

Scott Ritter: Iran STRIKES 200 US Troops on Saudi Base, Trump FLIPS on Hormuz

Scott Ritter reacts to the latest in Iran's retaliation and explains why Trump is holding a press conference after admitting the US may pull out of the war even if the Strait of Hormuz remains in Tehran's control. Scott Ritter: <https://scottritter.com> , <https://donate.stripe.com/dRm3cw2AeeY06slfeld7q00> FOLLOW ME ON RUMBLE: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> FOLLOW ME ON TELEGRAM: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> SUPPORT THE CHANNEL ON PATREON: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #trump #straitofhormuz

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. As you can see, I'm joined by Scott Ritter, former U.N. weapons inspector and U.S. Marine Corps intelligence officer, geopolitical analyst, and friend of the show. Scott, good to see you back. Thanks for having me. Yes, well... I want to ask you about the realities of the war. First, I just want to review a bit about what has happened since the last time this show aired, in terms of Operation True Promise 4, as this leads into the address that Donald Trump is going to give to the United States about Iran—supposedly, at least that's what we're being told. So, in wave 89, it was one of the biggest since the beginning of the war. And we had Al-Kharj in Saudi Arabia—according to Iranian media, all Iranian sources—saying that they took the Al-Kharj base, where 200 U.S. pilots had been relocated.

There were also direct hits on a helicopter base in Kuwait and in the UAE. Their bases were hit there. And the promise by Iran to begin hitting U.S. firms has started. Amazon Web Services and a telecommunications company based in Batelco, Bahrain, were also hit. Now, Scott, Israel has also faced much of the brunt of Iranian strikes, and Iran is saying they're coordinating with Hezbollah and Yemen now as part of the broader resistance. Donald Trump is saying that Iran is begging for a ceasefire. He's kind of flipped on the Strait of Hormuz question—first saying it didn't need to be resolved to end the war, and now saying it does. Talk about the realities of where the war stands now, given that Iran and the United States are saying different things, and their actions are also sending different messages.

#Scott Ritter

Well, first, we have to understand that Iran has stuck to its plan. Iran had a plan, and it's been executing and implementing that plan. The plan has flexibility built into it, and Iran was prepared for

that. So as the conflict goes on, Iran has been able to expand the scope and scale of its response—not just hitting Israel, but also hitting American bases. Donald Trump expressed surprise that Iran would do this, but Iran had been saying they would do that no matter what. They've also expanded the conflict to regional actors who have been supporting the U.S.-Israeli aggression against Iran, the Gulf Arab states. And they've shown the ability to diversify their target set.

As you pointed out, in response to American attacks against Iranian universities and civilian infrastructure, Iran has put universities in the region on notice—those with an American presence—and also American businesses on notice. They struck, as you said, an Amazon-related business in Bahrain, and there'll be more. It's always curious when you see the naysayers out there saying that Iran is running out of missiles, that they don't have enough launchers. And yet today, Iran showed that it has enough—enough to expand its launch capacity. We're also seeing Iran start to make use of more advanced missiles, as they said they would, to exhaust their older missile supply.

And now they're deploying new missiles—missiles being built underground in missile assembly facilities. Iran's capabilities aren't being eroded, despite what Pete Hegseth says; Iran's capabilities are expanding. This is Iran winning the war. There's just no other way to put it. The United States is in purely reactive mode. Israel is in reactive mode. All the United States and Israel can do right now is drop bombs on targets they don't even know how to identify. We have a situation where U.S. military planners have defaulted to the "tonnage equals damage" model—the same one used during Desert Storm, near the end of the strategic air campaign, as it came time to set off the ground invasion.

You know, battle damage assessment people like me were saying we hadn't achieved the level of destruction that the commander in chief, General Schwarzkopf, said needed to be achieved before initiating the ground attack. And this frustrated Schwarzkopf and the Air Force because they simply weren't doing their job. I mean, they were flying aircraft, they were dropping bombs, but, you know, air power will not win a conflict. This is a lesson that's been known ever since air power entered the stage. It's a support element—you can't win a war through air power alone. And yet this is what the United States is trying to do.

You know, what happened is they—well, in order to get the green light for the ground attack, they just changed the equation and said it's not about what professionals like me see on the ground. It's about if we drop X number of bombs, we achieve a certain percentage of outcomes. So they just started dropping bombs, increasing the tonnage, and proclaiming victory. Then they launched the ground attack. But, you know, the war wasn't won by air power. I got thrown out of the theater after the war ended because I had the audacity to try to do an on-the-ground battle damage assessment of an actual battlefield where the Tawakalna Division engaged the U.S. Army.

I was going to grid it out, go in, and document every piece of destroyed Iraqi equipment, then figure out what destroyed it—do an examination, determine the kill, identify the weapon that did it, and see what percentage of Iraqi equipment was destroyed by ground forces versus air power. The Air

Force would like us to believe they destroyed everything. It turned out they destroyed almost nothing at all—that almost all the damage was done by ground forces. And as soon as I started doing that, I came back from my initial work, and the military police who took me in said, “You’re going home. Pack your stuff. We’re putting you on the airplane.” They shut it down because they didn’t want the truth.

I’m just telling you right now, we are not winning this war by air power. When you have Hegseth talk about bombing them, or Trump saying we should bomb them into the Stone Age, we’re not accomplishing anything. We’re blowing up empty buildings, we’re blowing up civilian infrastructure. You know, history will show—for instance, in World War II, as we targeted the German defense industry with a strategic air campaign—they went underground. They were producing more Messerschmitts at the end of the war than they were at the beginning. They had actually improved the efficiency of their production by going underground. You know, for the Germans, it was oil—being able to have gasoline for their tanks and their aircraft—but they were producing more aircraft.

The Iranians have been preparing for this war for 20 years. They have, by some estimates, 27 underground missile cities. And these aren’t just missiles ready to launch—they’re missile production facilities where they can assemble the missiles. And we’re just not ready for this. We don’t have a plan. We literally don’t have a plan. We’re making it up as we go along. And you can see that with Europe. I mean, back in 1990, 1991, we built a coalition. Remember, we had French airplanes flying, Italian airplanes flying, British airplanes flying. We had a British division, a French division. We had Arabs—the Syrians were there, the Egyptians were there, the Moroccans were there, the Pakistanis were there. We built this coalition to confront Saddam Hussein.

We had a Chapter 7 resolution from the United Nations Security Council. And importantly, as Americans, we had a congressional resolution authorizing the use of force to implement it. In 2003, we couldn’t get a Security Council resolution. We couldn’t get—well, we got some sort of half-hearted congressional authorization. But we went to the Europeans, and Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Armitage went to NATO in the spring of 2002. They made the case: they said there were weapons of mass destruction and that NATO needed to intervene. I was invited by NATO to come and give a rebuttal. I went, and the U.S. ambassador at the time called me a known enemy of the state, saying NATO shouldn’t allow a known enemy of the state to address it.

But I had the meeting, and NATO rejected it. They said, “We’re not going to war,” probably because of the briefing I gave. I think it was, you know... The majority of NATO ambassadors who attended the briefing wrote demarches to the United States condemning Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Armitage for lying to them, misleading them. And NATO didn’t attend. But at least the United States tried. You know, we gave it the old college try. I’ve still talked about old Europe, new Europe. You know, we turned to the new Europe and got the Poles to send commandos in. And, you know, this is the beginning of—one of the reasons why we expanded NATO was to get this new Europe that we could manipulate.

But we didn't even try this time. No effort was made whatsoever to get Europe on board. When I flew during Desert Storm—or Desert Shield, at the time—I flew from the United States, from Tampa to Spain, and then from, I think it was Torrejón, and from Torrejón on to Riyadh. Spain is a transit point for U.S. aircraft, and it's important. We've got to logistically sustain this war. We can do that through an air bridge from the United States through Spain, and then Torrejón—and, I mean, Sigonella in Sicily is also an important base. Italy played an important role. Rammstein plays an important role. We have bases in the United Kingdom that play an important role too.

They've all been denied to us now because, I mean, I think the British have opened up their bases, but Spain and Italy—they're not letting their airspace or their bases be used because we didn't even try to coordinate. We made no effort to coordinate with Europe. We've lost Europe. And now Trump's throwing a temper tantrum, saying, "Oh, we're going to leave NATO." Well, leave NATO already. I mean, I've been supporting leaving NATO for a long time, because NATO is an organization that's had no legitimate mission since the end of the Cold War. But right now, the Europeans always feared America leaving, and now it's been exposed.

If Europe stays in NATO, or if NATO stays intact, Europe's just solidifying the reality that they're nothing more than an extension—tools of American foreign policy that's about illegal wars of aggression. Because that's what's happening in Iran today. There's no legal foundation whatsoever for what we're doing—none, zero. No constitutional authorization, no authorization under the Charter of the United Nations. It's an illegal war of aggression. We didn't even try to get them. We're sending a third aircraft carrier. We had seven aircraft carriers deployed up front during Desert Storm—seven—because we knew it was a war. We were ready for the war. We don't know what we're doing right now. Ground troops, boots on the ground. Do you guys understand that ten thousand troops accomplish nothing?

Zero? There will be no ground invasion with ten thousand. You might do a raid, but an invasion implies you're seizing and holding territory. Please, people, do you think we can do everything? I'm trying to tell you, as a guy who was in the Marine Corps—and I love the Marine Corps—troop battalion landing teams will do nothing against the Iranians. They might be able to carry out a raid here, a raid there, but when you look at large-scale operations, battalions aren't that big. Five hundred, eight hundred men across the beach—how much territory can they hold? Use your brains, people. Use your brains. They can hold no territory. We should be talking divisions, corps, armies. That's what has to happen if you want to go on the ground in Iran. And we're not there.

Not at all. Not even close. And if we wanted to be there, how would we mobilize them? How do we get them from point A to point B? It takes us six months to get a U.S. Army heavy brigade ready to deploy to Europe on its rotational basis—six months of advance time. Get all the personnel up to speed, get the equipment prepped. Then you've got to ship it over to Europe, then it's got to be offloaded and all that kind of stuff. Where are they going to be received? How are we going to get the equipment there? We've got a couple of brigades' worth of stuff in Kuwait. You're going to land the troops there under fire?

I mean, there's, you know, John Boyd—Colonel John Boyd. He's the guy who came up with the OODA loop. The OODA loop is the decision-making cycle: observe, orient, decide, act. It was originally a fighter pilot concept. I think they called him "Forty-Second Boyd." He basically said that in a head-to-head match, he could come in, initiate an action, and the other person would have to respond. He knew his aircraft so well that he'd always get into a kill position—boom, shoot you down—by observing, orienting, deciding, and acting.

The person who can execute that cycle—you're inside the enemy's decision-making cycle, because now the enemy is reacting to you. And when the enemy is reacting to you, you get to move them where you want them and kill them. The Marine Corps adopted the OODA loop in the 1980s for our maneuver warfare concept. That's when it came into prominence, when I was going through officer training—maneuver warfare was all about the OODA loop. And, you know, that's the key: you get inside the decision-making cycle. The Iranians own the decision-making cycle right now. Everything we're doing is reacting to the Iranians. Nothing we're doing is proactive—nothing whatsoever.

We are reacting. They're driving this boat, and as a result, they're being very effective in what they're doing. We are absolutely chaotic and ineffective in what we're doing. And you see that with the president—I mean, he's just herky-jerky. One minute it's "we need the hormones," next time it's "we don't." It's like, oh man, I'm just going to tell you what—I'm going to turn off the comments because I'm feeling bad, and I'm in a killing mood right now. I will reach into your comment section, pull people out, and bite their fucking heads off. So off they go, because I'm just not going to let this happen today. Yo, Danny, I'm all yours. What?

#Danny

I appreciate that, Scott. I appreciate that. Yeah, well, I wanted to ask you then, Scott, to follow up on this, given everything you said—what exactly is Iran accomplishing versus the United States and Israel right now? Because, you know, as you said, Iran is going through things very methodically, with a planned strategy that reflects decades of preparation. I mean, just against Israel alone—100 missiles in 24 hours—that's what Iran is claiming. Actually, the Institute for the Study of War says Iran isn't firing anything right now. But there seems to be a really strategic plan being carried out. Despite all this talk about talks, despite all this talk of a ceasefire, maybe there haven't been many strikes over the last six hours, you know, last night.

And then suddenly all these locations are being hit. I'm going to pull up what Donald Trump said as you're talking, because in his own words, he's saying one thing one day and another the next. He's saying we can end the war without the Strait of Hormuz being reopened, and Iran says it's open—they're just controlling it. Then he says today, absolutely not, they're begging for a ceasefire. He's flip-flopping almost every other day now. What are the U.S. and Israel accomplishing versus Iran? And what is Iran accomplishing versus the United States? How is this affecting the power balance, geopolitically and militarily?

#Scott Ritter

First of all, understand that Iran didn't start this war, so we can't really talk about what Iran's objectives were going into it. This war was thrust upon Iran. Iran was ready for it—they prepared for it—and they basically said that the forces that initiated this war must be defeated before the war can end. Iran isn't just fighting for survival; it's fighting for victory. And victory, in their view, means the United States leaving the Middle East and Israel being curtailed from carrying out the kinds of aggressions they've been engaged in. Iran also has a secondary mission, I guess you could say, of breaking the backs of those Gulf Arab states that have supported the United States and Israel against Iran for so many years.

Iran is going to ensure that when this conflict ends, they're not looking for a ceasefire—they're looking for the termination of the war. Going forward, there will be no resumption of this conflict; the enemies will have been defeated. Now, Iran can't physically defeat the United States. To be honest, we haven't suffered any meaningful casualties. They've taken out some aircraft here, some aircraft there. They've killed a couple dozen people, wounded hundreds more, but those are insignificant losses in the scale of things. You know, war is war, war is hell, and our militaries are designed to be more resilient to this.

Going into Desert Storm, you know, we were stocking up on tens of thousands of body bags because that's what we expected. We were expecting to take those casualties and win—to prevail—because, you know, that's how big boys fight. So we haven't been hurt. But the military is an extension of politics by other means, and this is where the United States is losing. We're losing politically. I mean, let's just think about what the Iranians have accomplished here for a second. The United States is going to be evicted from the Middle East. When this is done, we're out. Our bases have been destroyed. And even if we wanted to come back, we'd have to rebuild them at costs of tens of billions of dollars that we don't have.

But the Gulf Arab states are being punished—and they're being punished for hosting us. Part of this deal is to break them so that they say, "We don't want the United States here," because the United States has been exposed as a fraud. The whole purpose of the U.S. presence there is an extension of the Carter Doctrine from the 1970s. It said the United States provides security guarantees to the Gulf Arab states to ensure the continued free flow of energy—energy security. Well, the Iranians control the spigot. They control the Strait of Hormuz. They alone decide what energy flows through and what does not. The United States can secure nothing.

Every single one of these Gulf Arab states has been pummeled by the Iranians, and there's no defense against it. And so, you know, Iran has said that. Israel has always acted as if it has the ability to reach out, touch, and destroy—and, of course, it did. For a day, it killed Ali Khamenei, who wanted to die. I mean, he literally was in the place where he was most easily found, and they killed

him—made him a martyr and brought Iran together in a way that nobody could have imagined before the war. But Israel is being slaughtered, pummeled. They're, you know—Israel's closer. I love it when you have these Israeli propagandists.

I can't even do an Israeli accent anymore, but it's this ridiculous, exaggerated accent about how they haven't suffered any real casualties. Their soldiers aren't suffering from the Iranian attack. Yeah, but that's not the point. Iran's missile attacks aren't designed to kill Israeli soldiers—they're designed to destroy Israeli infrastructure. And this is where the Iranians are succeeding. The Haifa oil refinery has been hit, power plants have been hit, and soon, you know, Iran is going to step it up. Iran has to be careful—you don't want to get too existential with Israel, because they have nuclear weapons. But as Israel carries out attacks against Iran, Iran retaliates in kind.

And this will have an impact on Israeli targeting decisions going forward. So Israel is being pummeled. The United States is going to be evicted. Israeli behavior is going to change. But look what else they've done. Because of Iran's stance—because Iran hasn't been beaten, because of Iran's continued resistance—NATO is about to dissolve. I mean, just think about that, Danny. NATO is about to go away. It's the end of NATO. The United States is going to be evicted from the Middle East. The United States is going to be leaving Europe. And now we go to Asia. You know, South Korea, Japan—they've been stripped of their defenses, and they've been shown that there is no American security.

Look at Japan and the South Koreans. They're starting to ration energy because they can't get the oil they need—the oil that the United States guaranteed them would be flowing. We can't guarantee squat. Not only that, we've stripped all of our defenses bare. We have no missile defense shield left in the Pacific, and we don't have the ability to reconstitute it because we have nothing left. We've used it all. Literally, we've taken ourselves down to zero. Precision strike—we've been pouring our precision strike missiles into Iran under the mistaken belief that if you hit them with a certain amount of high explosive, you'll get a certain percentage of destruction. We're destroying nothing except buildings.

As the Iranians proved today, we're not impacting their ballistic missile capabilities. Pete Hegseth is a liar—straight-up lying. He doesn't know what he's doing. And that's the whole point: we don't know what we're doing. We're bombing for the sake of bombing, bombing for statistics—to get a certain tonnage of high explosives dropped—because they won't allow real battle damage assessment. So other people are just doing calculations. This is a president who's briefed on war porn every morning. That's his war briefing—war porn. People sit there, taking images of us blowing things up, and they show them to him for like 20 minutes, and he just sits there doing mental masturbation.

#Danny

I think it's actually just a few minutes. I don't even know if it's 20, Scott.

#Scott Ritter

Well, at his age, he can't last that long, so he's got to—I'm being mean to this guy, but I don't care. I despise him. I despise everything about him. He's not a president in any sense of the word. He's the worst kind of dictator—the kind of dictator who's so far removed from reality. And he's surrounded himself with yes-men and yes-women who just won't tell him the truth. I mean, they just give him the war porn. He sits there and gets off on it every day and goes, "We're winning." And then he, you know, whatever else he does—who knows? But we're not winning. We're losing. We're being defeated strategically. It's not about the amount of American military equipment that's been destroyed.

Hopefully, we won't lose much, and we don't put any boots on the ground, and all our boys and girls come home. But we're being defeated strategically. Iran owns the global economy right now—they're destroying it. And Iran has the ability to make it worse. There's nothing we can do to stop the Iranians. That's the point. There's nothing we can do to stop them conventionally. I mean, I guess we could, you know, bring in nuclear weapons. But what—27 underground missile facilities? Do we even know where they are? I mean, Tulsi Gabbard, we think we know—Tulsi, you know shit. I mean, you know nothing. Because if you knew, this war would be over. We think we know where it is.

Well, you don't know. I hope it's all there, because then we can have a negotiated settlement. But who could blame the Iranians if they wanted to enrich uranium to the 94%, 98% level and produce three to five—well, you know, 12 to 20 kiloton warheads? Gun-design uranium weapons don't even need to be tested. Very simple. The missiles they're firing right now are all nuclear-capable. The warheads they're using—the beauty of it is, the Iranians are doing all the nuclear delivery testing that needs to be done right now, because the warheads they're sending in have different payloads.

But they're doing the vibration test. They're doing the heat-shielding test—right, operational launch. If they test it and it hits the target, they go, "I guess our vibration and heat-shielding test works." Now they can put the uranium device in there and deliver it with precision. We can't shoot it down. So this is where Israel has to be careful, and the United States has to be careful, because Iran has the ability to physically remove Israel from the face of the earth. Now, Iran will pay a horrible price—may not even survive as a nation-state—but if you're an Israeli, it doesn't matter.

What matters is your temple is gone. Your biblical homeland is gone. And this isn't Armageddon—they're going to kill everybody. All the Israelis will die. Again, Iran controls this war. Iran is the driver. It frustrates Donald Trump more than you can possibly imagine, because he wants to be the guy in charge. So he makes stuff up. Enter the Russians—and I still believe the Russians will save the day, because they have the ability to talk to the United States, to Israel, and to Iran. And Russia has a vested interest in bringing stability to this region.

And they can also do things on their own terms—getting the energy sanctions lifted, getting all sanctions lifted against them, and even getting sanctions lifted against Iran. And also, you know, with the United States pulling out of NATO, that's a big Russian victory, and that'll be the end of Ukraine. So Russia will get what it wants in Ukraine. You know, the stage is being set for a grand bargain. I had a little back and forth with Nima. He believes that Iran should have a nuclear—I'm just telling you, it's not going to happen. All of you, Pierre, who said Iran should have a nuclear weapon before—You know what's winning the war for Iran right now?

Not having a nuclear weapon. If you guys would just think for a second—Iran's winning because they have ballistic missiles. Their missiles are pounding the crap out of people, including Israel. If Iran had a nuclear weapon right now, we'd be greenlit to use nuclear weapons against Iran, because Iran can't strike the United States with a nuclear weapon. We can strike Iran with all our nuclear weapons. A nuclear weapon would only guarantee that Iran is destroyed. People need to understand that. There is no deterrence in a nuclear weapon—it's just an invitation to destruction. People can say, "Why can't Iran have one and Israel?"

Because Israel has one. Guys, again, I'm just trying to—Dan's been proven right on this every time. You doubted me, and people doubted me before. When I said there won't be a nuclear weapon, there won't be a nuclear weapon. The president told me there won't be a nuclear weapon. The foreign minister said there won't be a nuclear weapon. Nothing's changed. A nuclear weapon only means Iran will be destroyed. And religiously, you lose all those people in the street right now—they're there because they believe in the Islamic Republic. You start reversing fatwas, and you've got issues. Iran must put its 60% enriched uranium...

#Danny

Oh, Scott, it looks like we've lost you. Are you still there? If not, maybe reload. All right, we're back. Yeah, we're back. Okay.

#Scott Ritter

They have to put the enrichment on. See, I think that's what brings this war in, because that allows Donald Trump to declare some sort of victory—he achieved something. Politically, he can remove it. I don't think the Iranians care that Donald Trump is declaring victory to the American people. Let him. Because the victory is that they will continue to control the Strait of Hormuz forever. This dynamic will never change. They now own it. And they will have their sanctions lifted for the first time since the creation of the Islamic Republic. Free trade. They'll thrive. And they'll be part of BRICS—an integral part of BRICS. It's just a pure win, win, win, win, win across the board. So no, there will be no Iranian nuclear weapon, I believe, unless Israel uses nuclear weapons first. And then all bets are off.

#Danny

Yeah, well, Iran has made it quite clear that that was never really in the interest of the current Iranian government, even before this war. I mean, leading into it, there were talks and more talks from the United States, fear-mongering about Iran building a bomb again and again. And Iran said, no, we're not going to do this, and we don't need to do this. I think that "we don't need to do this" is a key point, because, you know, Iran was going to get attacked. The United States and Israel wanted to attack Iran, and Iran stood firm and said, well, we have what we need to defend ourselves. And I think that's really been the position since the beginning, Scott.

And here's what Donald Trump is saying about the Strait of Hormuz, which I wanted to ask you about, given that what you just outlined does require the United States to make concessions. And Donald Trump and the Trump administration—I mean, we can't really think very highly of them—but nonetheless, many people outside the Trump administration, even former State Department and defense officials, are all saying you've got to give Iran something if you're going to end this war. Otherwise, you're just going to keep on fighting, and the consequences will keep piling up. But here's Donald Trump—he keeps demanding concessions from Iran that Iran says...

#Danny

It's not going to give.

#Danny

For example, the Strait of Hormuz—they say, oh, it's just us and Oman, that's who really will dictate the Strait of Hormuz. It's our territorial waterways. So what do you make of that? A lot of people believe Donald Trump is going to get up there at 9 p.m. tonight and announce something major about the war. I'm not so sure about that, but nonetheless, it seems like what you've outlined requires the United States to give something. Do you believe the United States will give in to Iran's demands? And if not, will Iran?

#Scott Ritter

It's not for the United States to give.

#Danny

Iran owns it. Yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's what I'm saying. So...

#Scott Ritter

Iran doesn't care. As Araghchi, the foreign minister, said, Donald Trump's negotiating with himself. It's literally the same thing. The Iranians aren't negotiating with the United States at all. You know, what we have is, we're the ones calling up the Pakistanis, the Egyptians, and others, begging them to reach out to the Iranians. Maybe Pakistan—well, you know, the Iranians picked up the phone, and then we said, "Oh, see, they're picking up the phone, they're talking to the Pakistanis." But what the Iranians are telling the Pakistanis is, "Pound sand. We're not doing it. We're not talking to them. We don't trust them." This is where the Russians come in.

Again, the Russians are the only ones who can make this thing happen. But the Strait of Hormuz isn't for the United States to give. We don't own it—Iran does. So we'll have to concede that point. There's nothing we can say like, "We're going to give this to the Iranians." They already own it. Ballistic missiles—what, we're going to allow Iran to build ballistic missiles, but only a thousand a year of limited range? And Iran's like, "Screw you. We'll build whatever the hell we want, because we're Iran. We're a sovereign nation. We'll do what we want to do." The only thing would be Iran's continued compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and that's essential.

Again, for all the mouth-breathers out there who believe Iran should build a nuclear bomb, it's not going to happen unless Iran withdraws from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, because Iran is a law-abiding nation. They actually play by the rules. So Iran would have to declare that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is no longer in effect, and at that point, they'd do what North Korea did—build a bomb. But they haven't done that yet. Why? Because they understand that conflict termination requires, in order for Iran to rejoin the family of nations with sanctions lifted and everything, Iran must be compliant across the board. And it's not going to be an easy step for the world to say, "Yeah, Iran, come back in with your nuclear weapons."

That just isn't going to happen. Even Russia won't tolerate that. I know Medvedev has said things like that, but he's not the president. The president is Vladimir Putin. And Vladimir Putin and Sergey Lavrov have both talked about the importance of nuclear nonproliferation and the need to adhere to the treaty. So, you know, Iran continues to be compliant. And I believe what Iran will say is that the deal negotiated before—or some version of that deal—will be part of this. That'll be Iran's concession, not to the United States, but to the world. Other than that, Iran will get everything it wants. And I like it—the new Iranian president. Dude, he was the president.

I mean, Donald Trump is just a moron—a literal moron. The new president? No, he's the same president. He's the one who told me in September that Iran doesn't want a nuclear weapon, that their ballistic missiles provide sufficient deterrence. And oh, by the way, his ballistic missiles are kicking your ass, Pete Hegseth, because you can't stop them with all your American technology. What they've done is force you to expend all your long-range precision strike weapons. You don't have any left, and so now you've got B-52s flying into Iranian airspace with Mark 84 gravity bombs, with the JDAM adaptation so they can be programmed with GPS and all that—but we still have to get physically close. It's over. We've lost this war. It's done. Yeah.

#Danny

Yeah, well, Scott, then I would presume you said Iran will get everything it wants. I mean, are you still there, by the way? I think your camera's frozen.

#Scott Ritter

Can you hear me?

#Danny

Yeah, I got you. All right, good—you can hear me. Yeah, yeah. Well, as I was saying, Iran has been very clear about what it wants, and a big part of that is the U.S. leaving the Middle East, essentially. All those assets, bases, forces—they've got to be gone. And then there are the guarantees. How does Iran get those guarantees? I think I can pose this question to you: that the U.S. and Israel won't attack again, because that, I think, is at the top of the list. But those guarantees have to, of course, have teeth to them. So how does that happen? Is there a vision for this that's possible under the existing arrangement—geopolitically, militarily, and so on?

#Scott Ritter

Well, the beauty of having the Russians as mediators—and there have been some reports that this idea is being floated—is that the Russians, as they proved in December 2021, no longer believe in handshake agreements or gentlemen's agreements. I mean, they were screwed by NATO expansion—"not one inch eastward." The Russians said that all future agreements between Russia and the West have to be in writing. They have to be treaties, and there have to be consequences for noncompliance. The Russians will take this approach here. So I believe that, for instance, it's not just the United States—there will have to be a commitment by the Gulf Arab nations not to host the United States, that they will close all the bases and won't reopen their territory to American forces.

So it's not just the United States leaving—it's basically preventing the United States from coming back. And that's a big thing as well. But this is all going to be done by treaty, and Israel will also have to, you know, sign treaties. I don't know how this is going to play out. The United States is going to have to put some pressure on Israel, but the days of Israel being allowed to bomb, you know, five countries in the region on a daily basis are over. Israel is going to have to comply with international law, and there are going to have to be consequences attached to that. And people say, well, how's that going to happen?

Well, I don't know, because the world right now is suffering. This isn't the world that existed last year. This is a world in an energy crisis, where lives are being turned upside down as we speak—jobs being lost, industries being destroyed. And the damage is getting to the point where it could become permanent—permanent economic damage. And when that starts to happen, people wake

up, and suddenly the tolerance level for Israel's illegitimate behavior will disappear. There won't be any tolerance. So I do think there's a chance for binding treaty agreements that constrain Israel and hold it to account—I mean, guaranteed sanctioning of Israel.

Nations should stop selling weapons to Israel—things of that nature. I think this is going to have to be part of a peace agreement. People say, well, that's pie in the sky. Pie in the sky is Israel surviving, because right now their energy production capability is being limited, their refining capabilities are being destroyed. The second Iran starts taking out desalination plants—well, you can't live in Israel without water. So Israel, again, is going to have to make a choice about survival. And that means they may have to sign on to things that a year ago would have been unimaginable. That's just the way it is. Don't start wars you can't win.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, and we're hearing talks, though, Scott. We're getting all these reports daily, and they keep changing. But at this moment, what I find so striking is that you have a country like the UAE, for example—they're saying they want to support China, the United States, and they want to join the fight to, quote-unquote, reopen the Strait of Hormuz. You have Saudi Arabia—they flip-flopped. They said, "No, we're not interested in this war" at the beginning, and now they're supposedly privately telling Trump that they want him to go the distance and disarm Iran and all of that. But then Iran is saying none of this is actually achievable. Not only will they keep control of the Strait of Hormuz, but they just inspected their missiles. I don't know if you saw this.

And they said, well, we have not only thousands upon thousands of missiles ready to go, but we're producing them. As you noted earlier, we're producing them despite everything. And I even saw reports that as the U.S. was dropping bunker buster bombs—B-2 bombers—over Isfahan, Iran was firing missiles out of Israel at the same time. So I think there's this deep contradiction that's just everywhere in this war. What do you make of these reports we're hearing every day? Now the U.S. is going to conduct this operation, the UAE wants them to conduct operations on these islands, they want to help the United States do this—it all just seems so disastrous and suicidal, especially as gas prices go up to \$4 on average. Economists and analysts are saying \$5, \$6, even \$200 a barrel very soon. Right?

#Scott Ritter

Let's put it this way: if the U.S. attempts an amphibious operation in the Strait of Hormuz, it will fail, and U.S. amphibious ships will have to withdraw out of range of Iranian missiles—if they survive. The United Arab Emirates will then find out that Iran will launch attacks and start seizing UAE territory. Iran's not playing around. The interesting thing about Iran during this crisis, you know, this war, is that every time Iran says they're going to do something, they do it—no ifs, ands, or buts. And now Iran's saying, "If you come after us, we will take your territory." That's the reality. The UAE is a paper tiger. They've got a bunch of guys who are posturing—about 85% of their military is

mercenary. The real Emirati citizens, they're nothing. They're fat, obese, corrupt, pathetic individuals who live behind a facade of wealth—wealth-generated beauty.

But the reality is that underneath it, the foundation is very weak and fragile. Iran could take out the UAE right now just by hitting their desalination plants. Iran's proven it can strike them anytime it wants to. So the UAE exists only because Iran allows it to exist. If the UAE starts acting on its words, it'll cease to exist. And when you take out the desalination, all the expats leave, all the workers leave, and you're left with a bunch of Arabs who don't know how to do anything other than sit upstairs, snort cocaine, drink whiskey, and pretend to be pious Muslims. These are horrible people—horrible human beings. And then they'll, you know, what, die of thirst? Because all that's going to be left for them is oil. And I don't think oil tastes too good.

#Danny

Yeah. Yeah. And Scott, there are other dynamics at play here in this war, even beyond the military and, you know, even beyond the economic realm of the Strait of Hormuz in terms of oil. You know, Iran has said that they've instituted a toll on the Strait of Hormuz. And in that toll, they've actually put in place a policy where these tankers need to pay in RMB. There are some interesting numbers showing that RMB settlement activities on China's CIPS—which is how they handle international currency conversions when transacting—have been going way up as Iran reports that this toll is in place and allows ships through the Strait of Hormuz. And then there's this other dynamic—I don't know if you saw this—that's been happening throughout the war.

Even now, while Iran is being bombed—and of course, the U.S. and Israel love decapitation—you have Iranian officials like Abbas Araghchi out there with the people, talking about how being among them lifts his spirits. It's just a completely different mindset, a different reality from that of the United States. The Trump administration is struggling not only to justify this war, but there's really no way to justify it away. It's just not popular. Most Americans aren't happy with what's happening economically, and a good majority say they don't support it. What do you make of these developments outside the military realm, and how they're going to affect the overall trajectory moving forward?

#Scott Ritter

Can you imagine Marco Rubio wandering the streets of Philadelphia, trying to tell people, "Hey, this war"? They'd boo him out. They'd run him down. Let's not even talk about Donald Trump.

#Scott Ritter

We thought the regime would collapse when we killed Ali Khamenei—when the Israelis killed him. Instead, the people, every night...

#Danny

Scott, you still there? You stopped at "every night." If you're able to come back, go ahead.

#Scott Ritter

Yeah. Every night, the streets of Iranian cities are filled with citizens coming out, rallying in support of the government. And when we drop bombs, they cheer. They're like, "Bring it to me. Make me a martyr. We're not afraid. We will not quit." This is a nation making this decision. So here's Araghchi who, to be honest, wasn't all that popular before the war started. There were people upset with him, saying he was too weak, he was too this, he was too that. And now he's walking among the people, fearless, because he is with the people. The people and the government are united in a way that doesn't exist in the United States. You know, we have social media, and I don't know what Elon Musk is doing.

I've got to be careful. He'll probably kick me off, and I don't give a shit. Whatever game they're playing on X to flood the feed now with these pro-Israeli accounts, these pro-MAGA accounts—it's not working. It's just empty, superfluous crap, dreck, intellectual tripe. The facts are known. I mean, you know, Garland Nixon, Judge Napolitano, Danny Haiphong—you're out there promoting FETNIMA. Nima's probably a little sore at me because I, uh, I don't know. We ended on good terms, but I'm not feeling very good. I don't know if you can figure that out yet, but I'm running a fever, and I've got a huge—uh—and so my temper level is like this.

And, uh, I sort of went over the top with Nima, but because we're friends, you know, we'll survive. But the point is, you guys are out there doing God's work. Sabatino's out there doing it. I don't like calling it "alternative media" because that implies a kind of subordinated role to the mainstream media. Actually, many of these programs are getting better viewership than the flagship shows on mainstream media. The truth is out there. People are seeing the truth, or being made aware of it. The American people are waking up to the fact that they're being lied to on a regular basis. And even MAGA, you know, is starting to realize that it's all been a fraud—one giant fraud, one giant scam.

You know, a lot of people fell for it. Me, I'm the one who actually believed that this idiot was going to pursue peace. How can you run a campaign saying you're not going to get involved in one of these endless wars in the Middle East, and then go get us involved in an endless war in the Middle East? I mean, you know—crazy. But he'll never be trusted again, just like the Iranians will never trust him again. The American people will never trust Donald Trump again. He can't be trusted. When his lips move, he's lying. That's just it. He hasn't told the truth about anything. And all these people on the internet—this is what I voted for?

You're just exposing your own ignorance. But we're at the stage right now where the United States is not just losing the war in Iran—we're losing our position in the world. I mean, let's just look at a

couple of things that have happened while this is going on. The 2025 National Security Strategy document—the United States talked about the Western Hemisphere. I call it “Fortress America.” We're going to evict all those foreigners. Of course, we went into Venezuela, the CIA bought everybody out, got Maduro out, and it looked like the plan was on the way. Earlier this week, the Russians went to Brazil and signed nuclear deals. You know, we said that all of South America's minerals belong to us. Russia went in there. Now they're exploiting them. They're turning it.

They're going to be the ones converting the uranium into uranium hexafluoride, bringing it back so the Brazilians can enrich it and make fuel for their two nuclear reactors. That's the Russians doing it. We can't do anything about it because we're weak. We've got nothing. I'm just telling people—you don't understand what this war did to us. Whatever advantages we had came from our high tech, and it's all gone. All gone. What's the good of having an F-35 fighter if the long-range standoff weapons don't exist? Now you've just got an expensive bomber. You know, they get shot down if they're not careful, as proven when the Iranian air defense came out of hiding and hit one the other day. China just went to Ethiopia. You know, where's the one that's supposed to be taking over Africa?

We're going to kick all those foreigners out of Africa. We're going to come in, we're signing these big treaties, and we're going to be doing this and that. The Chinese just closed a \$13 billion deal—actually, it's a total of \$13 billion, and China has just under \$11 billion of it. In Ethiopia, China's in there investing, building bridges, building supply chains, building industrial connectivity. So China's owning Africa. Russia's starting to own South America. China's going to be in South Africa. And Russia just broke the Cuban blockade. The United States made Mexico back down with 86,000 barrels of oil, but Russia said, “Screw you, we're coming in with 750,000 barrels. What are you going to do about it?” America went, “Not a damn thing,” because we can't. America has nothing left, except...

#Danny

Except—yeah, that was the last thing you said. America has nothing left, except when you're back.

#Scott Ritter

Except we've got aging nuclear weapons. That's all we have. We've got nothing left. This is an Iranian victory. The Iranians are responsible for the strategic defeat of the United States. It's amazing.

#Danny

Yeah, it really is. Well, as we head to the close here, Scott, just two final questions for you. First, what do you expect Donald Trump to say today? And second, I want you to end the program with what you learned on your recent trip that can help us understand not only this war, but what's going on more broadly.

#Scott Ritter

Well, Donald Trump's a con man, so I expect the great con. I expect him to come out and try to spin this conflict into the greatest military victory the United States has ever had. He's the greatest leader that's ever led the United States, and this is an amazing victory. The American people should all be in the streets chanting "USA, USA" as we speak. But if those Iranians don't accept this victory, then, of course, we'll bomb them into the Stone Age. That's what I expect him to say—to talk about negotiations that don't exist, to talk about things that exist only in his mind. It'll be an embarrassment for him, for this administration, and for the American people. That's it. I don't expect anything good out of this—just more humiliation for the United States.

What I learned in Russia came in two phases of my trip. The first phase was in Moscow, where, as I said on the opening night, I did a book event. The next night we did what was called "cigar diplomacy" at a posh cigar club. I published it on my Substack. We had a panel with myself and Garland Nixon, who traveled with me. We were joined by a well-known Russian historian, Professor Fursov, and then Elena from MGIMO, which is their international relations university—their foreign service institute. We talked about U.S.–Russian relations, and one of the things we discussed was the role Russia could play in bringing an end to the war. That's why I got excited today when I saw that Russia was talking about getting involved, because that wasn't a dialogue that was happening before.

I'm not saying I'm responsible for anything. I'm just saying I went in there, and my job was to inject this idea—the necessity of Russian diplomatic intervention. And we did that in a very high-profile forum with people connected to institutions that get listened to by the Kremlin. And I got invited—because of that, I got invited to speak at the Presidential Academy. I spoke to an audience there about this very issue, the necessity of Russian diplomatic intervention. That was my introduction; that was my purpose. I did a number of high-profile interviews where we talked about this as well. So on that, I feel pretty good. I mean, again, I'm not taking credit for anything. The Russians are—they do whatever the hell they want to do.

But I feel like I'm on the right side of history in suggesting that Russia play a—you know—a major, um, mediator role. They're the only ones that can bring an end to this conflict. And then the second part of it was Chechnya. I went to Chechnya to make a documentary film there. I interviewed six high-level officials, toured appropriate places, and—this is mind-boggling—I mean, the level of ignorance that exists in the United States about Chechnya, about Islam, about anything. We tend to be very superficial about this. I did a lot of preparatory work before I went. I studied the biographies of the people I was going to interview. I studied Chechen history. I wasn't ready for what I got.

I mean, I had the book open, and I had—you know, when you have the Grand Mufti of Chechnya talking about the role of Islam and getting into the details of how Islam and the Chechen clans developed, and the origin of the term—you know, "Chechen" means "enemies." But the Chechens call themselves Nokshi, which means "people of Noah." I didn't know that. The Chechens believe

that Noah's Ark didn't land on Mount Ararat but in the Caucasus, and they call themselves Nokshi—they are the descendants of Noah. And, you know, why are the Chechens so tough? I mean, it's not just that they're raised that way. I had a very experienced Chechen warrior say, "We're tough because we've been fighting wars for centuries, nonstop. The weak die, and the strong survive."

And so the Chechens are genetically bred for war. And if you think about that, that's exactly what happened. These people don't quit. They don't quit. And the weak die. I mean, it's Darwin's theory—basic survival of the fittest. And the Chechen fighters are the fittest fighters. These guys are studs, I mean, to a man. You look at them and you're like, there's not a skinny guy among them. They're just all... because they're genetically bred to fight. Not because they wanted it that way—history created that. And yet, these are some of the most peaceful people you'll ever meet, the most friendly people. If you're invited in as a guest, they will die before anything happens to you. That's just the way it is.

People are like, "Why are you going to Chechnya? Don't you feel scared?" Maybe the first time. But then you learn about their hospitality. And, man, they are just—great hosts. Once you're brought in, you're under their protection. Nothing's going to happen to you. Maybe you're careless crossing the street, but no harm will come to you. They won't allow that to happen. They are assiduous in their protocols. It's fast. So I'm in the process of—you know, we're going to be making this movie. I've got to turn all the interviews into transcripts, then review them, start clipping out the pieces, and piece it all together. It's a 90-minute documentary, but it'll be fascinating.

And then I'm going to publish the rest of the interviews. You know, what's not used in the documentary we'll publish as a standalone interview. I mean, we interviewed the Grand Mufti. We interviewed two ministers of culture. We interviewed the prime minister of Chechnya—"the Lord," that's his call sign. We interviewed the commander of Chechen forces in Syria, talking about that initial deployment. We got to speak to the commander of Chechen forces that fought in the Battle of Mariupol and the early battles that liberated Lugansk. You know, this was just an awe-inspiring tour. I just want to say I'm grateful to everybody who supported this, because it only happened thanks to the people who went to my Substack page and hit the donate button.

It's because of you that this trip took place. It's because of you that the movie is going to be made. I also negotiated successfully for an amazing follow-on trip in June that I can't talk about—except to say, I mean, keep supporting, because that's what makes this happen. And, you know, this Chechen film—the Chechens said nobody's ever done this before for them. Nobody's ever come in and tried to tell their story. They're very anxious to see a good job, or maybe the protection won't be there. But they're very anxious to see what the product of this is, how a foreigner views it. And if the film's good enough, I plan on submitting it to the Moscow Film Festival and getting it seen on an international stage.

#Danny

Okay, incredible. Well, on that note, everyone, you can find ScottRitter.com in the video description, where you can continue to support and follow all of Scott's work. Be sure to hit the like button as you go. We'll close here. I just want to thank everyone who gave a super chat—I'll pull you up on the screen as I say goodbye. And just know that tomorrow at 1 p.m. Eastern, I'll be back. I don't know yet who's coming on or exactly what we'll be talking about, but I'll announce some of it a little sooner. Other than that, Scott, do you have anything you want to say as we wrap up? First, everyone's wishing you well—that you feel better—and so do I. I know travel can be brutal; I always feel like I get sick after I travel. But anything you want to say as we head out of here?

#Scott Ritter

I just want to say thank you to everybody. I went on your show before the trip—about a couple of weeks before—and I made an appeal. Your audience kick-started a fantastic fundraising moment that actually made this trip possible. You always think you've got a budget, and then when you get there, you realize your budget isn't covering the reality. But I brought in Plan B, and it was only, again, because of the tremendous support that your audience and others provided. So thank you very much, guys, and I hope I can make a film that makes all of your support proud.

#Danny

Yes, and we'll have to have you back on soon as things develop and as you're feeling better. And, of course—buckle up, everyone—things are still escalating. We're looking at a very significant and massive development in this war. So, without further ado, everyone, see you tomorrow at 1 p.m. Eastern Time. Scott and I are out of here. Bye-bye.