

# Scott Ritter: Strait of Hormuz: Global Energy at Risk

This interview argues that the resignation reflects a deeper crisis inside U.S. policy: growing disillusionment with war, frustration over intelligence being ignored, and concern that factional politics have replaced constitutional principles. It also warns that the conflict with Iran is reshaping global energy security, with the Strait of Hormuz becoming a central pressure point. The discussion suggests this could trigger more resignations, wider political fallout, and lasting changes to oil markets, shipping routes, and Middle East power dynamics.

## #Nima

Scott, what do you make of Joe Kent's resignation? Donald Trump can't accuse him of being a leftist or an enemy. This is a guy who supported Trump, who really believes in America, who wants the country to be stronger. But he doesn't see that happening under the current policies of the Trump administration. Joe Kent...

## #Scott

No one can question his courage. You know, he served in some of the world's worst places under the worst conditions, and he prevailed. Joe Kent is—well, we have a large body of experience from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but especially the war in Afghanistan, which made maximum use of special operations personnel, special forces personnel. He actually expanded their ranks considerably. And these are very intelligent people, very physically fit people, and people with a moral conscience. But their moral conscience is defined by a warrior's ethos, not so much by what it should be defined as, which is constitutional principles.

I hear these special forces vet bros out there giving lip service to the Constitution. But when it comes down to it, as you dig deeper into what they're saying, they're focused on military efficiency. I hate to break it to people, but the Constitution is not efficient. The American form of constitutional government is not efficient. It's ugly, inefficient, whatever—but it's ours. It has checks and balances. The moment you say "checks and balances," you imply inefficiency, because you're checking and balancing. The military is not about checks and balances; the military is about accomplishing the mission. And Joe Kent is one of those guys who accomplishes the mission.

He's given a mission, and he accomplishes it. And he's surrounded by people with a similar mindset. But they've fooled themselves into believing this is constitutional because they took an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution. They think that by accomplishing the mission, they're fulfilling that oath. But they don't understand that sometimes the mission operates in opposition to

constitutional norms and values. Joe Kent—and I saw this when he was running, because I had hope for Joe Kent—but then I'd read statements he made about the Middle East. And, you know, he's somebody who, like most of the people who fought in these wars, will admit that, yeah, we were doing the wrong thing.

We shouldn't have been there, you know—especially Iraq. We shouldn't have been there. In Afghanistan, we did it the wrong way, all that stuff. But then, you know, you're like, okay, okay, okay. But then you throw in Iran, because they don't know anything about Iran. "Iran is evil, it's an evil Islamic regime, the worst terrorist organization in the world." And you're like, wait a minute, where'd you get that? You know? And Joe Kent was part of that crowd. And the other thing is, as you define yourself as an American, you now, unfortunately, become factionalized, because again, these people stopped being American and started being Republicans.

They started to be in opposition to the Democratic Party because many people in the Democratic Party were against what they were doing in Afghanistan or Iraq. They began supporting the Republican Party out of this mistaken belief that the Republicans actually cared about them. But Joe Kent knows this. Joe—I'm assuming, because Joe Kent's a stand-up kind of guy—lost his wife, Shannon. She was a hero, a heroine. In Syria, she was killed by an ISIS bomb. But if you look at her chest, I mean, the awards on her chest, she was a woman who had been there, done that, and she had the T-shirt. She wasn't just a war tourist.

And she died, tragically. And now Joe is raising kids, so he knows the reality of war. But Joe doesn't know—Joe allowed himself to be captured by the MAGA movement. The MAGA movement is not an American movement; the MAGA movement is a faction. People, please read Federalist 10. I'm sorry, I'm just one of those constitutionalist kind of guys. James Madison wrote Federalist 10 to warn us about the danger of factionalism and the creation of factions. And MAGA is a faction. It's not an American movement—it's a faction. An American movement actually believes that everybody should exist. It understands checks and balances, the need for balance.

Factions want everything to go their way. And the MAGA faction is controlled by a group of Zionists who hijacked the MAGA movement to put Israel first—literally. And Joe Kent went along with that, along with others. They thought they were serving America—America First, MAGA. No, you were serving Israel first, a parasite that had taken over the American body. He ran for office, and now he gets in. And that's the other thing, too—it's easy, and Joe knows this, along with everybody else. They know what the burden of leadership is. Joe knows it better than anybody. He's been in combat. There's no bullshit in combat. There's none.

You have a mission to do. Bullshit gets you killed. When you start sitting there spouting nonsense, you get distracted, and next thing you know, a bullet enters your brain housing group and your brain gets splattered on a wall. Joe knows this because he's seen the consequences of that. But when you get into politics, it's all bullshit—every single thing. So he bought into a load of crap, and now he comes into office, and now he's at the counterterrorism center. He's seen the truth because he's

trying to deal with these terrorist threats that are real. And he realizes that we're not hitting the right targets.

We're not focusing on our own thing. To sell this war with Iran, we actually had to label a nation that isn't terrorist in nature—the Iranian nation, the Iranian people—as terrorists, and spend a lot of time explaining why everything they do is supposedly tied to terrorism, while the real terrorists out there aren't getting the attention they deserve. And then we get pulled into a war that Israel dragged us into. Joe's smart; he knows exactly what happened. He knows Netanyahu told Trump to initiate it, and Trump said okay. Kent knows the Joint Chiefs of Staff said it was a bad idea.

Kent knows that Tulsi Gabbard put out an intelligence report saying the regime wouldn't fall—that nothing they wanted to accomplish would be accomplished. And he knows that Donald Trump went ahead and did it anyway. You know, I think he finally reached the point where he said, "I can't do this anymore. I can't live with a lie." Because Joe Kent, for all his faults—and when I say faults, I mean being sucked into the MAGA movement—hell, we all were. You're talking to a guy who thought Donald Trump was going to be a peacemaker, okay? We all got conned one way or another. But like any honest person, when you wake up in the morning and realize you were conned, he didn't delude himself. He acknowledged it. He wrote a letter, and he resigned.

This could be—should be—the beginning of a cascade of resignations, resignations of conscience, of moral consciousness. I don't know if it will be, because again, I've lost a lot of faith in humans, especially Americans, over time. I'd like to believe that when most Americans are empowered with knowledge and information, they'll do the right thing. Sadly, I don't believe that anymore. I think Americans have become addicted to comfort, and therefore they'll do whatever is necessary to sustain that comfort, even if it's the wrong thing to do. But this could be—I mean, this could lead to additional resignations. Tulsi Gabbard needs to resign and start telling the truth about what happened. She wrote this awful post where she basically said she defended the president by sort of trying to tell the truth, but not really telling the truth.

You know, the president was briefed on all this, that, and the other thing, and then he made a decision. Yes, but Tulsi, what was he briefed on? Did his decision match the conclusion? Because your job as an intelligence officer is to give recommended courses of action. Tulsi, I've been an intelligence officer for a long time—I know what you're supposed to do. So, did the president take one of your courses of action? Did he listen to it, or did he just do whatever the hell he wanted and say what he'd said before? I don't believe you. I don't trust you. Well, at that point, you have to resign. If the president doesn't trust you, then you're not doing your job, and you must resign for the good of the people. Find someone in there the president does trust.

And then you have a duty and an obligation to go to Congress and explain this. You don't have to go to the American people, because a lot of what you'd be explaining is classified. But Congress has closed sessions. And since the president long ago self-identified as a man who doesn't believe in the Constitution, doesn't believe in the office of the presidency, believes in a cult of personality, believes

in a dictatorship—called himself a dictator—you're not beholden to any confidentiality of conversation with him, because he's not a president. He's a dictator. You need to go to Congress and talk about the dictator named Trump, and how he's disregarding all the evidence and got us into this war on behalf of Israel.

Now, half of Congress will try to suppress you because they work for Israel. But the other half might actually start, you know, asking follow-on questions, and that could lead to this president ultimately being held accountable—either at the election, at the voting booth on election day, or maybe the ultimate accountability, where his cabinet finally wakes up to the fact that this man is awful for America, harming America and harming them, and they invoke the 25th Amendment and remove him. But, you know, Donald Trump is, after Israel, the greatest threat to the United States. Remember, because he stopped believing in America—he only believes in Donald Trump. Scott, before wrapping up the—

## **#Nima**

We had an interview with the Iranian foreign minister. He said that Iran is designing a new mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz. There's also an article in the Financial Times arguing that Iran's actions in the Strait of Hormuz show the reality of multipolar economic warfare. For decades, the United States dominated sanctions and used financial pressure as a strategic weapon. Now other powers, including Iran and China, can use similar tools to respond to the escalation. How do you see the whole situation in the Strait of Hormuz? Donald Trump is begging the Europeans to help him.

I don't know in what way they can help Donald Trump in the Strait of Hormuz, but it seems like it's going to turn into one of the most strategic points—or strategic outcomes, you know. This trade route is so important, not just for Iran, but for all these Arab states, along with Japan, South Korea, China—everybody depends on it. That shows how important it is. How do you see the way Iran is talking about this, and how, as an outcome of this war, something is reshaping in the Middle East?

## **#Scott**

Well, first of all, there's a disconnect between what Iran is saying—which is reality-based—and what other nations are saying and doing. I think there's a growing recognition that Iran right now controls the Strait of Hormuz. You don't get through the Strait of Hormuz without Iran saying yes. Now, the United States is carrying out a military campaign designed to degrade Iran's ability to interdict the Strait. Again, it's about intelligence preparation of the battlefield. I look at a map, I look at the Strait. And the other interesting thing is the way the Strait operates: you have traffic going in, and you have traffic coming out. There are two lanes.

And the traffic coming out takes you through a channel that runs between two Iranian islands—Kish Island and Larak, I think it is. And it's very narrow. You're never going to force that if Iran doesn't want you to. You know, Iran hasn't even begun the business of mining the Strait. The other thing

Iran hasn't done is sink a ship in the middle of that channel, because that would be the end of that channel. I mean, all Iran has to do is put some tankers out there, sink them, bring them down, and they can do the same again. Iran controls the Strait and will always control the Strait. We're trying to carry out a campaign designed to hit Iran's missiles—you know, the Aref Missile Brigade, I think I'm saying that right. It was the one that had the compound that got bombed by the United States, killing the girls.

RCEF, RLF—something of that nature. It's organized into four battalions. The first battalion is short-range anti-shipping missiles, about 15 to 20 kilometers in range. Did you catch what I just said there? Fifteen to twenty kilometers. That means they can be set back a certain distance and still reach in; they don't have to be right on the coastline. Then the second brigade has the medium-range missiles. That means they can strike deeper into the Gulf or operate in a standoff role. What you've got now, when you look at the terrain of the Strait of Hormuz, is not just how they can reach into the Strait, but how far back they can relocate and still have the ability to impact it through direct or indirect fires.

And then there's the long-range. So you have three battalions that provide layered closure capability. The United States right now is focused on bombing the ridges and the mountains along the coastline, as if blowing those things up would save anything. It shows, again, a fundamental lack of understanding. The Iranians have been preparing for this war for a long time. They know how we operate. Oh, the fourth battalion, by the way, does all the unconventional stuff—lays the mines, runs the fast boats, the whole thing. So it's just a broad-spectrum approach to closing the Strait. We're never going to interdict that.

The only way to fully open the Strait is to physically control the territory I just described. And that means it's not just landing on the shore—you've got to go in depth, a couple hundred kilometers. Do we have the 900,000 troops that would take? No. So we're never going to close the Strait. Even with shipping going through, imagine you're an insurance company or a ship owner. What insurance company is going to insure that? No one's going to sit there and say, "Yeah, we'll give you the same rate." No—insurance rates are going to go up, the cost of shipping is going to go up, and other people are just going to abandon that route and say, "We're not doing it." It's just not going to happen. Europe right now is saying they're going to talk to Iran to try to get Iran to let their tankers go through.

But the Iranians are basically saying, "You're doing nothing. You're not doing it the right way." This isn't about negotiating with us to get your oil through; it's about negotiating with the United States to stop doing what they're doing—to stop the war. Iran isn't going to do Europe any favors. Europe has to save itself, and it saves itself by identifying as sympathetic to the Iranian plight, the Iranian cause. The nations that have shown sympathy are the ones getting favorable treatment. The nations that keep paying lip service to the United States—just telling Washington, "We're not going to send naval forces in"—well, Iran couldn't care less about the navies of Europe. The only thing more pathetic than an Israeli infantry platoon is the navy of Europe.

Sending an Israeli infantry platoon into southern Lebanon means they're all going to die. The navy of Europe comes in, tries to open the Strait—they're all going to die. I mean, it's stupid to even have this discussion. Trump is playing a political card here. But the fact of the matter is, it's not that. Iran's not going to reward Europe for that. What Iran wants is for Europe to tell the United States to stop this war. Stop it. But now you have Finland saying, "We'll exchange support for the United States in the Middle East for American support in Ukraine." You see how the Europeans are thinking? So Iran's not going to play that game. I think what we're seeing here is a permanent redefining of energy security parameters. Whatever calculations or algorithms were used before this war are going to be permanently changed.

There are going to be new algorithms. The price of oil is going to be higher no matter what. Because, you know, for instance, if you're Kuwait—let's say Kuwait's oil production survives this conflict—strategically speaking, all these nations are going to take a hit. They may not survive it. But let's say they do. Let's say the Kuwaiti royal family survives. Now, are they going to sit there and say, "Well, we're just going to double down on stupid and do what we did again so it can happen again, because now Iran can shut this trade anytime they want"? Or are they going to start negotiating with the Saudis to build a new pipeline that connects Kuwaiti oil to the Red Sea?

But what they have to understand is that the pipeline begins somewhere, and that will just be a target for the Iranians. This changes everything. Now that the world has gone stupid—now that the Israelis have gone stupid, the Americans have gone stupid—striking Iranian energy means that from now on, these energy fields are targets. That changes the whole approach. You know, it's the same thing that's happening in Russia. When the Ukrainians started going after Russian oil—strategic oil manufacturing and processing facilities—the Russians realized they had these giant facilities with no protection. So now the Russians are in the business of hardening those facilities, physically putting in air defense, the whole works.

There's, you know, the role being played now by Russian industry in counter-drone technology. It's not just the Ministry of Defense that comes in. These oil companies are now responsible for protecting themselves, so they're developing counter-drone technology. Well, this is going to be the next reality. You can't talk about building an oil field in the Middle East anymore without talking about how to defend it, which means your expenses go up. So everything's going to cost more. Everything's going to cost more. And the other thing this does is show the vulnerability of all companies'—uh, sea lanes of communication. Um, look at, uh, the Strait of Malacca in Indonesia. That's another one, a critical one.

Everything goes through that. It's the easiest place in the world to shut down after the Strait of Hormuz. Bab al-Mandeb—you know, Yemen can shut that down. The Suez Canal—we saw what happens if you get a tanker turned the wrong way and it gets stuck; it's shut. Well, maybe it's time for Iran to start sinking shipping in the Suez Canal and shut it down too. You want to play stupid games? The Iranians are fully capable of playing that game as well—making you pay for your

stupidity by paying the ultimate price. You know, short-term pain for long-term gain. This is going to be long-term pain for no gain whatsoever. That's what's going on in the world today.