

# Ray McGovern: Iran Hits Targets Near Israel's Nuclear Site

## #Nima

Hi everybody, today's Sunday, March 22nd, 2026, and our dear friend and brother Ray McGovern is here with us. Welcome back, Ray.

## #Guest

Thank you very much for inviting me. I have a little cold, so I'm going to put a cough drop in so I don't disturb anyone.

## #Nima

Ray, let me start with the new escalation that's happening. Donald Trump issued an ultimatum to the Iranians. He said that within 48 hours they have to open up the Strait of Hormuz, or he'll attack all the power grids in Iran. He's talking about attacking Iranian power grids and creating a disaster there. But here's how the Iranians have responded so far. We've learned from the IRGC headquarters — they call it the Khatam al-Anbiya headquarters.

And they said if Donald Trump does that, they'll fully close the Strait of Hormuz until the damaged facilities are rebuilt, and they'll target all energy, ICT, and infrastructure assets of Israel, destroy regional companies with U.S. shareholders, and hit power plants in countries hosting U.S. bases. This is a new escalation, Ray. And Donald Trump is so obsessed with this Strait of Hormuz. What we know as of today is that the strait is not closed. Iran is trying to manage it — some ships can go, others cannot. It means that countries Iran considers friendly can pass, but the enemies cannot. What is your understanding of this ultimatum and the way Donald Trump is, we could say, getting more desperate for a conflict with Iran?

## #Guest

Well, he is getting more desperate, and the lies he tells about having removed any aircraft, the capability, or having defeated this or that — those are just lies. I just wonder who's telling him that, or whether he's just making it up out of his own mind. Now, our friend Professor Morandi had an interview yesterday with Glenn Diesen, and you may not have seen it, but he goes a little farther than the IRGC. And I'm sure he's trying to warn Trump that, look, if nobody else told you about this, the places where you have bases are incredibly vulnerable. I mean, talk about ground troops — my God, go into Kuwait or wherever.

This is what he said: if the U.S. uses ground forces, well, how about the Iranians using ground forces to enter Kuwait, move into Saudi Arabia from the north, and from Yemen from the southwest toward the north and east? Who's going to stop them? He points out that Saudi Arabia has already shown its incompetence in many ways. So, there's that. And also, it mentioned—if I'm not mistaken—let's see, where is it here... yeah, there's some mention, oh yeah, desalination and other infrastructure. My God. Now, you know how much Israel depends on desalination.

Some of the Arab folks around the Gulf also depend heavily on that. In my view, those systems aren't easily repaired. So who's going to have water to drink in those places? Trump has gone off half-cocked. He's being advised by some Air Force general who heads the Joint Chiefs of Staff and thinks bombs always win wars. Well, he never learned that bombs never win wars — it takes a lot more than that to win one. And this whole escapade that Trump has embarked on... You know, I was looking at Sun Tzu just the other day, and he says it all right here. This is 500 B.C., okay? Here's Sun Tzu.

## **#Guest**

Diplomacy and military intelligence must be used to stave off the possibility of war. It's obligatory. It must be prepared with extreme delicacy if war is unavoidable, and with intense thoughtfulness, okay? And when the foe is defeated, the subjugated enemy must be respected and not taken advantage of. Once the engagement is over, victorious troops must return home so that the cost of keeping them in a faraway location doesn't drain the resources of the triumphant country. That's a kind of nice way of saying what we, as infantry platoon leaders, learned back in the '60s. And, Nima, this may sound corny to you or to others, but we were ingrained with the idea that before you do anything—before you send the squad out, nine people—you do an estimate of the situation.

Okay, so what does that mean? I wrote down some of the things I remember. Enemy—okay, how many are there? How are they armed? What's their motivation, what's their morale, and what's their stake in this? What's their resilience? How can they be reinforced if necessary? Okay, that's the enemy. The other two are real easy: terrain, right? Weather. And then the last one is LOCS—L-O-C-S—Lines of Communication and Supply. Well, I mean, don't generals learn this? I guess Air Force generals don't learn this, because this is really terrible. It's not only Sun Tzu; it's the Infantry Training Center at Fort Benning, where I spent not such a nice time way back in the early '60s. Why is it all being done? Well, not to defend the United States.

I mean, there is no threat—whether it's imminent or, if that's even a word, "unimminent." If it's a distant threat, there's still no threat to the United States. Netanyahu, who's in the driver's seat here, persuaded Trump that it's a threat to Israel and that this is the time to go ahead and wipe them out. Now, lots of good things are happening too. I just read this morning that the chief investigator, Karim Khan of the ICC, has been exonerated from those made-up charges about sexual abuse. Okay, that means that Netanyahu and Gallant, if I recall correctly, are going to be pursued now in a

way they couldn't be when the chief prosecutor had to duck out last May. So there are people looking at this thing in a more sober way.

Not Trump, though—and this 48-hour thing. I mean, if he follows through on that, my God, I just hope that the Israelis themselves, and then the Gulf states, say, "Please, please don't do that. Look what it means for us." And if he reacts by saying, "I don't give a rat's patootie what it means for you—maybe this will get the street open and we won't have to pay nine dollars a gallon for gas right before the election in November."

It's so damn cynical. And alas, I'll just say he's flying blind. You know, I was a very proud intelligence analyst because, in my day, we were pretty much the first line of defense, right? We anticipated real threats. If it was imminent—well, there were very few imminent threats—and we did anticipate most of them. The one we didn't was the Cuban Missile Crisis, and that's another story. But I was proud to serve in that frontline capacity, being the first measure of defense. Now, we could talk about this if you like, but the real gutsy intelligence judgment came after my former colleagues produced a false estimate—false information to justify the war on Iraq. Somebody sensible said, "Oh my God, those neocons, they're going to go after Iran now."

How can we prevent—oh, they're going to say they have nuclear weapons. Let's put out our National Intelligence Estimate and see how close they are to getting one. I'll just repeat it for people who don't know: that judgment, issued in November 2007, unanimously—by all 16 intelligence agencies at the time—and with high confidence, said Iran stopped working on a nuclear weapon at the end of 2003 and has not resumed work on one. That judgment held. That's why I was very proud of my annual support of the CIA. It held until just last year.

Last March, Tulsi Gabbard said the same thing. She even said there's a fatwa—a religious edict—against having a nuclear weapon, and there was no evidence at that time, March of last year, that that fatwa would be changed. So I was so proud of these guys for sticking to their—I mean, the pressure must have been terrific, okay? Unlike Iraq, they stuck to their guns until just this week, when Tulsi Gabbard gave the game away in a most obsequious way. It just pains me to even think of that performance.

## **#Nima**

Ray, the other important event yesterday was the attack on Dimona. They sent just one missile, and it hit the target—just to show it was a warning sign for the Israelis, that they can do it whenever and wherever they want. And...

## **#Nima**

What is the calculation on the part of the Israelis when you hear that? Because it seems the Israelis are, you know, in charge of what's going on. Donald Trump isn't really running the show, and he's

somehow so obedient to what Netanyahu is asking for. What's your understanding of that? Because Israel—look at Tel Aviv, look at Haifa. Haifa was attacked by Iranian missiles, and the refinery in Haifa too. Look at Tel Aviv today—it's somehow becoming like Gaza. And the two targets in Arad and in Dimona—they hit them with two hypersonic missiles, and they reached the targets without facing any, you know, any difficulties from Israel's air defense system. What does that say to us?

## **#Guest**

Well, I've seen the video. Maybe you saw it too—they sent something up to intercept it and, whoops, it didn't. So Trump's bragging about their air defense system being completely obliterated, or that the Iranians won. Well, it's the Israeli one that's not impenetrable. In other words, we have Iron Dome, we have THAAD missiles, we have Patriot missiles—oh man, we've got it all covered. But as we told Ronald Reagan back in the '80s, anything can get through an air defense system, an anti-ballistic system—there are always decoys. And in this case, there was no decoy necessary; it was just going so damn fast. As you watch the Israeli missile— I don't know what kind it was, no doubt given by the U.S.—it just sort of didn't... oh, there it is... but it didn't intercept it.

So you're right, I think. The Iranians are going to say, look, the next one could go right into Dimona itself and obliterate—forgive the word—your nuclear processing or plutonium facility. So, look, don't you realize that we have this capability? And don't you realize that you cannot defend against it? We're hitting Tel Aviv now, too. You know, you can keep this secret for only so long. There are very courageous correspondents or journalists there pointing out what's happening in Israel. So yeah, I think that, if nothing else, this gives the lie to the notion that we have this impenetrable anti-missile system. They can wreak havoc—that is, the Iranians—and, you know, they could use these cluster bombs, or whatever they call them, the ones that send out about 25 bomblets each over an area.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, right.

## **#Guest**

So I don't know. You know, I used to say, well, somebody sensible might get to Trump and kind of shake him and say, no, you've been misled here. This is not a winning situation—make the best deal you can. Now, I think that happened about two weeks ago. And what did Trump do? He got on the phone and called Putin: "Hey, can you help me out here?" Well, it's not real clear what Putin said. What Trump said about Putin was, oh yeah, he's willing to help, he'd be happy to help. Well, I don't think Trump is going to get any real help from Putin on these things.

As a matter of fact, I think the longer this thing goes on, the more the Russians will provide arms, as they usually do to close friends—and the Chinese too. So we've got China, Russia, and Iran in a kind of triangle here. And there's nothing U.S. bombs can do to win this thing. I don't know how to get

through to Trump and give him an elementary lesson on Sun Tzu, or even what we infantry officers learned as an estimate of the situation. It's crazy. Now—48 hours? What do you think? What do you think is going to happen?

## **#Nima**

Yeah, I think that could be the case, because Donald Trump is somehow—remember when he was trying to convince Hamas to disarm? He said, “Forty-eight hours, you have to disarm. I’m going to hit you harder than—” well, it’s not going to work like that. Now, this guy is so much into using that kind of language to put pressure, but the Iranians know that. They were prepared for this war, Ray. How do you see Iran in the way they’re responding to the attacks from the United States and Israel so far? Because it seems they’re not escalating—they’re responding to escalations. But their response to those escalations is somehow destroying everything when they do respond to what’s being waged by the United States and Israel.

## **#Guest**

Well, you know, it defies credulity that Trump would say, “Oh, nobody warned me about the Strait of Hormuz. Nobody warned me about this, that, or the other thing.” And when you look at the people around him—Rubio, Haqqani, General Raisin Kane, who else? Maybe J.D. Vance—these people are really ignoramuses. You know, I call them that, using a German term that won’t be used here. But they don’t know which end is up. And they don’t know not only Sun Tzu, but I don’t know where Haqqani learned his infantry leadership, because he never learned to do a basic estimate of the situation.

And he’s leading troops. If those Marines don’t clog the toilets on those landing ships—if they go ahead and do what they’re told—I mean, I fear for the Marine Commandant, because he’s in a terrible position. You saw him sitting up there briefing everybody. What kind of Marine would allow his troops to be sent into carnage? I mean, it’s not fighting the Japs on the islands; it’s fighting an unnecessary war for Benjamin Netanyahu—a war of choice we never should have gotten into.

## **#Nima**

Ray, there are people in the United States—Democrats and Republicans—who are against this war between the United States and Iran. One of them is Joe Kent, who finally decided to step down from his position because he said this isn’t going to benefit the United States or the agenda they had. He voted for Donald Trump, but he didn’t want a war in the Middle East because he lost his wife there, in Syria. He knows what the battlefield is, what the reality of fighting in the Middle East is, and he doesn’t see that kind of understanding in the Trump administration. That’s why he decided to get out—to resign from the Trump administration. How did you see his resignation and the way he’s trying to talk about it, to convince, to put pressure on the Trump administration? I don’t see that happening, but it was an important move on his part.

## #Guest

Well, you know, you talked about conscience. I'll just read two sentences that were key to me—I've written them down here. When he wrote to the president, he said, quote, "I cannot in good conscience support the ongoing war in Iran. Iran posed no imminent threat to our nation, and it is clear that we started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby." Whoa. This is unique. This is a guy not only with the guts to resign, but he's not going to resign silently. He's going to say, look, I've learned a lot since I was an infantry soldier, a Special Forces guy, and I just can't believe that this stupidity would be done at the highest level.

Now, I have a lot of respect for him—I've always supported him, all of it—but my God, doing this, those words again: "Due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby." That's it. And a colonel, I mean—he's unique among people who would say that. Now, part of it, in my view, is that he's not really part of the system yet. I mean, he went to Iraq eleven times. He's a combat soldier, a Special Forces guy. And all of a sudden, he gets, for his merits, to be head of this National Counterintelligence Center. But he's only been with the CIA not long enough to realize how it works, sir—Joe.

This is how it works. And if you watch that Tucker Carlson interview closely, you'll see that Joe is really bothered by what he doesn't understand. There's a hidden hand behind all this. "I haven't figured it out," says Joe Kent. It's supported by the lobby and by an incredible, overt media campaign. I just don't know exactly how it works—but it works. And if memory serves, he even raised the Charlie Kirk thing, saying, you know, things are suppressed and things aren't investigated, and we try. Yeah, that's right, he did. He went into detail—he said, you know, we try to investigate what happened.

Charlie, go away. We're shut out of it. And the FBI said, "No, no, no, no—we've got it. We've got this taken care of." Right. Well, Joe Kent is a guy with experience and principles—personal experience, including his wife being killed by so-called moderate terrorists. Moderate terrorists—well, you remember? There were bad terrorists, and then there were moderate terrorists. There were moderate terrorists in the west of Syria, which the CIA trained and supported. And then in the north, there were moderate terrorists supported by the U.S. Army and the whole thing. Well, you know, he knows from personal experience that that's why his wife was killed. Not only that, but they were supposed to get the hell out of there, and the bureaucracy—or the sinister undercurrent—prevented it. So what Joe is saying here at the end is, "Look, I'm new to this, but I sense something I don't quite understand."

The Charlie Kirk thing is one thing, and he talked about other things. So you could say that Joe is an honest guy, admitting that there are forces at work here that prevented his wife from leaving Syria when she was supposed to. And there are forces at work here that get the president to do the bidding of a person like Netanyahu—not only a person who commits genocide, not only a person

who enforces starvation, but a person who has blackmail material on our president. He's got a real trove of information—Epstein files. His are not expurgated, not edited out. There's no black on his. And I'm convinced now that that's one of the holds that Netanyahu has on our president. And would our president make earth-shattering decisions just to avoid all that coming out?

I wouldn't put it past him. If he commits genocide, if he enforces forced starvation, he'd do that too—use that lever. The real concern I have, in extremis—and I think it's likely—is that the Iranians have the capability to put Netanyahu in extremis, in other words, right back against the wall. Would he use his nuclear weapons? Well, I think the chances are better than even that he would. So we have a unique situation. I've been around a long time, Nima—six decades, professionally—and I haven't seen, since the Cuban Missile Crisis, a confrontation where one party with nuclear weapons is being pushed into a decision to either retreat shamefully or use them. I'd like someone to persuade me he wouldn't use them.

## **#Nima**

Ray, I think that's a big issue—the use of nuclear weapons. If Netanyahu actually decides to use them, what would be the outcome? From what I've seen, the Iranians are militarily, strategically, and economically prepared for this war. I don't know the answer to your question. If Netanyahu goes nuclear, what would be the response from the Iranians? What I can say is that I saw confidence in the people I spoke with.

## **#Guest**

I'm sorry, say that again?

## **#Nima**

The same people I asked about what the Iranian reaction would be if Netanyahu went nuclear—they seemed confident they'd handle it the right way. I don't know exactly what that means, but it seems to me they're prepared to go all the way.

## **#Guest**

Yeah, it's a safe bet that Netanyahu himself—and Israel—would be obliterated. You know, look at the difference in the size of the countries. Look at the fact that Iran is so widespread, and their key facilities are all over the place. How many nukes does Netanyahu have? How would he deliver them? Well, I guess, you know, I go back to John Kennedy. I think he's right over my shoulder there. Okay.

## **#Guest**

Yeah.

## **#Guest**

John Kennedy brought me down to Washington in 1963, okay? I mean, me and thousands of others who wanted to do something for our country, right? Now, in that June 10th speech in 1963, he said, look, the worst thing we can do as two nuclear powers is to face each other with a choice between humiliating retreat and the use of nuclear weapons.

## **#Nima**

Now, what was he talking about? He was talking about what had happened just eight months earlier.

## **#Guest**

And luckily, Kennedy and his brother and others were deft enough to talk to Khrushchev and persuade him—look, we'll let you down easy, we'll pull out those missiles in Turkey, but you really have to take these things out. Wow, I remember, I was at Fort Benning at the time, for God's sake, and there were no weapons there. Why? Because they were all down in Key West. Okay, so that was 1963. Kennedy, of course, was removed, in my view mostly because he was reaching out to Russia to create a more decent relationship. He pointed out in that speech that, almost unique among major countries of the world, the U.S. and Russia have never been in a war against each other. If you want to know what happened to John Kennedy, you could do a lot worse than reading that book *\*John Kennedy and the Unspeakable\** by James Douglass.

So what I'm saying here is, it's been a long time—1963. I can't do arithmetic real well, but this is the first time we're faced with a situation where Netanyahu could be choosing between humiliating defeat and using a nuclear weapon. And I don't know—I don't think, and this is the key—I don't think that even if Trump himself said, "Please don't do that, please, that would be really dumb," Netanyahu would, as is his wont, ask for permission. After using these things, he'd ask for forgiveness, saying, "Well, we had to do that." And would he get forgiveness? My God, I just don't know. So that's my major concern for the medium term. Short term, there's almost certainly going to be a false flag attack of some kind. In other words, they'll blame the Iranians for something that kills a lot of Americans.

Now, whether they're in the Persian Gulf area or in New York City—it's happened before, you know. No matter where they are, this will be one of the arrows in Netanyahu's quiver. And the Israelis have never shied away from doing this kind of thing before. They've got this gang of four in the White House—Trump, perhaps Rubio, the Air Force general, and maybe Vance. What would they do? They'd probably blame someone... They wouldn't oppose whatever Netanyahu might do. So we're in a hell of a fix. And it wouldn't be so bad if our founding father, George Washington—you know, we're 250 years old now, America, which I'm so proud to be a citizen of—hadn't warned, as he left office, about entangling alliances. He warned against doing something for another country that didn't coincide with our own interests.

If you go back there, you can see that France, which helped us a whole lot in the Revolution, would say, "Oh, hey, now come on in. We're fighting the British. You know how to fight the British. You did a great job—come on, help us." No way. John Quincy Adams was the same way. So all that history—whether it was ever learned by Trump and his coterie—is out the window, because they don't know history. They don't even know Sun Tzu. They don't know how to make an estimate of the situation. We're in a really perilous situation. I don't know... Well, I think the only solution we have is to just spread the word around. Now, Max Blumenthal was out with the judge recently, and what he said was, "Look, let's not forget that we're making progress here. There's so much on the alternative..."

## **#Nima**

Ray, it seems that your device is doing something.

## **#Guest**

Oh, am I? Okay, sorry about that. I thought I'd turned that off. Are you okay now? Sorry.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, it's okay.

## **#Guest**

Let me make sure it's turned off. I don't know how that came through. Anyway, I forget where we were.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, Ray, let me ask you this question, because it's so important given your experience and your understanding of American intelligence. You know, what has happened so far with the case of Iran—with the war against Iran? In my opinion, we're talking about what's going on militarily, with the missiles and the air defense systems. But before all this madness happened, it was a colossal intelligence failure. It seems the United States, or the Trump administration, was convinced that if they started this war, in four days they were going to destroy everything and bring about regime change in Iran.

And not only the United States—they convinced the Arab states in the Persian Gulf, and even Modi, I would say, was convinced that they were going to do a regime change in Iran. That would bring something else to Iran, something that would be friendly to what the United States wants to do in the Middle East. But it was an intelligence failure—a colossal intelligence failure. Why did that

happen, in your opinion? Was it because of Donald Trump, who wasn't willing to understand the situation? Was it because of the information that was provided to the administration? Or was it something else?

## **#Guest**

Nima, that's the sixty-four-thousand-dollar question. As I see it, we've got a delusional narcissist in power here—he knows his power. Pete Hegseth aids and abets that delusion. Marco Rubio—watching him trail along with Trump at that press event the other day—he's in it because he wants to be president next time. And there's nobody around to tell the president what he doesn't want to hear. Now, it's hard to feel sorry for Tulsi Gabbard, but I almost did. I mean, she was grilled by that senator from Georgia, Jon Ossoff. "Tulsi, you said that after the June war last year, the processing—your energy processing—had been obliterated. And then you said, right here on the bottom of page six of your prepared testimony, that there's no evidence they're working on un-obliterating it," or whatever he said. "Well, now, you forgot to read that."

"You forgot to read that, Tulsi Gabbard. So tell me—if it was obliterated and there's no work to un-obliterate it, then why do you say there's an imminent threat?" And she said, "Well, you know, that's not for me to judge. That's for the president alone to judge." And Ossoff, to his credit, said, "Look, this is the annual threat briefing. You know, this is the annual threat briefing. Last year you were pretty candid—why don't you say this year what you really feel?" And with respect not to enrichment but to making a nuclear weapon—which, as I said before, since 2007 has been consistently stated in these worldwide briefings or conferences—the reading is that they're not working on them. "What does this one say? What does this annual threat assessment say? Zero. Zero. On this all-important issue." "I think I have a note here—I'll just read you what it says. Here it is."

## **#Guest**

Okay, it says, quote, "We are monitoring Iranian weapons-of-mass-destruction-related capabilities and their actions following the initiation of Operation Epic Fury." Oh, isn't that interesting? So these senators—some of them had the guts to say, you know, "No, this is not quite right. You can't say there's an imminent threat if you say it was obliterated." Isn't it interesting that the annual threat assessment used the word "obliterated"? We used to say "destroyed." Did they use "obliterated" because that's President Trump's favorite word? I suppose so. That's not allowed. I did my first contribution—it was on Sino-Soviet relations, Russian relations with China, in 1964, okay?

We gave it to LBJ, and it was an honest assessment of what we felt—my portion was about the Soviets. So that goes back. In those days, we called it the annual report or something like that. We didn't call it a threat assessment or any of that stuff. But it's required by Congress now. And, you know, she all but committed perjury. But it all hangs on the word "imminent," and you can have lots of lawyers say, well, imminent doesn't really mean imminent—or maybe it does—but, you know. So

she was dancing around. To her credit, she had put at the bottom of page six of her prepared written testimony, which she gave to these senators before the meeting, that everything's obliterated and there's no sign it will be restored, okay?

And only one of the senators caught that parallel. Now, two of them—Senator Warner asked about it too. So, what's the upshot of that? The senators have made their point. Will they do anything about it? Chances are they'll do zip about it. Why? Because they too are creatures of what Joe Kent called pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby. Most of them are funded up to the gills by the AIPAC lobby, and most of them probably figure that Netanyahu is calling the shots. But that's what we've got to deal with because, well, they're not real bright people. And it wouldn't be so bad if American lives weren't in jeopardy.

And I just feel really sorry for those Marines if they're sent into battle again. I've seen the cliffs on the Strait of Hormuz—my God, they're worse than Normandy, for God's sake. You probably know that better than I do. But there's no way the Strait is going to stay open unless the Iranians are persuaded to allow it. It's open for Chinese ships and people paying in yuan. My God, what happens to the dollar? So it couldn't be. I'll just say one more thing. I think about four weeks ago, Nima, you and I talked about this. We listed all the reasons why it would be crazy to do it—the Gulf of Hormuz, gas prices, the coming elections, and all that stuff.

And our logical conclusion was that, despite all these armaments and ships and everything heading that way, he'd be crazy to do this. Well, that's the lesson here—he is a little crazy. And what else will he do? My God, forty-eight hours. Well, we've got twenty-four hours left of that now. Anyhow, if he does this, a lot of people are going to suffer real damage, not least of all Israel. And the desalination—I've been around places where I couldn't get water, right? And not being able to get water is something serious that most people in Washington have never encountered and have no idea what that means.

## **#Nima**

Ray, my understanding of how Washington sees Russia, Iran, and China is that most of the people providing information to Washington mostly hate those countries. The Russian analysts, Iranian analysts, Chinese analysts in Washington—they all hate Russia, China, and Iran. I don't know, but the outcome of that kind of hatred isn't going to be helpful for Washington. Still, they seem very comfortable with what they're getting from these analysts. So who's responsible for that?

## **#Guest**

Well, it has to do with careerism and integrity. I had a catbird seat watching the corruption of the analytic section of the CIA when Bill Casey, a Cold Warrior who hated Russia, and Bobby Gates, who served as his deputy for analysis, started appointing people who would agree that the Russians would never, never change. Gorbachev was just this clever commie, they said. They were telling

everybody and their brother, "Look, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union will never give up power without a struggle." No—they were wrong about that. But in the process, they put in these malleable managers, a guy who knew nothing about Russia in charge of the Russian division.

All kinds of people were really just interested in getting ahead—getting pay raises and so forth. And this came to fruition during the run-up to the Iraq War, because there was nobody left to stand up to Dick Cheney and George Bush and say, "We're not going to participate in this charade." So George Tenet, who was Director of Central Intelligence at the time, avoided doing a National Intelligence Estimate. Why? Because he knew it wouldn't stand up to close scrutiny if they were honest. So Dick Durbin, a senator from Illinois, got on the phone with Bob Graham, who was head of the Senate Intelligence Committee, and said, "Look, require an estimate, for God's sake."

"They want us to vote for war in October? Require an estimate before then." And Graham says, "You think so?" Anyhow, he tried—called Durbin back. "Now they say they're too busy." Durbin said, "For God's sake, you tell them there's going to be no vote on the war unless they do a National Intelligence Estimate about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and about ties to al-Qaeda, which are being talked about whenever you see any evidence." So what happened? Well, Tenet went to the White House and said, "Oh my God, look what Bob Graham told me." And the White House said, "Okay, well, do what you have to do—just make sure it comes out right." Oh God.

And so these malleable managers were told not only to do an estimate, but to do it real quick—and to do it according to what Dick Cheney had already said on August 26th before the Veterans of Foreign Wars: Iran had a nuclear weapon, they were just about to get it. The whole thing—it was awful. I still feel pain saying this. So those are the people who got pay increases, bonuses, the national intelligence officers for doing that. All I'm saying is, if there was no accountability for those lies, we're just lucky that somebody smart in Congress decided, "Oh my God, those neocons are going to do the same damn thing on Iran. Okay, let's see what we can do."

They looked all around for it—an unmalleable manager, so to speak, a man or woman with integrity. They could find none at the CIA. So they went to the State Department, found this guy named Tom Fingar, and persuaded him to come in and do an estimate, bringing his own people in. In total secrecy, he was, we have to admit, the beneficiary of some really good intelligence that year. And then, in November of 2007, it was Congress that published this estimate because they had requested it. That's why Bush went ape on the Hershey Highway, so to speak, as we say in the Bronx, okay? What did he do? He went to Israel and told those folks, "Oh, I don't agree with that estimate, but there it is."

And then I quoted what he said in his own book—how could he mount an attack on the facilities of a country that the intelligence community said had no active nuclear weapons program? Well, he didn't say this outright, but the whole tone was a bummer, you know. So all I'm saying is, I watched a war be prevented by good intelligence and gutsy people with integrity. And that carried through last year when the estimate said the same damn thing. And this year we have Tulsi Gabbard sort of

being the malleable manager we saw with respect to Iraq, and the Senate making nice little points there, as lawyers do. But what's going to happen? The Senate and the House will hold no one accountable this time either—because of AIPAC, because of what Joe Kent said was the Israel lobby, which has a stranglehold on these guys.

So it's up to us. I guess I started talking about Max Blumenthal with the judge, and he was pointing out, yeah, we are making progress. There are a lot of Americans who know what's going on now because of our various programs—the judge, you, Nima Alkhorshid, Deeson, the late Colonel Dixon, Danny Davis. It's a richness we haven't experienced before. The problem is breaking our way into the major media, and that hasn't been so successful. But I'd say that you and the judge probably have a better readership—or viewership—than CNN these days. So let's be positive about this. Let's get this stuff up and out, and by and by, when the body bags start coming home, and when Trump is really worried about what happens to the rest of his tenure and the coming elections in November...

And one last thing I'd point out—Netanyahu also has this to worry about. It's not only an existential threat to Israel; it's an existential threat to Netanyahu, his wife, and his family. The Supreme Court of Israel has turned down all requests that Netanyahu be pardoned for the corruption charges he's guilty of and all that. He's contradicted himself so much in testimony. It's clear that if he loses power in October—or before, when they have the next Knesset election—he goes to jail. I mean, I'm really surprised that the jurists in Israel stuck to their guns and said, "No, we're not going to pardon this." They told the president, "No, don't pardon him. You can't."

And so he's not going to be pardoned. Does this figure into the equation? I'm afraid it does. I mean, it's an existential threat not only to Israel but to Netanyahu himself. And as I said before, if a guy commits genocide and forced starvation—hell, maybe even uses a couple of nukes against Iran—I think the chances are better that he would do it unless he's restrained somehow. And who's going to restrain him? These Congress people, these senators? Give me a break. Nobody's going to restrain him. Trump may try, but I think Netanyahu would just give him a look and say, "Yeah, we'll take your advice under advisement, but we've got to do what we've got to do." And I think, unfortunately, that's where we are today.

## **#Nima**

I think a huge factor in what happens to Netanyahu and his administration is the outcome of this war with Iran, which would mean devastation and destruction for Israel. And how is that going to influence Israel—Netanyahu's administration? Last night we saw Ben-Gvir go to one of the cities in Iraq that was hit by Iranian missiles. And you see a woman there, she's saying to him, "You bear responsibility for all these deaths. Get out of my city." And she's calling Ben-Gvir a Nazi, a Nazi. Here's what she said, Ray.

## **#Speaker 03**

They're saying, "You're Nazis!"

### **#Speaker 03**

You are the leader of the Right Movement! You are the leader of the Right Movement! You are the leader of the Right Movement!

### **#Guest**

My Hebrew isn't very good, but I could tell she wasn't very happy.

### **#Nima**

Yeah, she wasn't happy. And, you know, when the pain reaches society—when it hits the people who hadn't really felt it before, who weren't feeling what they're feeling now—things change. Because in the case of Gaza, in the case of Hamas, Hamas wasn't really capable of hitting Israel that hard. But now you see something different happening. Iran is hitting back, and hitting hard. That's bringing the suffering to people who weren't very aware of what was going on in Gaza. They'd been mostly silent so far. But this could bring some kind of leverage against Netanyahu, in my opinion.

### **#Guest**

I think that's a hopeful thing, Nima. Israeli citizens are so brainwashed, so indoctrinated, and so much in support of things like genocide, for God's sake, that I think it would be a sea change to expect that kind of shift. I think rather it would be more like the attacks on Iran, which would solidify support for the government because, you know, we rally around her. So I don't know. I'm not an expert in that area, but I think that's a hopeful thing. Still, I would think it would take months, maybe even years, and a lot more devastation for Israeli citizens to turn away from their government and say, "OK, that's gone too far." I just don't have a good handle on the Israelis, but the polls tell me there's still about 70% support for things like genocide. That makes me very sorrowful.

### **#Nima**

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

### **#Guest**

You're most welcome, Nima. Thanks for having me.

### **#Nima**

Thank you.