

Scott Ritter: Iran REJECTS Ceasefire — Missiles Rain Down in BRUTAL Escalation

#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Wednesday, April 1st, 2026. Our dear friend, our brother, Scott Ritter, is here with us. Welcome back, Scott.

#Scott

Thanks for having me.

#Nima

Scott, let me start with what Donald Trump posted moments ago. He's talking about Iran's new president, who's asking for a ceasefire—asking Donald Trump and his administration for a ceasefire—which so far has been rejected by the Iranian government, at least from what I've seen in the Persian media. And even in the latest interview the Iranian foreign minister gave yesterday on Al Jazeera, here's what he said.

#Speaker 03

It is currently ongoing, but your point is correct. We have no good experience negotiating with the United States. In the past, we negotiated and reached an agreement, only for the United States to withdraw from it for no reason—twice, more recently this year and last year. We negotiated, and the result was their assault and attack. There is no trust that negotiations with the United States can lead to results. Trust is at zero. Every time they present a proposal for negotiation, the first issue we must examine is how honest they are—and we see none. There is no trust. And to build trust, major steps must be taken. Whether the Islamic Republic decides to do so or not is another matter. But in response to any proposal, the issue is how much trust exists. At present, no trust exists.

#Nima

It seems, Scott, that today Donald Trump is going to speak and address the nation. He's basically focused on the war in the Middle East between Iran and the United States. It's kind of amazing that Israel is now in the background—it's not on the front line anymore. What's your understanding of these new escalations? Because many people think they may attack, that they might try to invade Iran from the southern part this weekend. What's your understanding of that?

#Scott

Have you ever carried out an invasion?

#Scott

No.

#Scott

I have. We're not going to invade anywhere—not with 10,000 troops, all right? We can do a raid. Maybe we can go in, do some things, get out—maybe. Might get away with it. But we're not invading anything. This is just stupidity. People talking about an invasion have never done it. They don't know what it is. They don't know anything about the military, about war, about logistics. Two Marine battalion landing teams—Red Beach 1 and Red Beach 2. Yay, we went in, advanced 500 meters. Now we have to stop. Where's the follow-on echelon? Oh, there isn't one.

So you're kind of stuck where you are right now. Yeah. It's not much of a beachhead, is it? No. Five hundred Marines isn't a lot of Marines. There are four thousand total. Yeah, but most of them are logistics and air wingers. Actual boots on the ground—rifle companies—that's different. This is stupid. Anybody talking about a ground invasion literally doesn't know what they're talking about. There could be a raid, but you're not going to hold any territory with ten thousand people. And like I said, there are only four thousand Marines deployed in the area, and half of them aren't combat troops. Half of them, you know—they're wingers staying with the airplanes.

#Nima

It seems they have more than 10,000. They're talking about 50,000 soldiers.

#Scott

How are you going to get 50,000 soldiers? Where are they coming from?

#Nima

I don't know.

#Scott

They don't come from anywhere yet. They're not there. And again, they're not soldiers. We have a lot of airmen. Did you look at the guys who died in that first drone attack? Those weren't frontline combat troops. Those were fat reservists. I mean, I'm not picking on them—I'm sorry they're dead—but, you know, these weren't the tip of the spear. These aren't guys who've been out there doing

their push-ups, pull-ups, running and hiking with 45-pound packs, 90-pound packs, 110-pound packs, humping mortar rounds and base plates. No, they don't know how to do that. They were sitting in a bunker, and they got killed. The vast majority of the people in theater are just that—support troops, logistics troops. There are no combat troops.

And the combat troops, you know, they require sustainability. That means we've got to have—let's just make this very, very clear—we're making this up as we go along. We don't have a plan. If we had a plan, the Marines would have been deployed forward, up front. This is all reactive. If we had a plan, the paratroopers would be in theater, ready to rock and roll. If we had a plan, the Rangers and Delta would already be on the ground doing their stuff. This is all reaction because we thought we were going to win this war that quick. We thought we were going to drop a couple of bombs, kill the Ayatollah, and down goes the regime. Look at the stupidity of this president. The new president of Iran—same president. Same guy, the guy I talked to back in September before the war. It's not a new president.

It's not new leadership. It's the same freaking leadership. In Iraq, it's the same foreign minister. Yeah, they killed some people, but they got replaced. That's what happens when you have a system. And, you know, what all the Iranians said is that they're not looking for a ceasefire. They're looking for the war to end and to make sure there's not another war. And if those conditions could be met, they'd be willing to stop the war. But until then, no—they're going to keep going, keep plugging away. And I loved all the people tracking the missile launches—"They fired this many on day one. Look, it's getting smaller, smaller, smaller. They ain't got nothing left." Last night—boom—the Iranians went, "Yeah, eat that and die." And they'll just keep doing that.

The Iranians have been planning this for 20 years. There's nothing reactive about the Iranians. They're operating with a plan—we're the ones reacting to it. There's not going to be a ground invasion. It just won't happen. Like I said, there might be a raid. But again, a raid to accomplish what? Having planned a major raid during the Iraq War and the Gulf War, and having defended it before the Commandant of the Marine Corps and a panel of four- and three-star generals, I had to answer a lot of questions about the risk versus the gain. I mean, are we just trying to prove that the LAV-25—which at the time was relatively new—can be inserted by helicopter, run around, shoot things up, and then pull out?

Because if that's what it's about, we're not too thrilled about it—there are Marines on that. They can die. There has to be a reason for the raid. If you could secure the 60% enriched uranium with a raid— in, op, out—something like that would be a reason. Karg Island. We're not going to hold Karg Island. We're not even going to take Karg Island. But even if we did—has anybody looked at a map? See where Iran is? You understand that Karg Island is low and flat, and it's going to be leveled. The Iranians know everything about it; we know nothing about it. No, it would be a death match. It would be stupid. Yeah. This president is dumber than hell. I mean, I think the Iranians said it best—he's negotiating with himself.

Negotiating with himself. He's making things up. There's a lot of wishful thinking. Anytime the Iranians—first of all, the Iranians made it clear they're not going to negotiate with the United States. That just isn't going to happen. So he has Egypt, Pakistan, Turkey, and maybe some others trying to reach out to the Iranians. And if the Iranians take the call, the president says, "See, they're negotiating with us." No, they're not. They just took a call from the Pakistanis. What they told the Pakistanis was, "Tell the Americans to pound sand." You know, Trump doesn't want to hear that. This man lives in a fantasy world. He's going to try—he needs to create the conditions where he gets to say, "I won the war." The Iranians aren't going to play that game.

They don't care about domestic American politics. What they care about is ending this war so there never is another war. That means Israel doesn't get to keep doing what it's been doing, and the United States doesn't get to keep doing what it's been doing. And that requires the Gulf Arab states to be broken—totally broken—broken to the extent that they no longer look to the United States as their savior, that they realize they have to live in this region in peace and harmony with the Iranians, which means they have to start treating the Iranians with respect. This might require some regime change in the Gulf Arab states, in the United Arab Emirates in particular. Maybe it's time for that family to say goodbye.

Maybe in Kuwait. Goodbye. It's all possible. These aren't popularly elected regimes; these are monarchies installed by the British. So it's not like, you know, these people earned their right to be there—they were given it. And then they just sit there on their oil, build giant palaces, and live this pompous, lavish lifestyle where, because of the amount of money they can throw at a given problem, they've been able to solve most problems. Well, you ain't solving the Iranian problem too well. And I think they're going to be broken. The United States is already broken. We don't have a solution. We don't have a solution to the Strait of Hormuz, and it's only going to get worse. The Iranians hold all the cards.

So, you know, Donald Trump is just—he's in a fantasy world because he can't admit that he made a mistake. He can't admit that Pete Hegseth, the worst secretary of defense in the history of secretaries of defense, lied to him, misled him. And he needs to create this narrative that says, "I am the conquering hero, and because of my decisive action, great things happened." The Iranians aren't going to—well, I mean, the sad thing is we had a deal, and now we don't. Now, there's some talk—and this I'm pretty hopeful about—if it turns out that the Iranians said they may be willing to let the Russians serve as a mediator. This is what I've been pushing for. This is what I pushed for when I went to Russia.

I went to Russia and made as much noise as I could about getting the Russians to act as mediators, because that's the solution. A Russian mediation could solve a lot of problems, because then Trump can do some posturing and all that. But, you know, it's still early. In the end, the result has to be the United States out of the Middle East and Israel accepting a Palestinian state. And there need to be international security guarantees. I always love how the Ukrainians say, "We need security guarantees." Well, you know, I think the Arab world needs security guarantees against Israel. Israel

can't be allowed to keep the same kind of military it has now. It has no right. It can't be allowed to go out and bomb everybody. They bombed five countries in the last week. I mean, come on, man.

#Nima

Even they're bombing Syria, and Ben-Gurion is talking about assassinating, you know, the HTS in Syria. You know, it's amazing, Scott—when it comes to the war, you mentioned it's going to be, if they attack, a raid on power. What would be the outcome of that? What do they need? I'm not 100% sure, but I really believe they can't achieve anything if they go after those 400 kilograms of enriched uranium. They're not going to find it; they're not going to do anything like that, you know, grabbing it or whatever.

#Scott

But I can't imagine the Iranians saying, "All right, we've got 406 kilograms of 6% uranium hexafluoride. Let's put it in a lightly guarded facility near the coast of the Persian Gulf, and we'll just leave it there so the Americans can come in, launch a raid, and take it." I think it's much deeper inside Iran, in a mountain, which means the raid would have to penetrate deep into Iranian airspace. They'd get shot down on the way in. Then we'd have a Black Hawk Down situation all over again—you know, a helicopter goes down, we've got people on the ground, survivors, Iranians closing in, close air support brought in, more helicopters go, more aircraft go down.

And now the whole thing's bogged down before it even began, because this isn't World War II. In World War II, you send in the C-47s and three of them get shot down—so sad, too bad, wouldn't want to be them—but you just keep going. No, this is the modern day: a helicopter goes down, we've got to come in with combat search and rescue, we've got to put guys on the ground, we've got to do the whole Black Hawk Down thing. We don't leave a man behind. And then everybody dies. If we do a raid into Iran, my prediction is the entire raiding force will be destroyed, because we're going in—again, this isn't carefully planned. Everything that's being done here is being done for political reasons, not for legitimate military reasons.

There's no reason to go after the 450 or 460 kilograms of uranium hexafluoride—none whatsoever. We had a deal where they were going to give it to us. My advice to the president would be: do whatever you can to get that deal back on the table. Whatever it takes, including getting the hell out of the Middle East. Tell the Iranians, "We're going to get the hell out of the Middle East, but you've got to turn over that 450 kilograms of uranium hexafluoride." And this is where the Russians can come in. The Russians can handle this—lifting sanctions and things of that nature. I think the Iranians would give it up.

Um, it's caused them nothing but trouble, nothing but problems. And you know, what I would tell the Iranians is, we'll leave the bases, and we'll work with the Israelis to change behavior. But we need you to bring back that deal that was on the table. You're closing the door forever on your

potential to develop nuclear weapons—that's just the way it is. You're going to sign a deal that says you will never be able to build nuclear weapons. You'll be permanently limited to 3.75% enriched uranium, carefully safeguarded, etc. That's it. And I think Iran would do it, but not with the Americans dictating.

#Nima

I really don't think they're going to do it. In my opinion, those days are gone. I just don't think so. You have to understand what's going on in Iran right now.

#Scott

I know full well what's going on in Iran, and I know that the Iranian people have said they'll tear the president apart if he negotiates with the United States. But now the Russians come in. And if the Russians sit down with you and say, "Okay, stupid people—because you are stupid right now—you're being destroyed. Yeah, you're tough, you're really tough. We're so impressed. God, I'm so impressed with how tough you are. But you say you care about your people. They're about to do permanent damage to your infrastructure—permanent damage. You'll never recover from this, ever. All right? So now you can sit there and say, 'Oh God, we're the Shia, oh yay, we're so good. Karbala, Karbala, Karbala, Karbala.' Wow. That's stupid. How about lifting sanctions? How about getting the sanctions lifted, getting you fully engaged?"

#Nima

They don't want it anymore, Scott. Of course they do, Nima. Of course they want it. They need it. Yeah, I know. The priority isn't the sanctions right now. The priority has changed, because they're talking about Israel—because they're talking about Israel.

#Scott

What's their priority when it comes to Israel?

#Nima

Yeah, Israel should be denuclearized.

#Scott

Destroyed? Iran doesn't get to make that decision.

#Nima

Yeah, but Israel—right now, the problem is Israel, Scott. As long as Israel has nukes, those nuclear weapons.

#Scott

Nima, this is fantasy. This is cocaine-sniffing fantasy. If you think Iran has the leverage to get Israel to give up its nuclear weapons like that, you're high on something. You know how Israel will give up its nuclear weapons? On Iran. That's not my point.

#Nima

That's not my point about forcing Israel. My point is that as long as Israel keeps those nukes on its soil and keeps talking about the Samson Option, there's no way to have any kind of balance.

#Scott

Israel never talked about the Samson Option. Israel has never talked about the Samson Option. They've only talked about it indirectly.

#Nima

Their minister said that about Gaza—they said to use nukes against the Gazans. The Gazans have nothing.

#Scott

It's a cocaine-sniffing minister who's high as a kite, sitting there saying stupid stuff. Find me the official policy statement of the Israeli government that says they'll drop nuclear weapons on Gaza. Because we have Americans who've said the same thing—and they're just stupid, mouth-breathing morons. Okay, let's get to the official policies of the Israeli government. There is an official protocol that exists between Israel and the United States on the use of nuclear weapons, and Israel will not violate that protocol.

#Nima

I really don't think Iran would accept that. The worst thing has happened, Scott. No, the worst thing has not happened. Yeah—no, nothing. What else can they do? They want to use nuclear bombs? Go ahead and use them. And then what?

#Scott

How tough are you then, when you're dying of radiation sickness?

#Nima

They're going to see what they've got.

#Scott

They're going to see, Scott. I think they have to understand that. The Iranians are going to unveil their three 15-kiloton nuclear weapons that they managed to put together? Yay!

#Nima

I'm saying you—I think they know how to respond to that. And it's not just my personal opinion, because I talked with many of them when I was in Iran. I know the rest of the people. They said what—decision makers or the people? I'm talking about decision makers.

#Scott

I'm not talking about—you're telling me right now that the decision makers in Iran won't go for it? Because, first of all, what you're saying doesn't line up with what the Iranian government is saying. The Iranian government is saying that if the United States leaves the Middle East, and if Israel—if there are behavioral checks and balances on Iran—they never once mentioned Israel's nuclear weapons as a precondition. That's your thing. They never mentioned it.

#Nima

What I think the official policy is, Iran is keeping this level of enrichment. They're not going to give up that level because they want to be prepared for Israel. If Israel decides to attack Iran using nuclear weapons, they want to be ready to respond. That's the whole concept. What I've learned—it's not my opinion. I'm not speaking from my own point of view. It's because I've talked with many of these decision makers in Iran. They said they're prepared to the end. They said the end means the use of nuclear weapons. They're prepared for that.

#Scott

I mean, there's nothing you can do. It's like looking at a person in the ocean—only the Russians can save your ass. That's the only chance you have.

#Nima

Because otherwise, you're just going to get— You know, Scott, even Medvedev said that two days ago. He said the outcome of this war would be Iran withdrawing from the NPT and becoming a nuclear power, having nuclear bombs. And he said that. When someone like Medvedev says that, it

means something. It doesn't mean his assessment of what's going on in Iran— that's the only assessment that matters.

#Scott

Did Putin say it? No. Don't talk to me about Medvedev. Don't talk to me about Karaganov.

#Nima

Don't talk to me about— Yeah, when it comes to Russia, Scott, when it comes to Russia, we have to understand what's going on against Russia and Iran, because I think they're fighting the same war. What Russia is fighting and what Iran is fighting is the same. It's the same. The same people, by the way. The same people.

#Scott

The people who are in Ukraine are the same people who are in Israel. They're not fighting the same war, Nima. Because Russia is not ready to commit suicide. Iran is, apparently—according to you—that's not the same war. One is a rational approach toward achieving objectives that are well laid out—the Russian approach—ending the war. I'd hope that Iran would be on that course too. But if Iran is saying, "We're willing to die and commit suicide," then Iranian suicide means the destruction of the global economy. And Russia's not about that. I can guarantee you, Russia's not about that. Russia's not looking to die with Iran. They're not willing to hold hands and die with Iran.

#Nima

They're not there to wreck the entire economy.

#Scott

The Russians are there to find a path to peace. That's guaranteed.

#Nima

Yeah, but they're not trying to destroy the Russian economy or the Chinese economy, because they're considered—so far, in the Strait of Hormuz, all those Chinese and even Indian, even Pakistani tankers were passing through the Strait of Hormuz. This is not the problem with the world.

#Scott

Because they're paying money.

#Nima

Yeah, they're paying, exactly. They don't target these countries because they see them as friendly. The problem is how to put pressure on the United States, not on China or Russia. And these countries understand what's going on—especially with the case of the Strait of Hormuz. Because right now, the main problem, you know, before this war started, Donald Trump was all about nuclear weapons and the nuclear program. Right now, his main priority is the Strait of Hormuz.

#Scott

Yeah, of course it is, because the Iranians—that's your trump card. But again, do you consider Donald Trump the irrational actor, or just an irrational actor?

#Nima

I don't see Donald Trump as a rational actor. I don't see him as being rational anymore.

#Scott

Right, right. Irrational.

#Nima

Irrational. He's irrational—completely, 100% irrational.

#Scott

Emotionally driven, not fact-driven.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Scott

All right, so what do you think will happen if the Iranians—look, don't get me wrong—I think the Iranians are doing a fantastic job. I mean, they have a plan, they've been sticking to their plan, and we've been reacting to them from day one. You know, they've got the whole OODA loop sequence going in their favor; they're driving the decision-making cycle and all that. But the difference is, on Iran's best day—best day—they could put five nuclear weapons on a missile and take Israel out. And then Iran would cease to exist. I hope Iran understands that. Everybody says, "We're ready for it." You don't know what you're ready for, because life would end for everybody. The United States

would come in—it wouldn't be Israeli nukes, it would be American nukes. And ours are a lot bigger. You want to see what happens to twenty million people in Tehran? You know what a one-megaton bomb would do to Tehran? Take it out.

#Nima

Why would the United States do that?

#Scott

If Iran used nuclear weapons against Israel?

#Nima

Yeah. No, no. I'm talking about why the United States would use nuclear weapons against Iran. Is it because of Israel, or because of the United States?

#Scott

Because Donald Trump is an irrational actor who's doing more than anyone else.

#Nima

Let's assume his main objective is not to be beaten by Iran. So you think he's going to go nuclear just because he doesn't want to be beaten by Iran? I think Donald Trump understands—after all, Scott—so far, Donald Trump tried to do regime change. The main goal, I think, was regime change. It wasn't about a military operation. If it were a military operation, they would have been prepared for the war. They were not prepared for this war. They were deceived by Mossad, I think, basically, and some people in the CIA, who told them they could do regime change. You remember, you and I discussed this before—you said if they go there, it's going to be a regime change operation. But that was a fantasy, I think, sold by Mossad.

#Scott

Well, you remember what I said about regime change. I said it would be a regime change operation. It's the only way they could do it because of their limited military capabilities. I said the only way we could do this is through a regime change that collapses Iran before their missiles could become fully engaged. But I also said you can't initiate regime change unless you have certainty of outcome. And that means the Israelis need to have the place totally penetrated, the United States needs to have it totally penetrated, and we've got to go in there and get it done. I mean, across the board, a fundamental regime change isn't killing the Supreme Leader—regime change is suppressing the totality of the establishment.

And if you could do that, then you could initiate this action. I think it's clear they couldn't do that—that they were operating under the impression that killing Ali Khamenei would achieve the goal. That's Donald Trump's simplicity. And I blame the Iran Mission Center. They don't have the Iran Mission Center anymore, but the Near East Division of the CIA—they've got to know. I mean, they've got to know the truth about Iran. I say they've got to because the CIA doesn't even know the truth about Russia today. So, you know, clearly the CIA can start believing its own propaganda. And I think that's what happened. I think one of the things that happened in Iran is that we started—if you go back in history—there was a guy, Steve Richter.

Good old Steve Richter—my good old friend who hates me. He was doing the regime change in Iraq, but he also did Iran. There was a time, I forget, maybe in the '80s or early '90s, when we needed intelligence. We had a network of people dating back to the Shah's time—all the stay-behinds. They were in there, we had them all, and they were reporting. Then the requirement came down: you need to increase your Iran reporting. Steve Richter and his team were running a mail operation where they were basically mailing letters out to Munich. You can do that every now and then—you get 5,000 pieces of mail going out today, three letters going to Munich. That's not raising the profile; that's normal. Normally, the CIA would have thought this thing through.

You test the postal system, see what triggers it, and then you keep that sustained thing going—get those letters out there with the secret writing in them and all that. Richter was told, "Double down." So Richter basically told everybody, "Just start mailing letters." And what happened was, suddenly, the mail going to Munich went way up, and the Iranians went, "Hmm." They grabbed the mail, knocked on doors, brought people in, opened it up—found the secret writing, interrogated them, found the secret writing materials—and they rolled up the whole network. We lost everybody in Iran that quick. We tried to rebuild it with rapid recruitment. Now, this would have been in the 2000s, with all those people traveling around the world—all the, you know, professors and scientists going to this meeting, that meeting.

We went in there and did what we do. Sometimes it didn't work; sometimes it did. You know—get them drunk, get them with a whore, take pictures, confront them with the reality that their family life's over, that they'll be killed when they go back to Iran—and then they start rolling over for you. So we got them all in there, but now we were communicating using Gmail, the old CIA Gmail account. And, you know, I forget who came up with it. I can't remember if it was the Iranians who rolled it up first and then gave it to the Russians, who then gave it to the Chinese, or if the Russians gave it first. Bottom line is, somebody figured it out.

And so the second wave of recruitment went away, which means now we're totally dependent on Israel. Israel, of course, has been working with the Kurds, with the M.E.K., and with others. So now you've got Israel doing their thing. The Israelis, you know, they assassinate scientists, they plant viruses to make things blow up—they blow things up and they're like, "We're the Israelis. We're so

damn good. We're awesome. We even did a raid on this archive and took all these papers out," although they didn't. You know, all that stuff. So the CIA said, "Well, rather than us doing a third round of recruitment, we're just going to rely on the Israelis and dovetail on the Israeli op."

And so the Israelis are telling them, you know, we infiltrated 5,000 Starlinks, we have these cells, we've got people in every city, we're doing this, we've got that. The CIA's going, "Wow, you guys are really good." So when we kill Ali Khamenei, you're going to be able to get people in the street? Mossad's like, "Yeah, we got this. We are good. We are Mossad." And the CIA thought it was great, and they went and told the president that this was all going to happen. The president called up Netanyahu, and people went, "Yeah, baby, we can do this." And they went forward. You never—ever, ever—go to war based on another country's intelligence.

Never. Because that intelligence service doesn't work for you. They're not working in your best interest; they're working for their government's best interest. And the Israelis have always wanted the United States to be doing what they're doing right now. This isn't some Israeli fantasy—having America dropping bombs on Iran is what they've wanted for 20 years. Donald Trump delivered it, but he was led down that path by a CIA that had an op pulled on it. It's the old "the Israelis are so good, they can do nothing wrong" thing. Oh, we know Iran is a tough target, but the Israelis have guys inside. Man, the Mossad's really good. They're really awesome.

Well, they're not bad, but they're not perfect. They make a lot of mistakes. And the thing about the Iranians is, they're not your typical target, I believe. I mean, every society has its weaknesses, every society has its flawed individuals, and those people are susceptible to being recruited and betraying their countries. But this is where I think the West got it wrong. And this is where I think you actually have greater insight than I do, and others. The Iranian people believe in the Islamic Republic. They may not think it's perfect. They'd like a better life. They may even think some of the Ayatollahs are corrupt and should be replaced.

But the concept of an Islamic republic, where religion is an important part of their daily lives—this isn't a fantasy to them. It's not imposed; it's what they want, and they have that. And then there's also the notion of Persian pride. I mean, we're talking about people who know their history, their culture, where they came from. There's a lot of pride in Iran, and they're not going to allow themselves to be sold out. So the idea that we could go in there and buy them off—the "Venezuela solution," you know—that's the other thing, because Trump was told by the CIA, "We can buy the entire Venezuelan leadership."

And I think he was told that we could buy the entire Iranian leadership. That's one of the interesting analytical failures—what we did with the Revolutionary Guard. You remember Rafsanjani at the end of the Iran-Iraq War, looking to rebuild Iran and also figuring out politically, what do we do with the Revolutionary Guard? These radicals were out there saying, "We want to go, we want to do all this stuff." He turned them toward business, got them into the business sector, and they began running companies. And we said, "That's corruption," except they were actually doing good business.

They were actually building things. They were producing things. They were creating an energetic economy. But we called it corruption. So we said the Revolutionary Guard command was inherently corrupt. And you know, when you have corrupt people, they can be bought off—except they weren't corrupt. I mean, were there some examples of corruption? Sure. Money tempts everybody. But overall, the fact that the IRGC was heavily involved in Iran's economy isn't a sign of societal failure; it's actually a sign of societal success. And it also further—well, "radicalized" is the wrong word—but it further solidified the Islamic aspect.

So you don't have secular businessmen out there—you have people who believe in the Islamic Republic doing business. It made it impossible to buy them off. Impossible to buy them off. We got Iran all wrong. I mean, you and I didn't—we got it right, I think. But the CIA, we being the United States, we got it all wrong. One hundred and ten percent wrong. We were so far off in our assessments. And we still don't understand what's going on there. Donald Trump's still not getting a qualified briefing, and nobody has the courage to go in front of him and tell him the truth. You know, you saw James Webb, former Secretary of the Navy under Ronald Reagan.

His son is out there now saying things that, on the surface, look like he's condemning the attack. But he keeps saying things like, you know, the Iranian regime is this, that, and the other thing. I'm like, no, that's not it, man. You got it wrong. And it seems impossible—you can't say anything about Iran without adding, you know, "the murderous, thuggish Ayatollah regime." But it's not murderous and thuggish. They have a judiciary that's—well, we execute more people in America. I mean, we put more people in jail. Where's our murderous, thuggish justice system? You know, the Iranians, they have stiff penalties for drug dealers.

They have stiff penalties for adulterers, I guess. They have stiff penalties for traitors. You know, is it the justice system I would want? I don't know. I don't live in Iran. I don't know what the problem would be—what would happen if you didn't have stiff drug penalties? Would Iran suddenly find a thriving narcotics black market, with people getting high in tea shops around the country and society sinking from within? So maybe you have to deter that, because you live in a neighborhood where Afghanistan is producing opium and shipping it through, trying to get it into other markets. Maybe you need that kind of deterrence.

Adultery—if you're an Islamic republic and your moral and family values are the cornerstone of what holds your society together—adultery is probably frowned upon. It's seen as, if you allow adultery to take place, then your society will be undermined from within and collapse from within. Because what makes the Islamic republic strong is the Shia faith, and the Shia faith is built around—well, I mean, I just got lectured by the Chechens about this. And, you know, they're not Shia; they're Sunni, they're Sufi. But again, their whole concept of family and the role that Islam plays—Sufism is so close, by the way.

#Nima

Sufism is so close to Shia.

#Scott

I know. It's very mystical. I had a long talk—I got to meet the Grand Mufti of Chechnya. I had a long, fascinating conversation with him about the role Chechnya could play. You know, the Chechens—they had a big parade the other day, and they're like, "You invade Iran, we're coming in. We're coming in to fight on the side of Iran." The Sufi Chechens coming in to fight with the Iranians. But the point is, we don't understand these things. We're so ignorant. We've allowed Islamophobia to corrupt our minds to the point where the only model we can see is Wahhabism, which is sort of a Western invention to begin with. Salafism is a Western perversion of traditional Islam. You know, we can go back to—what was it?

Uh, I can't remember the name of the guy who defeated the Mongols, you know, back in Syria—started with a T, Tarmia or something like that. But he defeated the Mongols and then tried to take over, to say that he was the guy, but he was quickly pushed to the side—got pushed, pushed—and then this sort of became the beginning of Wahhabism. But the British allowed Wahhabism to flourish and be exported. The point is, we don't know Iran at all. And so, therefore, I'll say this: I get a little angry. But I don't know Iran. So you may be right—100% right—about your point. You were in Iran, you know the language and all that. I just think you're making a mistake if you think that Russia and Iran have the same objectives. They don't.

#Nima

No, they don't. I don't think so.

#Scott

Russia's objectives are about Russia. Yeah, exactly. But Russia's objectives also include two major things: Iran being an integral part of BRICS, and the north-south economic corridor for Russia to get from St. Petersburg down to Chabahar, you know, and all that. And for that to happen, Russia needs Iran to survive this war.

#Nima

And Russia needs this war to end for good.

#Scott

Yes. No, I think the Russians are the best mediators because they understand what the Iranians want. They don't want this war to start. They don't want Israel dropping bombs this time next year, or five years from now. They don't want American forces back in the Middle East causing problems.

When this war ends, it ends. Done. Finished. And then Iran can focus on the economy—making that the number one priority—how to get into the Eurasian Economic Union and how to make BRICS flourish. Can you imagine how strong BRICS would be if Iran's economic potential were unleashed?

I mean, for all the idiots blowing up Iranian steel mills—you know, they just don't use their brains. Do you know how quickly China's going to come rolling into Iran to help rebuild those steel mills when the war ends? Iran has huge economic potential—huge economic potential. And if the sanctions can be lifted and there's normalization of economic relations, Iran will do to the Gulf Arab states what Russia did to Europe. I don't see the Iranians saying, "Dubai is the place we want to put our money." I don't see that happening. I see the Iranians saying to the Gulf Arab states, "You're sunk. We'll have nothing to do with you. We're going to become the economic power."

#Nima

It depends on them. I think it depends on them because, after all, when you talk about the leadership in the Arab states in the Persian Gulf, it's different from the people in those countries. Iran recognizes that difference. That's why I don't know if they'll change their attitude toward what's going on against Iran. Instead of cooperating with Israel and the United States to attack Iran, they might choose a different path. As we're seeing right now with Oman—with the case of Oman—we see something different. It's not like the UAE or Saudi Arabia.

#Scott

Remember, China came in and negotiated rapprochement, but that turned out to be shallow. The Saudis can't be trusted. If I were the Iranians, I'd never trust the Saudis again. And if I were the Iranians, I'd never trust the UAE again. If they're not careful—if this war goes on much longer—I think Iran's going to deal fatal blows to the UAE. I mean, you take out desalination plants in the UAE and they're sunk. Now, that opens Iran up, but hell, didn't we just bomb an Iranian desalination plant the other day? They retaliated by hitting a Kuwaiti desalination plant. Hopefully people woke up and said, "Stop," because, you know, there are issues.

But Iran can resolve its water issues. The Gulf Arab states can't. You know, that's reality. I just—you know, we get back to the nuclear thing. I don't think this ends with Iran having 60% enriched uranium. I don't think it can end with Iran having 60% enriched uranium. And I'll tell you why: because Iran's not going to physically defeat the United States. Iran wins by surviving. And they're winning right now—there's no doubt about that. But Iran will not physically defeat the United States. We're not going to put 50,000 troops on the ground and give Iran a chance to surround them and make a Dien Bien Phu moment, you know, where they're marching Americans through the streets of Tehran.

That's just not going to happen. Trump wants out of this war. I think the big message right now is that he's desperate—so desperate he just makes stuff up. If the Russians can come in and negotiate

an end to the conflict that meets Iran's objectives—all of Iran's objectives, not compromising any of them—I think the Russians would tell the Iranian leadership, “If you want America gone, you've got to give up the 60% of your uranium.” And then it comes down to the Iranians. I mean, I know that things have changed. First of all, we're talking about an Iran that's been bombed. The horrors we've inflicted on the Iranian people are mind-boggling.

Back home, we have no clue what we're doing. We've run out of targets, so now we're hitting civilian infrastructure. We're bombing civilian homes, leveling city blocks, committing war crimes beyond imagination. And it's not just in Tehran—we're striking other population centers as well. Shiraz—I'm scared to death of what we've done to the historical and cultural treasures there. Isfahan—again, what are we doing to these places? We Americans, you know, we're about to celebrate our 250th anniversary, and we're destroying things that have been around for thousands of years. It's shocking. Iran has paid a huge price. I know the calculation has changed, and I respect that fact.

But I guess what I'm trying to say is that while Iran's willingness to go all the way is what could enable them to win the war, at some point “all the way” means suicide—it means everybody dies. At some point, though, the Iranian leadership has always talked about doing what's best for the Iranian people. And if a Russian mediator can come in and negotiate a great deal that ends all the nonsense, and the only price Iran would have to pay is giving up 60% enriched uranium, I think that's something Iran should do. I'd advise them to do it, because holding onto it—I just don't see the point. In order for Iran to get out of the NPT and have a nuclear weapons capability, they'd have to defeat the United States.

So now, does Iran have a plan that—because if we're dealing with a rational president, a rational president—I think Iran has the cards: economic strangulation. See, a rational president would actually care that there's no diesel fuel in Australia right now, because Australia is an ally. A rational president would care that there's gas rationing in South Korea and Japan, because they're allies. A rational president would be very concerned about what's happening to the European economy, because they're allies. We have an irrational president who is—you know, it's a cult of personality, and it's all about his ego. He's the only thing that matters right now. And the Russians are unique in their ability to understand that. Putin has been playing Trump's ego, you know, masterfully.

#Scott

I mean, anybody who doubts it should just take a look at where Russia is right now.

#Scott

You know, they were literally ready, in 2027, to make drastic changes—economic belt-tightening that was going to bring real pain to the people of Russia. At the end of this year—I'm sorry—and Putin said, “We're not worried about that anymore.” Why? Because they just won the lottery. Suddenly,

money's flowing in. They're going, "Wait a minute, we don't have to do these belt-tightening things. We're solving it." And it's only going to get better for Russia economically. Why? Because Putin had patience. For all the people going, you know, all the Gilbert Doctorows out there saying, "Red lines, you let them—red line, red line, red line, red line, red line."

#Nima

Well, Gil, if we'd done what you wanted, there'd be a permanent state of warfare between Russia and Europe right now.

#Scott

Instead, Russia's winning across the board. There's not a single aspect of this conflict that Russia isn't dominating. So much so that they were able to send, you know, what, 700,000 barrels of oil to Cuba—break the American blockade—because there's nothing America can do. And now, because Russia had patience and didn't react to any of the escalation, NATO's dead. Donald Trump's pulling out of NATO. It's over. Finished. Goodbye. Remember I told you Mark Rutte would be the last Secretary General of NATO? Mark Rutte's going to be the last Secretary General of NATO. Easiest call to make, because Donald Trump's the easiest person to predict—which is why I'm telling you that if you don't get a negotiated deal, this egomaniac will use nuclear weapons. Because he's the guy who designed it. Remember, it was under the first Trump administration that the nuclear employment plan involving Iran was changed so that we could preemptively use nuclear weapons.

And the trigger is an Iranian nuclear weapon. That's the problem. If we had a rational president, we wouldn't be doing this. First of all, we wouldn't be where we are. But we have an irrational president. And therefore, this is where I think the Russians—the Russians are the only ones who can do this. There's no other nation out there right now that can serve as the liaison between Israel, the United States, and Iran. Russia has good relations with all three of them. So I'm hopeful. But again, the idea that the Iranians are going to walk away with 60% enriched uranium when this is all over—I can't see it. I don't see that happening. I understand where you're coming from, and I understand the sentiment, and I understand the justification for keeping it. But, you know, Ayatollah Khomeini.

#Nima

I think, Scott, when you talk about it—what do you mean?

#Scott

The Iran-Iraq War ended with the Supreme Leader saying, "I will drink this cup of poison to bring an end to this conflict." Yeah.

#Nima

Scott, I think right now the main concern for the Iranians isn't enriching uranium, because they're capable of producing it at any level. They have the knowledge, they have everything. You know, they understand it's not something that can just be bombed or destroyed in Iran. It's there forever. Forever. I agree with you.

#Scott

Look, I've said it before. I was on your show. I've said it, and I'll say it again—I've never backed away from it. Iran can already build a nuclear bomb. They've solved everything. All they need now is the decision. But I'll point this out: Witkoff misunderstood when Araki said, "We have 450, 460—I don't know—kilograms of uranium hexafluoride enriched to 60% uranium." And Witkoff went, "You're telling us you have the ability to build ten nuclear weapons." I would've slapped Witkoff right there and said, "That's not what they're saying, you moron." All the Americans were running around at the end of June saying, "We don't know where it is, the Iranians could be building a bomb."

What Araki said was, "We're not building a bomb. We have it all, and we're willing to give it up. Therefore, there will be no bomb." We have it all. We're willing to give it up. No bomb. There was no threat implied there at all. It was the Iranians saying, "We haven't done anything with it. We haven't enriched it higher. We haven't turned it into metal. We haven't done anything. It's all here." And if the Iranians could make that statement today to the Russians and say, "Yeah, we—" you know, because if the Iranians come back and say, "Well, we've only got 250 kilograms of it left," people would go, "Three bombs." You know, which I think might be the case, but hopefully that isn't the case.

Hopefully, Iran can say, "No, we still have it all," because that means they haven't weaponized. They haven't taken that step. But they said back in 2024 or 2025, a senior Iranian Revolutionary Guard guy said, "People, we have everything we need but the core. We have the warhead. We have all the safety stuff that goes along with that." All these missiles they're firing—every single one of them has components linked to a nuclear delivery system. I mean, the Iranians have already tested everything. The other part of it is, we've given the Iranians all these advanced missiles they're testing right now while they're firing.

This is their nuclear delivery system—and it works. The components, for instance the charges used to release the submunitions and all that, operate on the same principle that would be used to fire a nuclear weapon. And it's all being tested. The vibration testing is good. Everything's good. So there's literally nothing stopping the Iranians other than themselves. If they wanted, they could have enriched this stuff up to 92%, 94%, even 98% if they wanted to, and turned it into metal. We're talking about a basic gun design—so it would be 12 to 20 kilotons of yield.

You don't have to test it. We're waiting for the Iranians to test. We never tested it. You know, the first bomb dropped on Japan was a gun design—never tested. The design that was tested at Alamogordo was a plutonium weapon, an implosion weapon. Gun design is the simplest thing in the

world: slug, slug, boom—critical mass, boom. It's not efficient; you're wasting a lot of potential, but it's 12 to 20 kilotons. Three of those, and Israel no longer exists. And Iran can do that. And the Iranians now know it isn't going to get shot down. They're testing it right now. It isn't going to get shot down.

And it'll hit what it's aimed at. So the Iranians are in the driver's seat. If they want, you know... And this is why I think Russia needs to come in right now and just put an end to this and say, because you don't want to go there. Look, I know the Iranians. Their pride has been hurt. You've been attacked. You've been stabbed. You've been stabbed in the back. You've been bombed. You've been betrayed. My God, if I were an Iranian, I'd be screaming, "Nuke them!" I would. I wouldn't be sitting here trying to be Mr. Rational. I'd be saying, no, take Israel off the map. Israel deserves to be taken off the map. I have no sympathy for the state of Israel.

There's no place on Earth that deserves to be nuked more than Israel. But that doesn't solve the problems. And Iran doesn't want to go down in history as that nation either. That's not the legacy Iran wants. So let's see what the Russians can do. Let's see if the Russians get engaged. There's still no guarantee. But I think Donald Trump is desperate right now—desperate. I'm anxious to see what he's going to say tonight. I'm anxious to see what kind of— I mean, I love it. I forget which Iranian— was it the president, or was it Araghchi—who said he's negotiating with himself? It's perfect.

#Nima

Yeah, it was Araghchi, the foreign minister of Iran.

#Scott

It's perfect. He's negotiating with himself—it's a fantasy. The Iranians have been very clear about that. First of all, there are no negotiations, not even through intermediaries. The fact that they pick up a phone call from the Pakistanis doesn't mean they're negotiating.

#Nima

But Scott, the problem is that Donald Trump doesn't even follow himself from one hour to the next. How can you deal with that? You can't.

#Scott

You can't. You can't. You can't. This is why the Russians have to be the mediators. There's no way Americans can sit down with the Iranians. There's no way. How could the Iranians ever trust— you know, for there to be an American the Iranians could trust, the Trump administration has to be gone and a whole new administration has to come in. You know, J.D. Vance can't be trusted. There was talk that he was going to be— J.D. Vance can't be trusted. Tulsi Gabbard can't be trusted. None of

them can be trusted. There's nobody in Washington, D.C., right now who can be trusted to be the mediator. But there is a modicum of trust between Russia and the United States.

There's a relationship with Kirill Dmitriev and Steve Witkoff that could possibly be exploited. So if the Russians could sit down and mediate this thing, I think you could get a deal very quickly. I don't think Israel has too many cards left to hold. I think Israel has just been shown to be a nation-state that's being taken apart piece by piece by piece. I don't know what the battle damage assessment is from last night. I do know that the Israeli claim that the Iranians were down to their last 27 launchers was disproved dramatically. So, you know, we'll see. But this is so frustrating. I didn't want to do your show today because I knew I was going to lose my temper—not at you, but just at the situation. I'm so frustrated by this whole thing.

This angers me. To be an American and see your government behave this way—it's such a fundamentally un-American thing to do. Look, I know America's arrogant. I know we've been arrogant for a long time. Hell, guys, all the people saying we're arrogant—why not? We're the superpower. Superpowers are arrogant. You're supposed to balance that arrogance with, you know, responsible thinking, an appreciation of humanity, trying to do the right thing. You know, a framework of law—imperfectly as it's implemented—but at least it's there. This president's thrown that all out. We're in the wild, wild west. And it's not good. It's not a good look for us abroad. It's not a good look for us at home. The constitutional republic is dead. And so I'm very frustrated.

#Nima

Actually, Lavrov commented on that, Scott. Lavrov talked about it. Here's what he said about international law.

#Scott

President Trump said he's not interested in international law. He has his own morals and his own understanding of what's right and wrong. Some elements of international life harken back to times long past, when leaders of certain countries were abducted in broad daylight and city blocks were wiped out with biblical cruelty, when children's hospitals were targeted and hundreds of children died in an instant. Nuclear power plants are being bombed—plants that are supposed to be defended and protected by international law, along with other facilities. And in this situation, nobody but us and our allies seems to care about international law.

#Nima

Yeah. It's literally pointing out that Donald Trump doesn't care about international law. He's just hitting. And this is the official position of Russia when we hear it from Lavrov. No, he's not a negotiator like Kirill Dmitriev. He's someone who makes these policies.

#Scott

He's the man. Peskov came out and said it's the wild, wild west. It's the rule of the gun, and that Russia is going to have to adapt to that. Because when you have one rogue player, then everybody who complies with the law is at a disadvantage. And so this is why it's a very dangerous situation that we're in right now. And this is why I'm so frustrated. So, again, I apologize early on for that breach. I was tempted to call you up before the show and say, I'm just not in the mood. My brain's not wrapped around this enough because there's just a lot of anger and frustration right now about everything. There's nothing good coming out of anything about my country right now. Nothing good. There's literally nothing good. It's all bad news. We're failing everywhere. There's no glimmer of hope. There's no light at the end of the tunnel.

We're looking at a dark abyss. And so many Americans have just bought into this whole MAGA propaganda stuff. Mainstream media is totally sold out. There's no rational thought among them. And then, you know, the independent media platforms—I mean, X has just become this horrific platform. I don't know what they've done, but it's just nonstop pro-Israeli, pro-Trump crap thrown out there. It's overwhelming. I mean, I'm grateful they haven't kicked me off, but, you know, it's not—they say it's the number one place for news in the world, but it's hard to even navigate to the news because you have to go through so much crap and noise, you know? And so I was like, I promised Nima I'd be on at 11 o'clock. I don't want to do this. I don't want to do this. I don't want to do this. But I'm here. So it is what it is.

#Nima

By the way, when we look at the reality of what's going on right now, one of them is the Strait of Hormuz. Iran is going to keep control of the Strait of Hormuz—they're not going to give it up. And the other question is, how do you see that bringing some sort of sanity? You've mentioned the problems these countries in the region are facing in terms of security. I'm talking about all these countries together. How do you see this new situation coming into play when it comes to the security of the region?

#Scott

Well, first of all, Iran has to prevail. But I think Iran's made it clear that it alone will control the on-off switch for the Strait of Hormuz, which means they're not going to tolerate games being played by the Gulf Arab states. So in the future, if Kuwait wants to play a game, Kuwaiti ships won't be allowed to go through. In 1987 or so, you know, the Iranians and the Iraqis were hitting each other's islands and oil production and all that stuff. So the United States re-flagged a whole bunch of ships with American flags and sailed them through the Strait of Hormuz. And Iran didn't do anything. I mean, they tried to fight back, but we sank their navy, and they didn't have any other options.

But Iran learned from that. They learned from that experience. And we didn't. We somehow still believe that just sailing a destroyer through the Strait of Hormuz would secure it—that that's all it took. But Iran basically created an integrated, you know, strait interdiction capability that can't be defeated. Short of literally putting 250,000 troops on the ground—that's the minimum number needed to land at, you know, Chabahar, then sweep up the coast and clear the Iranian coastline around the Strait of all capabilities. But even then, that's problematic. It's rugged terrain, and the Iranians aren't prone to surrender. So I just... this is a big deal for Iran.

It forever changes the landscape because it gives Iran the ability to dictate outcomes and to influence—meaning when there are negotiations now, people can't play the "bluff Iran" game. You know, "Do this or else we'll do that." The Iranians are like, "We'll just hit the off switch." And we know what that means. It gives Iran leverage against Europe and everybody else too. So if Iran can retain this—and I believe they will—I think that'll be one of the preconditions. And the Iranians will say, "Yeah, you just have to pay a price. A toll. If you pay the toll, you get passage. If you don't, you don't get passage." It's that simple. And, you know, it's not about income generation. It's about control. It's about the leverage that comes with control. And I think this is a big deal, and it's going to be a very painful pill for the president.

This is why you hear the president saying—it went from "we have to force the Strait of Hormuz" to "we don't care about the Strait of Hormuz," and now back to "we have to force the Strait of Hormuz" again. Because, you know, he knows, first of all, the Strait of Hormuz, for the United States, it's not crucial. We don't need it to survive. But the global economy does—it impacts global energy prices. But the president can't be seen as being weak on this one. So, you know, this is one of those key points for the Iranians that shows they're not weak. Look, if they were getting beat as bad as PDKSS said, they wouldn't be controlling the Strait of Hormuz. I mean, that's as simple as it gets. And last night—was it Wave 89? I mean, a hundred big missiles fired. Pretty good.

#Nima

No, look, Scott — most Israelis are living in bunkers. You look at Iran, nobody's living in a bunker. They know they're getting bombed by fighter jets, but they're not hiding. That's the reality of two different countries.

#Scott

The other thing, too, is the longer this war goes on, the more difficult it's going to be for the U.S. and Israel to sustain it. You know, the F-35 fighter wasn't built for this kind of sustained combat operation. At some point, they're going to have to go in for maintenance. And then the other thing is, you're using up all the precision-guided munitions—standoff munitions—to drop bombs. In the

future, you're going to have to come in with laser-guided or satellite-guided bombs. But that means you have to get closer to the target. And what we're seeing is the Iranians putting a whole bunch of stuff underground, including half their air force. So, you know...

At some point, the nature of this war is going to change. They're going to keep degrading E-3s. People need to understand that if you blow up an AWACS—well, AWACS is what allows us to dominate the skies because it gives us total situational awareness, communications, boom, boom, boom. I think the Iranians have several tricks up their sleeve that they haven't used yet, up to and including anti-satellite weapons—meaning the Iranians could blind the United States. And when the time comes, if necessary, they will. I don't think Iran's done unveiling capabilities. What is the United States doing? We're mobilizing the third aircraft carrier. Again, if we were serious about this war, we'd have three aircraft carriers on station.

When it began, actually, it had seven, because that's what we went into Desert Storm with. But we're not serious about this war. This is a made-up war, and we can't afford it. It's destroying our economy and the Pentagon's budget. The ramifications of this—we're chewing up resources to the point where, if we ever wanted to defend Taiwan against China, we no longer have that capacity. It's over. If we pull out of Europe and the Ukrainians pull another one of their stupid Baltic state end-arounds—say we pull out of NATO and the Ukrainians launch a drone attack—the Baltic states will be taken over by Russia. There's nothing anybody can do to stop it. I just remember all these air power guys: "Ah, we'll come in with air power."

We'll hit the Russians like they've never been hit before. And I'm like, really? But now—you hit the Iranians. They didn't have anything close to what the Russians have, and they're sort of winning. And now you're telling me this NATO Air Force has no standoff weapons anymore? None? Because it was really the Americans that delivered. The Germans have the Taurus. The Taurus won't be around after day three of Russian drone attacks against Germany, okay? Because there is no air defense in Germany. None. So drones will just be flying anywhere they want, hitting whatever they want. That's all of Europe right now. The Russians are building a thousand drones a day at their factory near Kazan. They use two, three, four hundred a day against Ukraine. Where are the other drones going? Oh—stockpiled.

So when the time comes, Russia will be able to flood the skies of Europe with these drones. There's no air defense against them whatsoever. And that'll be the end of Europe. Literally, Russia won't even have to come in. They'll do the rest for shock and awe, but they don't need to. The drones will just come in and take care of everything. So the United States has crippled itself—literally, we've crippled ourselves. And our defense industry can't catch up. I mean, Donald Trump can have all the meetings he wants, but reality is reality. Who's funding the factories? Has Congress allocated that money? You know, you build the factories—but how long does it take to build them?

I mean, you can do a lot of waivers, but at the end of the day you still have to do site surveys and environmental hazard tests, or else you open yourself up to long-term lawsuits. These tests

sometimes take months, if not years, if you haven't already done them. You build the factory, you hire the people—but to do that, you need contracts that justify the expenses. Has Congress said, "We're going to buy this"? Are we there yet? We're never going to recover from this. I mean, that's the sad truth. Actually, it might be the good truth. In fact, it is the good truth. The good news is America will never recover from this militarily, and we'll have to downsize—which is why Trump getting out of the Middle East is a realistic possibility, because I think right now he's desperate to get out of the Middle East.

He always wanted to get out of the Middle East, but he couldn't do that until the Israeli-Iranian thing was resolved. And now there's the potential for a resolution—then we can get out of the Middle East. Because what Trump wants is Fortress America. He wants to secure the Western Pacific, the Western Hemisphere, and then project power into the Pacific. But the key aspect of the National Security Strategy, the 2025 version, was to have military overmatch with the Chinese. How can you have military overmatch if you can't defend yourself? How can you have military overmatch if all your long-range standoff strike weapons have been destroyed? You're used up.

You have nothing left. I mean, it's the other way around now. We've guaranteed Chinese military supremacy in the Pacific. That's it. We're never going to recover from this. We're going to get out of NATO because we can't stay in NATO. We don't have enough military power to project ourselves into NATO anymore. So I think this Iran conflict will go down in history as one of the most transformational conflicts ever, because the Iranian victory—and I do believe Iran is going to win this war—will result in the United States not just withdrawing from the Middle East, but from Europe and the Pacific. Iran is defeating America globally. It's a big deal. It's a huge deal.

#Nima

Scott, the other issue is, we know that Netanyahu wanted this war for a long time. He wanted to go against Iran, and he said, "This is the head of the octopus." The main reason for that was he sees the Axis of Resistance as an octopus, and Iran is the head of the octopus. You have to destroy Iran, then the whole Axis of Resistance is going to disappear from the scene. It didn't happen when it comes to Lebanon—Lebanon is fighting back fiercely.

#Scott

Didn't I tell you that? I said Lebanon's in pause mode—that after the loss of Nasrallah, they had to turn to domestic issues. So Hezbollah took a backseat, but Hezbollah hadn't been defeated. And Hezbollah never withdrew from the south. They made some political withdrawals, but they always had the ability to come back, and their missile capabilities weren't fully degraded. And now, thanks to American stupidity, the Lebanese government has been exposed as nothing more than an agent of Israel. The Lebanese army is as impotent as the day is long. I mean, they're incapable of fighting or defending Lebanon.

The only force capable of defending Lebanon is Hezbollah, and they're kicking the crap out of Israel today. The Israeli ground forces are just people... This is one of those big awakening moments. You remember how in 1967 the supremacy of the Israeli ground forces played out against all the Arab armies, with the exception of maybe the Jordanians, who fought well but there weren't enough of them? Hezbollah is proving that an Arab army can defeat the Israelis in a stand-up fight. It's over for Israel. It's over. They've lost this war. They're mobilizing reservists, but the reservists don't want to fight. And who are the Israeli reservists?

These aren't, you know, these aren't boys who've been kept in a basement with a weight set, and they throw raw meat down there on occasion, and the guys are sitting there growling and ready to go. You know, come out of the basement like Daenerys' dragons in Game of Thrones when they came out and burned the ships down. No, that's not it. These are a bunch of effeminate little soy boys who want to sit in air-conditioned offices and do tech development. That's the big Israeli thing: "I'm a tech developer." And then they wear their overtly tight clothes and prance around. And now they're being told they have to go do their military service, and they're like, "Well, no."

I want to be in an air-conditioned office doing tech development. No, you've got to go to southern Lebanon. You mean I've got to go fight Hezbollah? Yeah. Nobody wants to fight Hezbollah. You might get their special operations forces who want to fight Hezbollah, but the mainstream Israeli army doesn't want to. They're scared to death. The 7th Armored Brigade—that's the equivalent of two battalions fighting Hezbollah. This is their elite armored brigade, the 7th. They're the elite guys, and they're getting crushed by the Ragwan forces. Lebanon—Hezbollah owns southern Lebanon. At some point, you know, Hezbollah has been preparing for a counter-strike into Galilee.

Let's see what happens when that happens—how Israel responds when suddenly Kiryat Shemona is no longer Israeli, but the flag of Hezbollah is raised over it. Ansarallah is now entering. They can shut down the Bab al-Mandeb—oh, shoot, I almost had a perfect track record—yes, the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, in a heartbeat. But more than that, they can defeat the Saudi army in a stand-up fight. I mean, we're at a point right now where Saudi military preparation is nonexistent. And if the Yemenis wanted to, they could retake—well, I say "retake" because southern Saudi Arabia used to be Yemen, stolen by the Saudis. Yemen could go in there and take it back, and that may be the result of this. And it has all the oil.

#Nima

Right.

#Scott

Well, in the eastern provinces, you can get the Shia to rise up and be very disruptive. I think, you know, again, Iran is in a position where it's not only going to compel the United States to leave the Middle East, abandon NATO, and withdraw from the Pacific, but we could see the end of the Al Saud

family in Saudi Arabia—which would be beautiful, wonderful, perfect. We could see the end of the corrupt Emirates, the end of the corrupt Kuwaitis, the end of the corrupt Bahrainis. You know, even Qatar may not survive this. Oman, I think, is a little better off. But this could be transformational for the region. The irony—I mean, we could just keep going down this road—is that Kuwait becomes the 14th province of Iraq when this is done.

Because if you get the corrupt Kuwaiti emirs to flee, the Iraqis—you know, it's going to be Saddam Hussein that's going to be doing this. It's going to be the Shia of Iraq saying, "Come on home, baby." And there could be no better outcome from this war. I mean, a weakened Israel, a chastened Israel—an Israel that is no longer capable of projecting its, you know, brutal aggression the way it does—is the best result, second only to getting the United States out of the region. But the third result would be cleaning house in the Gulf Arab states—cleaning house. And it would be great, because these corrupt families have brought nothing good to the region. It's fake. Whatever they do is fake.

Dubai was fake, always artificial. Have you been to Dubai? I've been to Dubai. It's—it's artificial. It's just a fake place, 100% fake. And, I mean, it's fun, you know, but it was built on the backs of oil money and then Western capital coming in to create this perception of a financial center. Artificial. Now it's gone. They're not going to recover from this. And I think there would be no better outcome than to see these Gulf Arab states all collapse and the people of the region elect their leaders. No more nobility. No more kings. No more sheikhs. No more emirs. It's time for presidents and prime ministers. That's how you transform the Middle East.

Because now this money—the money that's going to be taken out of the ground—you're no longer... You know how much of it goes into the pockets of these Saudi princes so they can afford all this stuff, their lavish lifestyles? I mean, they're robbing the people blind. It's time for the oil money to go to a government of the people, by the people, for the people, and take care of them. And we need the United States to get the hell out of there. Imagine Iraq without American involvement. I mean, God, Iraq could still live up to so much potential. And the same thing with Iran. I mean, I can't even imagine what Iran would be like in a sanctions-free environment, without worrying about American bases to their left and right—living in peace with their neighbors—it would be a paradise.

I mean, such a beautiful country to begin with. Can you imagine if Iran was able to take that money? I mean, the hypocrisy of Marco Rubio. If the Iranians weren't so busy building missiles, they could invest in their people. Hey, Marco, come to Albany and look at the frickin' potholes, pal. Come take a look at the infrastructure—the bridges are getting ready to collapse. Maybe if we didn't spend trillions of dollars buying weapons to carry out illegal wars of aggression, we'd have a better home too, Marco. The hypocrisy of American leadership. I mean, the amount of money we're spending waging war—\$200 billion is what we're asking to pay for this conflict. Crazy. Yeah.

#Nima

Thank you so much, Scott, for being with us.

#Scott

All right.

#Nima

Great pleasure as always. All we do, as two friends, is talk to each other—discuss things—but after all, the friendship...

#Scott

That's why I came on the show—because this is about friendship, and this is about having a conversation. I just want your audience to know that I wasn't being disrespectful to you earlier. I'm just so angry and frustrated right now, I don't even know what to do. Like I said, I didn't want to come on this show because I knew—my wife keeps telling me I've got to learn how to be one of those calm people who just sit there and go, "Oh yes, always calm." That's just not who I am. I wear my heart on my sleeve, and I'm not programmed to be that person—although probably we'd have a more intellectually sound conversation if I were. But I knew this was going to get out of control, and that's why I didn't want to do it. It got out of control, but I think you did a good job bringing it back, and it was an honor and a privilege to be on the show with you.

#Nima

Yeah, my pleasure as always, Scott.

#Scott

Okay, have a good one.

#Nima

Bye-bye. Thanks for watching!