. As far as Israel is concerned, it doesn't have either the manpower or the ability to transport manpower to Iran.

So obviously, we're talking probably about the use of some force like the Mujahideen-e-Khalq or the Kurds, but I think the Kurds have already made it clear that they're not going to participate in this because it's a losing cause. They have to live with everyone else in Iran, or, in the case of the exiled Iranian Kurds who are in the Iraqi Kurdish region, they know they wouldn't be welcome to stay there if they failed. So I don't think there are good options for either Israel or the United States on the ground, which leaves the air war—and that is getting out of control. When Israel bombed the South Pars gas field, it clearly coordinated with the United States.

It's not possible to run an air war with two air forces without such coordination. But on top of that, we have other indications that the coordination took place. Both Donald Trump and, now belatedly, Benjamin Netanyahu deny there was coordination. Netanyahu said he did it on his own. But it was a disaster because it led to retaliation by Iran, as Iran had sworn it would do, against the Gulf Arabs and oil storage facilities in Israel. The Haifa refinery, apparently, was badly damaged. In Israel, we know that Kuwait was badly hit last night, and the energy minister of Qatar has said it will take three to five years to restore gas production that was eliminated as a result of damage to Qatari facilities. The UAE is also under attack.

#Chas

The Gulf Arabs are in a very difficult position, and here we have to refer to Iran's terms for ending the war. Basically, the U.S. terms involve regime change. The Israeli terms go beyond that and demand the collapse of the Iranian state, which is highly unlikely to occur under any circumstances. But the Iranian terms are reparations for the huge damage done to Iran by these attacks, the removal of U.S. bases from the Gulf, and some kind of guarantee against further aggression from Israel. Now, the most difficult part of all this, I think, is that reparations cannot be paid. There would be no basis for Trump to arrange that politically in the United States.

So it comes down to whether the Gulf Arabs will move or not. And at the moment, they are very scared. They're not thinking rationally. They think they have nowhere to go but into the arms of the United States again. But that's not an answer to their long-term problem, because Iran can destroy them, in whole or in part, at will. And the United States can't do anything to stop that. So now there's a new arms sale from the United States to the Gulf. Apparently, the Gulf Arabs have sold a lot of gold in order to pay for it, and that's why gold prices have temporarily gone down. So this is a very panicky situation from their point of view, and an arms sale now won't result in the delivery of anything for years to come.

So arms sales and deliveries can occur without U.S. bases on their territory. And I strongly suspect that's where this is going to end up—that Iran will at least achieve that part of its agenda. It's too early to say, but this war is going to go on for quite a while. I just want to make a final comment, and that is, I think once again we're seeing that capital markets, like the U.S. stock market, are gullible. They misread situations. When Donald Trump or Benjamin Netanyahu says, "Well, you know, we're winning and we'll solve this problem," they don't understand that it's not true. And so we see wild gyrations in the stock market based on misplaced optimism that the war will soon end. It's not going to end soon.

Iran has not mined the Strait of Hormuz. It has created a toll booth, like on a highway: you pay. If you're not my enemy, I'll let you through. If you're my enemy, or allied with my enemy, I'm not letting you through. So Iran is basically operating a toll road now, and it's not going to stop doing that. In fact, it has already achieved one of its longstanding objectives, in that the United States has suspended sanctions on Iranian oil exports—something we had apparently refused to do in the

negotiations with Iran. So Iran has won a point there, and we're not even a month into this war. I think it will go on for quite a long time, until there is movement not just on the Iranian side but on ours.

#Nima

Ambassador, this isn't the first time Donald Trump has come out and said he didn't know about an attack. You know, it happened before with the Israeli attack on Doha—he came out and said he didn't know about it. And now he's playing the same game, somehow coordinating behind the scenes with Netanyahu to tell him the same sort of story. When you look at these Arab states, it seems they don't believe what Donald Trump is saying, but they're not allowed to show that they don't believe it. They're so confused—they don't know how to react. Yesterday we had the foreign minister of Qatar next to the foreign minister of Turkey. He said, "We all know who started this and who's trying to do this to our region." But he didn't mention the name Israel—he's afraid even to name Israel.

#Chas

Well, I think it's the case that they're trying to have it both ways, as usual. On the one hand, they clearly do know who started this—Israel and the United States are the actors here. The Turkish foreign minister, by the way, has been very clear on this, much clearer than the Gulf Arabs. Why? Because they don't want to alienate Donald Trump. At the moment, they don't have a strategy for getting out of this war. And as I said earlier, they're therefore clinging to Donald Trump and the United States. How long they'll be able to do that is a real question, because real damage is being done to their economy and their livelihood. These states depend on the recycling of largesse to the population—in other words, they basically pay the population to be loyal.

And we saw this, of course, after the so-called Arab uprisings, or Arab Spring, when welfare benefits were increased across the region to keep citizens—Saudi Arabia in one case, others in theirs—loyal and not in rebellion. But if you don't have revenue from oil or gas, how do you do that? These countries have citizens who've become used to a very elevated standard of living, a very easy life, because when you strike the ground, oil or gas comes out of it. You don't have to do very much. And, of course, there's a difference among the five small emirates—Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, and Oman. Well, Oman is different from the others in that it doesn't have superabundant oil and gas, which means Omanis have to work—and they do. Elsewhere, people don't work.

They live off the revenue from oil and gas, and they bring in foreigners—now largely from South Asia: India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh—to do the work they don't want to do. Well, how do they pay them if they don't have that revenue? And do people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka want to be in a free-fire zone? I don't think so. So there are dilemmas they're going to have to address, and I feel sorry for them. When they agreed to have U.S. forces on their territory, they had no idea they were inviting this kind of damage and destruction from Iran. At the moment, they're very anti-Iranian, but there's an Arab proverb: "Kiss the hand you cannot bite." I think, in the

end, they'll have to find a basis for peaceful coexistence with Iran, and it won't involve an alliance with the United States.

#Nima

Which means a new structure, a new security architecture for the region—for West Asia—in which Iran, together with Turkey, Pakistan, and I would even say all these Arab states, may come together to reach some sort of understanding about the region.

#Chas

Well, there are multiple proposals that have been made—one by the Chinese, and I think the Russians have been involved as well. Iran has certainly put forward proposals for a cooperative security arrangement in the Gulf, which is based on getting rid of the American military presence, correctly seen as hostile to Iranian interests. There is a possibility. You know, for example, one of the great dividing lines in the Gulf has been between Shiism and Sunni Islam. But when you come right down to it, just as Catholics and Protestants have things in common within Christianity and can make common cause together, so can Muslims.

There's a basis for setting aside or postponing differences—reserving them for later resolution—which could provide a foundation for the emergence of such a new order. Short of that, you know, the UAE, which has been for many reasons the most active anti-Iranian force in the region other than Israel, is a practitioner of realpolitik. They do what's required to serve their interests, and they're quite capable of deciding that continued association with Israel, through their reliance on the United States as well as the Abraham Accords, is not in their interest.

So there's a lot at stake here, and I think Iran shows every sign of being willing to continue taking enormous punishment as it tries to exhaust the United States and Israel. It appears to have largely succeeded in getting rid of the American and Israeli missile interception capability, which I think was always vastly overrated anyway. And it's now using the Khorramshahr-4 missile, a very heavy missile with multiple warheads, against targets in Israel. It's also able to strike elsewhere, like in Kuwait, with drones. So I don't think we've seen the last of Iranian retaliatory strikes on Israel, the United States, or those associated with the United States.

#Nima

Ambassador, when it comes to the oil refineries, gas refineries—all of that—these are very important facilities for the security of the region. But the other thing is, if they start attacking infrastructure in Iran, Iran could hit desalination plants, which is huge. I would say this is about the survival of the region—the desalination facilities—not just for the Arab states, but for Israel as well. How do you

think Netanyahu is going to go after some sort of infrastructure in Iran that could bring a new escalation, considering the reaction coming from Iran and the possibility of attacks on desalination plants?

#Chas

Well, the United States already made this mistake. In effect, inadvertently, I believe—without having thought things through, which seems to be the pattern in this administration—they attacked desalination facilities on an island off Bandar Abbas. I think there are about 30 villages on that island that have been deprived of the water they need to survive. So there's already a precedent for attacking desalination plants. And I know that in Saudi Arabia, the desalination plants in Al-Jubail provide, I think, about 70% of the kingdom's water, and the groundwater has largely been depleted. So if you knock that out, the city of Riyadh—which is, what, six or seven million people now—would have to be immediately evacuated.

But evacuated to where? There isn't any water anywhere else. You know, there are desalination plants—those in Yanbu and in Jeddah—but they're not adequate to support a population that large. So you're right. In the end, if Israel wants to destroy the Arab Gulf countries along with Iran, it can attack desalination in Iran, which would cause the Iranians to retaliate. Israel itself is heavily dependent on desalination plants, although it has stolen the water under the Palestinian territories to the detriment of the Palestinians. So yes, water is a main thing. I also note, by the way, there are many knock-on effects of this war.

One of them is that, in addition to Iran almost certainly now developing nuclear weapons under its new leadership, I've also heard that the late Ali Khamenei was the principal opponent of building an intercontinental ballistic missile—an ICBM—that could strike the United States. I think his death removes that obstacle, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard will want to build such a weapon. But, you know, it doesn't stop with Iran. If Iran goes nuclear and builds an ICBM, you can bet that Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia will try to do the same. And if there's no protection anymore from international law or alliance relationships—well, the Gulf Arabs are being destroyed not despite alliances with the United States, but because of them. What's the lesson in that for Japan, South Korea, or Taiwan?

And so I think we're about to see a wave of nuclear proliferation, which will make the world even less safe. Other knock-on effects: China has taken the lead in solar, wind, and nuclear technology. It's also taken the lead in electric vehicle technology. This is enormously good for China because everybody now is going to want to hedge their energy supply by betting on renewable resources like the sun, the wind, nuclear power, and electric vehicles. So China is a big winner from this, although in the short term it has some difficulties and is having to do some rationing of energy. Russia is a huge winner from this, and not just because of higher gas and oil prices, but also because of the effective end of any American effort to embargo their exports.

So Russia comes out of this also with a very, very weakened Ukraine, because the weapons that might've been provided to Ukraine are all being fired at Iran and won't be available. Other knock-on effects are pretty clear too. In the words of an increasing number of commentators in Western Europe, this has destroyed the Atlantic Alliance. Every country that was asked by President Trump—on the one hand, he said, "Well, you know, we've got the situation in Hormuz under control. We've sunk the Iranian Navy, but we need help, so send your navy." The Chinese just laughed at that; they didn't even reply. But American allies from Japan to Western Europe said no—and some of them said, "Hell no." And Keir Starmer, who's not known for being a very firm leader, said, "Look, it's your war, not ours."

We didn't start it—you started it, you finish it. So the alliance, which Donald Trump tried to treat like an aggregation of auxiliary forces, sort of subordinate forces that the United States could command at will to supplement American strength—that's gone. That vision, if it ever had any validity, is gone. And so another impact of this will be an acceleration in defense spending and preparedness everywhere, including your own country, Brazil, which has already made a deal with South Africa to cooperate in the development of new weaponry, and potentially as a partner of Japan, as Japan reaches out for new markets. So I think we're just beginning to see the implications of this foolish war, and they are very dire.

#Nima

The case of Japan is so interesting because, in the parliament—if I'm not mistaken—the Prime Minister of Japan was asked, "Why did you not condemn the Israeli and American attack on Iran? You're condemning, you're talking about Iran." She said, "Because I'm going to meet Donald Trump."

#Chas

That's honest. And she did meet him. And he is so gauche. When he was asked by a Japanese journalist why Japan had not been warned in advance about the war, he said, "Well, I think you Japanese know all about surprise. Remember Pearl Harbor?" You know, to say that in front of a Japanese ally—a right-wing Japanese ally—is unbelievably insensitive. But then, of course, that seems to be the norm for our president. I think Prime Minister Takeuchi was not very well prepared to answer that or respond to it. And when she goes home, which she's about to do, she'll face criticism in the parliament, in the Diet, for having failed to respond effectively. So it is essentially an insult, or at least an affront.

#Chas

I don't know. But Japan has a serious issue. I mean, Japan hasn't made any real decision since the end of the Cold War except to stick with the United States, which it has done. But Japanese positions on various issues have inflamed problems with its neighbors. Japan and South Korea, who ought to be cooperating to maintain a balance in Northeast Asia, are at odds because of an island—

the Japanese call it Takeshima, the Koreans call it Dokdo—which Japan claims as part of Fukuoka Prefecture but is occupied by South Korea. There are also disputes between Japan and China over the Diaoyu Dao, or Senkaku in Japanese—an archipelago of uninhabited rocks lying between China and Okinawa.

And to top it off, there are disputes between Russia and Japan because they never signed a peace treaty after World War II. The Kuril Islands, to the north of Hokkaido—the northernmost of the main Japanese islands—are in Russian hands, and Japan continues to actively dispute the Russian presence. It hasn't worked out a resolution. We also have issues arising now due to the Taiwan issue and the Senkaku issue. It looks like Okinawa is becoming a point of dispute. Okinawa, of course, was taken by the United States after World War II, occupied for almost 50 years, and then returned to Japanese sovereignty. But it had been an independent kingdom, with a relationship to China rather than to Tokyo. So things are getting unstuck, and none of this is good. We also have, of course, what is going on in West Asia itself.

Turns out that Hezbollah did not disappear as Israel thought it might. It rearmed. It's effective. It's putting up an effective resistance to another Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon. It's pretty clear to me—although I know some Israelis, and people I respect in the United States who are experts on Israel, do not agree with me—it's pretty clear that Israel is trying to annex southern Lebanon up to the Litani River, or perhaps beyond, and not just build a military buffer zone. Israel has just bombed Syria again, ostensibly to provide protection to the Druze, whom it's hoping to co-opt and bring under its protection, but who have a very independent mind and have not embraced Israel in that manner. And of course, Iran has held its relations with the Houthis in reserve.

The Houthis have not been active, but they could become active if this war continues to escalate. Meanwhile, Israel is continuing to conduct a low-intensity genocide in Gaza, and it is engaged in widespread eviction, ethnic cleansing, murder, and property theft in the West Bank. So this war has many fronts. I think Prime Minister Netanyahu is dreaming if he thinks Israel can take on all of these fronts at once successfully, even with the United States. And finally, I'll just say, increasingly, I think Donald Trump and his entourage have become aware that they've been manipulated by Netanyahu—that this is a trap he got the United States into. There's no doubt whatsoever that it was Netanyahu who wanted this war. He said, basically, that he had waited 35 or 40 years to find a president he could convince to do this.

Not much more, but in other words, Senator Chris Van Hollen says he waited 40 years to find a president who was stupid enough to fall for his plan—and he found that person in Donald Trump. So this is not—there's a lot of stress and strain in all of the relationships here, including, I imagine, inside Iran. Iran has lost a whole echelon of leaders. It has others. Iran is a country, not a dictatorship of one man or one little group of people. And Iranians are suffering. Do they blame their government? Yes, in part they do. But I think they blame Israel and the United States. And what are

they being offered by Israel and the United States? Nothing, except humiliation and subjugation. Those are not things that ordinary Iranians will accept. So this is a mess, and it's going to get worse before it gets better, in my view.

#Nima

Ambassador, you mentioned the southern part of Lebanon being occupied by Israel, or that Israel wants to annex it. But we know what's happening in the southern part of Syria, and that's important because Israel depends so much on desalination plants—about 75%. The territory under Israeli occupation is also a source of fresh water, and around 20 to 25% of Syria's freshwater is located in that area that Israel has occupied. It seems that for a long time they've had some sort of long-term strategy when it comes to the southern part of Syria. They're not going to give it back to the Syrian people. They're going to occupy it and try to reduce their dependence—or, let's put it this way, reduce their dependence on desalination—by bringing in a new source of fresh water.

#Chas

No, I think they have a very deliberate policy of stealing water from their neighbors. As I mentioned earlier, they've successfully taken the groundwater in the occupied territories and diverted it. They don't allow Palestinians access to wells and water sources—springs that have been there forever and used for generations by the inhabitants. And I'm quite sure you're right that a big part of their approach to Syria and southern Lebanon has to do with water. Water is very, very important. If I may, as an aside, I was involved in the negotiations to remove South Africa from Namibia, grant it independence, and withdraw Cuban troops from Angola in return.

Basically, Fidel Castro managed to seize the water supply for Namibia that was in Angola. When he had that water supply under his control, it played a big role in changing the minds of people in South Africa about whether they could continue to control their Namibian colony. In the end, we did reach an agreement, but one of the major factors in that was the Cuban control of water supplies in Angola for Namibia. So this is not a trivial matter. It's a long-term issue, a strategic question. And I think you're quite correct—Israel knows what it's doing in this regard. Whether it can hold on to that water is another question. Whether its desal plants will survive this war is another question.

Whether its population will stay in the bomb shelters or try to leave the country is an open question, because this is not going to stop anytime soon. At some point, the efforts by Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu to convince people that there's an alternative to reality are going to fail. Reality is what's still there when you stop believing in everything else. And the reality is that, while there's a news blackout on Israel, Israeli military censorship is very effective—and the foreign press, to its disgrace, respects that censorship. Israel is being pounded, perhaps not as heavily as Iran, but still being pounded, and damage is being done to Israeli infrastructure. This is going to go on and probably escalate.

#Nima

Ambassador, you mentioned the issue of sanctions. We had the U.S. Treasury Secretary, Scott Besant, talking about how they've unsanctioned Russia, and that Iran is in the process. Then they say they're putting pressure on Iran by doing that. Somehow, the whole calculation seems distorted—it's unbelievable to anyone with a logical mindset who would take seriously what Scott Besant is saying. Here's what he said.

#Speaker 04

They break the glass plan across the administration and at Treasury. We unsanctioned Russian oil. We knew there were about 130 million barrels on the water, and we created supply beyond the Strait of Hormuz. So we anticipated this. We knew there could be a temporary—and I want to emphasize temporary—choke point there. There were 130 million barrels in floating storage. In the coming days, we may unsanction the Iranian oil that's on the water—about 140 million barrels. So, depending on how you count it, that's 10 days to two weeks of supply that the Iranians had been pushing out. That would have all gone to China. In essence, we'll be using the Iranian barrels against the Iranians to keep the price down for the next 10 or 14 days as we continue this campaign.

#Chas

Go ahead. Well, you have to understand who his audience is. And as I said, he's trying to manipulate the stock market and the investment climate in the United States. So he says 10 to 14 days, implying that the war will be over then—but it won't be. He also implies that Iran is losing revenue from keeping the oil price down. Now it's, I think, settled around \$107 to \$110 per barrel, but it's going to go up again. It's at that level because...

#Chas

Some people are foolish enough to believe him. I don't think anybody, as you said, who knows anything about the oil industry—as opposed to trading in oil futures or investing in shares on the stock market—does believe him. I think he has very little credibility. And the theory he put forward really doesn't make sense, especially because, as I said, Iran is operating a toll booth in the Strait of Hormuz. So if you're Chinese, Indian, or Turkish, you've made a deal with Iran, you've used diplomacy to solve the oil problem, and your tankers are getting through. And if you're Iran, you're letting your own tankers through.

And there are some indications that Iran is actually exporting more oil now than it ever did. So I think this kind of reasoning is—well, I don't know what it is. It reminds me of Lewis Carroll's **Alice in Wonderland**, and it just doesn't have any connection to reality. I'd also say I heard a little tone of—if not desperation, at least doubt—in the voice of the Treasury Secretary. And I'm not sure how much credibility he has even in financial circles. I actually had a discussion last night with someone

who's a very competent economic and capital market analyst, who asserted—what I think is a common American belief—that basically the use of force can solve this problem.

But the use of force can't solve this problem. You know, a can opener can open a can—it can't drive a car. And people are very foolishly imagining that the almighty American military can go on forever and solve this problem. But no, it's not going to happen. And if there is, in fact, a Marine landing on the north shore of the Strait of Hormuz, I fear it may be a repetition of Gallipoli, which didn't work out too well for the Australians and New Zealanders that Winston Churchill deployed against the Ottomans at that place.

#Nima

When it comes to the U.S. defense budget—or war budget, as they call it—Pete Hegseth put it this way: it was \$900 billion before Donald Trump came to power. They asked for an increase of \$600 billion, and now, after three weeks of the war against Iran, they're asking for another \$200 billion. It's going to be double what the budget was before. It seems that as time goes by, it just keeps going up and up. How do you see the way Donald Trump is managing the situation in the United States and convincing people that this is going to be beneficial if the war continues? Or are we going to keep the conflict in the Middle East going as long as it takes? They know the price of oil isn't going to go down. Today we've learned that—it's going to stay high. Everybody's talking about \$180. Oh, yeah.

#Chas

I think so. You know, I mean, that price isn't unreasonable to expect. I suspect it's actually lower than where we'll end up. But no, I think the Secretary of Defense—self-styled Secretary of War—Pete Hegseth, is making a fool of himself. On the one hand, he says we need another \$200 billion to conduct this war, and in the next breath he accuses Iran of spending too much on defense, saying Iran is diverting funds from the people to its military. He calls that criminal. But what is he doing? He's trying to do the same thing—not just with \$200 billion for this war, but an extra \$600 billion, as you said, for what? Nobody knows. There's no threat analysis to justify it. And so, you know, I think the enemies the United States seems to want to fight go beyond Iran.

Iran is a middle power militarily—conventionally not very strong. It has developed an effective strategy for turning its weaknesses into strengths, using ballistic missiles and drones to good effect. But it's no match for U.S. conventional forces. Now, we're talking about fighting China—that's what that \$600 billion is for, I guess. I don't know if you've looked at what the People's Liberation Army is doing, but in many respects they're now ahead of us in terms of the technology they're deploying. Of course, they haven't had any experience in conventional warfare since 1979, when they attacked Vietnam—which then had the world's best infantry—and discovered that their military was lacking in capability and had to undergo reform.

Anyway, as I've mentioned before on your show—and I invite listeners to look this up—there's an institution called the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, which now tracks 74 areas of science and technology to determine which countries are in the lead. It used to be 64, now it's 74. Well, the latest report says that out of those 74, China is in the lead in 68. There are six where China is not yet in the lead, but the gap is closing. I'm not sure where the United States stands among those six. What I do know is that there's no European country on that list. So we're going to go to war with a country that's fighting on its own territory—or in immediately adjacent areas—while we're projecting power across six, seven, eight thousand miles of the Pacific Ocean, and somehow we imagine it's going to turn out differently than the attack on Iran.

I would say that if the United States—if this is really the reasoning we Americans have developed—someone should bring out the straitjacket, maybe call it the Strait of Hormuz straitjacket, and put it on the sentimentalists, because this is just irrational and self-destructive. And, you know, we're quite capable, apparently, of going ahead with incredibly foolish adventures. General Kane, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, now a full four-star general, apparently warned Donald Trump in several briefings about the difficulties the military would face in taking out Iran. The United States nonetheless decided to go ahead. We apparently told the Turks the war would be over in four days. So Donald Trump imagined a short, victorious war, despite his advisers telling him it would not be.

#Speaker 03

happen.

#Chas

He also ignored the warnings from the intelligence community that the regime in Iran was not going to fall, and that assassinations anger people and unite them rather than dividing them or making them more moderate. They also told him that, while he claimed he had obliterated Iran's nuclear program, he had not done so. And when he said, "I obliterated it, but I have to obliterate it again," it made no sense at all. So finally, I think they told him, "If you do this, Iran will go nuclear." And I don't think he believed them. He believed Netanyahu. This war was authorized by Netanyahu, not by the U.S. Congress. It is supported by the Zionist lobby, not the American people. It is politically fatal to Donald Trump, because you can see his own constituency—the MAGA movement—splintering right down the middle.

A majority of his followers do not approve of this war. So I think all of this is happening in the context of elections that he's trying to derail, control, or skew this November—if he can't prevent them. And I don't think he can prevent them. But he's making a real effort to ensure that voters who are hostile to him are not allowed to vote. So I think there's a sense of desperation setting in. I don't think Donald Trump is claiming victory, but there's no basis for that claim. We've said that we destroyed 100% of Iran's military capability, and yet Iran continues to fire at Israel and the Gulf Arabs. So there's a clear contradiction between reality and these claims that can't be bridged. And I

don't think, in the end, the American people—certainly not the people of the world—will fall for lies about what's happening. They can see for themselves what's going on.

#Nima

Ambassador, we had the director of the Counterterrorism Center in the United States, Joe Kent, resign from his position. He said he doesn't agree with Donald Trump's position or the Trump administration's stance.

#Chas

You froze for a moment. I'm not sure why.

#Chas

I can't—Nima, you're frozen. I don't think it's on my end, but you froze for a while.

#Nima

Yeah, I think something happened—yeah, it was a problem with the connection. The case of Joe Kent, Ambassador—I was talking about Joe Kent and his resignation. He doesn't agree with Donald Trump on the policies of this new war in the Middle East. He even had an interview with Tucker Carlson yesterday, where he raised a lot of doubts about the assassination of Charlie Kirk, and how Charlie Kirk had been doing everything he could to avoid a new war in the Middle East. What's the importance of that? Because for such a long time, we were talking about Tulsi Gabbard together with Kash Patel. It seemed they might do something in the Trump administration, but it turned out that Kash Patel is totally in line with, you know, the Zionist lobby—and Tulsi Gabbard was somehow silenced. Missing in action. Yeah.

#Chas

No, I have not been an admirer of Joe Kent, who has been a dyed-in-the-wool advocate of some of the conspiracy theories that power the MAGA movement. He's been fanatically loyal to Donald Trump. That makes the significance of his resignation all the greater. He has courage—political courage—to admit that the leader he followed is mistaken. He said forthrightly that there is no evidence of an imminent threat from Iran in any sphere. He was responsible for counterterrorism, and Iran apparently did not pose an active threat in that realm. It also did not pose an active threat in the nuclear realm, and he said so. So I think he's performed an important service. Unfortunately, he stands out among political appointees and civil servants in the United States for his willingness to sacrifice his career for the sake of truth.

And I respect him for that. I'm sorry that I misjudged him. But this is an indication of what we were talking about—that people like Tucker Carlson, who were strong supporters of Donald Trump, early supporters, important to getting Trump elected the first and second times, people like Marjorie Taylor Greene, people like Joe Kent—are bailing out on Donald Trump. He's losing his base. The part of his base that he's losing is the intellectually competent part of it. There are a lot of people in his base who are basically, you know, just ignorant. They don't follow the issues, they're not influenced by them, they're apathetic. That's a great asset to Donald Trump—that, you know, uneducated people support him. He said he likes uneducated people for that reason. But the educated among his supporters are leaving him.

#Nima

Yesterday, before wrapping up, Ambassador—yesterday, during the press conference that Daniel held—he mentioned something. He compared Jesus to Genghis Khan. That's bringing a lot of repercussions in the mainstream media and on social networks. And here's what he said when comparing Jesus to Genghis Khan.

#Speaker 03

Unfortunately, and unhappily, Jesus Christ has no advantage over Genghis Khan. Because if you are strong enough, ruthless enough, powerful enough, evil will overcome good. Aggression will overcome moderation.

#Chas

Well, he's describing himself, of course. He's not a Christian. I don't think he's even a Jew. I think he's an opportunist with a Jewish background. He's a Zionist, and the Zionists have become the major source of violations of morality, international law, and decency in the world today. Yes, he's capable of evil, and he clearly does not believe in the message of Christ. That's an own goal, in football terms.

#Nima

Thank you so much, Ambassador, for being with us today. A great pleasure, as always.

#Chas

Have a great day, Nima Alkhorshid.

#Nima

Thank you.

