

Scott Ritter: The US War on Iran Just COLLAPSED – Ceasefire Does the Impossible

#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Wednesday, April 8th, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Scott Ritter, is here with us. Welcome back, Scott.

#Scott

Thanks for having me.

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Scott, let me start with the latest news—what's going on right now with the attack on Lebanon? Israel, right after the ceasefire, attacked Lebanon. They hit many targets—more than a hundred, they're saying—and there are many casualties. The prime minister of Pakistan came out and said they're violating the ceasefire. Then we heard from the White House press secretary, Caroline Levitt, who said that Lebanon is not part of the ceasefire agreement. What is that? What's happening? On the other hand, looking at the Iranian media, one of the mainstream outlets in Iran reported that oil tankers will not be allowed to pass through the Strait of Hormuz because of Israel's strike on Lebanon. What do you make of what's going on?

#Scott

Well, first of all, you know, there's this negotiation taking place. The ceasefire is a tenuous agreement that isn't going to be solidified until the two parties sit down and work out the differences between Iran's ten-point plan and the Trump administration's fifteen-point plan. The Trump administration's fifteen-point plan does not include Lebanon as part of the agreement; Iran's ten-point plan does. And therein lies the problem, because both parties entered into this, you know, defending their position. You know, this is a stickler.

#Nima

I mean, how, you know...

#Scott

This is the reality. How do you deal with Israel? When we talk about a negotiation, it's really a negotiation between the United States and Iran. But the fact is, it was the United States together with Israel that attacked Iran, and Iran has said from the very start that Israel—this whole Israel-Lebanon, Israel-Palestine issue—has to be part of a peace agreement. And so, you know, now we're going to find out how serious the United States is about reaching peace with Iran. Iran knows that its "nuclear weapon," so to speak, is its control over the Strait of Hormuz and its ability to choke off the energy lifeblood of the world at a time when the world is starting to feel the crunch. I mean, there's a reason why this agreement came out now.

And that's because China has told Iran, "We support you, but we can't keep supporting you if we die economically. If you keep choking the Strait of Hormuz, we're in trouble. You have to sit down and start talking peace." Because the Iranians are going to reject it—they don't like the fifteen points; they want the ten points. But the Chinese said, "You need to do this now. You have to sit down and talk, at least begin the process." And look, one of the first things that happened before the Iranians shut it down was that Iran shipped out oil. They signed contracts to deliver oil to China and Pakistan, two nations that desperately need Iranian oil. So, you know, the United States needs this peace agreement. Iran needs this peace agreement—but not at any cost. Iran isn't going to.

#Nima

Israel doesn't want it. That's the problem.

#Scott

Israel doesn't want it. Let's talk about Israel for a second, okay? Israel's in a whole bunch of trouble right now. You know that, and I know that, because they sold Donald Trump a bill of goods—and they couldn't deliver on anything. They said this was going to be regime change. They said it was going to be easy, that it was going to be quick, that we could get the Strait of Hormuz, stop the Iranian nuclear program, and stop the Iranian missiles. And none of that came true. None of it came true. And Donald Trump now is in political hot water. He can't keep escalating. He's reached the end of his escalation limit—but so too has Iran. I know you and I have had our disagreements in the past, but I think my assessment has played out.

Iran can't escalate further without committing suicide. The Chinese made that clear: "If you continue to choke the Strait of Hormuz, we'll have to find other ways of doing business. We won't support this." And that would be the end of Iran, you know, because the United States would have no choice but to take the next step. He wants that. The Iranians don't want that. Nobody wants that. So they chose—but it's not surrender. Iran didn't surrender at all. In fact, Iran is in a very strong position. And that's why I think, you know, what Israel's afraid of is that if they allow this to happen, Israel will have to have a ceasefire with Lebanon. They'll have to. There's no ifs, ands, or buts about it. That's why Israel is striking so hard right now.

They're trying desperately to cause as much damage as they can and to generate as much angst about Hezbollah before Israel is forced to stop. Israel is losing in Lebanon—we know that. We know Hezbollah is beating them. Hezbollah is pounding Israel. So I think Iran is going to send a signal. I think they're preparing right now for a major strike against Israel. They're shutting down the straightforward moves and putting the United States on notice that this isn't a blank check. If you want to sit down at the table, bring your dog to heel—bring Israel to heel. And it's not just Israel. The United Arab Emirates, you know, who launched an attack this morning—bring them to heel too. These are two players that are unhappy with what Donald Trump has done.

They feel abandoned because they have been abandoned. That's the reality of it. You know, this is what happens to Gulf Arab nations that say, "Go ahead and win," when the United States attacks. But the United States isn't winning. Now the United States wants out, and they're like, "You can't just leave us abandoned." Well, I guess you can. That's the reality of dealing with the United States. But Iran, I think, is going to continue to punish Israel and punish the United Arab Emirates. They won't attack American targets, but they will continue to punish. And it's up to the United States to pick up the phone and tell the Israelis to stand down—you're part of this deal—and tell the United Arab Emirates to stand down. You're part of this deal too. So, you know, that's where we're at on this.

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Scott, you mentioned the UAE together. We know that Iran's response to the attack on Siri Island was to hit the refinery there—an oil facility on Siri Island. Then Iran struck Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the UAE—all of them.

#Scott

Did they hit Saudi Arabia? I thought they hit Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE. No, Saudi Arabia as well—the pipelines.

#Nima

Yeah, yeah. This is the response. I think the escalation happening right now has Israel behind the scenes. In the case of the UAE, I'm sure I can say Israel is behind it, because the UAE doesn't have that kind of capability to go against Iran with these sorts of attacks. They're not capable of doing this. That's why Israel is using them, in my opinion. I think the whole calculation right now is about how Donald Trump would be able—or how it's going to be possible for him—to control these people, basically the government in Israel. Because we've seen what's happening there: the opposition leader is hitting Netanyahu in a way we haven't seen before. He's just attacking Netanyahu because he's losing on every front.

#Scott

Look, as I said, Netanyahu is in trouble right now because he lied to Donald Trump. He sold Trump a bill of goods. And Trump, at the end of the day—no matter how influential the Zionists are in his administration—is not going to commit political suicide on behalf of Benjamin Netanyahu. Right now, because of this war, Trump's in huge political trouble. He's looking to wipe the slate clean. Senator Markey just came out and talked about impeachment and criminal proceedings and things of that nature, which is real, because Trump has violated the Constitution and international law. Trump can't allow the Democrats to be empowered.

And Benjamin Netanyahu, basically by getting Donald Trump caught in this tar baby of a war, has empowered the Democrats to impeach Donald Trump, even convict him, destroy his political legacy. So Trump needs this peace agreement—he needs it desperately. And at the end of the day, he's going to tell the Israelis, "You'll be on your own. We'll make peace, and you'll be left to deal with the Iranians. They're going to blow the crap out of you every day of the week, and we're not going to be there to help stop it. And, oh yeah, how are you going to reconstruct again? Every time those Iranian missiles hit, they blow up some buildings. How are you going to reconstruct?"

Who's going to be backing you on that? Not us. You want to be on your own? Be on your own. You want to be a big boy? Be a big boy. And they're going to tell that to the UAE, too. You know, we'll be more than happy to have the United States kind of deal with the Iranians in a way that allows all shipping but yours. You guys want to go to war with Iran? Go to war with Iran. You're big boys. You're the Sparta of the Middle East. You know, do it. But you're on your own. You're going to pay the price. And neither Israel nor the UAE can stand on their own. I think Donald Trump right now is desperate for a peace agreement. Desperate. Because he's maxed out his escalation capabilities.

The United States has lost this war. We don't have the ability to secure the Strait of Hormuz. If we did, we wouldn't be talking. That's the straight-up truth. If we could secure the Strait of Hormuz, we would do it. We can't do it. That's why the—well, we wanted to secure the nuclear material. Couldn't do it. Failed mission. And so we're done. We don't have anything. We can't escalate. We don't have the military capacity in conventional forces on the ground. And with air power, all we can do is commit war crimes. I think he's getting serious pushback. When he came out with his madman theory, I think many people in his administration said, "No, boss. This is genocide. This is collective punishment. This is a war crime. We can't do it." And so he reached the end of it.

He has to, at this point in time, find a pathway to peace. So do the Iranians. I mean, again, I'll just make this point: the Iranian leadership isn't here to commit suicide on behalf of fanatics. For the first time in their history, they have the opportunity to get all sanctions lifted, to get a clean bill of health from the International Atomic Energy Agency, to get the Director General's limits taken off by the Security Council. A complete, clean bill of health—and the ability to sell oil as they wish at fair market prices. No more steep discounts. Do you know what's going to happen to Iran when that spigot turns on, when that money comes in? Yes, they're going to have to rebuild and all that.

That's just blown up—buildings and bridges. You know, many of them were going to be reconstructed anyway. Iran is going to look like Dubai. I mean, we're talking new buildings, new construction. Maybe Tehran— you and I talked about this earlier—Tehran's too congested. Maybe they can build that new capital now, straight from scratch, because they'll have the money to do it. The Iranian government will be able to deliver on all the promises it's made to the Iranian people about a better way of life, a stable currency. I mean, being a businessman in Iran now with a stable currency—that's unheard of. BRICS, all the potential of BRICS. All this good stuff is about to happen to Iran, and Iran needs it to happen. But they're not going to surrender. They're willing to make compromises, and I think one of the compromises is they're going to agree to that agreement that was on the table before the war ended. They'll agree to it because they already agreed to it.

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They know that's a limit they can match.

#Scott

There will be no nuclear weapons.

#Nima

They don't want nuclear weapons. Of course they don't. They don't need them.

#Scott

They just proved they can beat the United States without it. The biggest thing here is that this isn't theory anymore. Iran beat the United States in a straight-up conventional fight. And they beat the Israelis. And they beat the Emiratis. They beat everybody. Iran is emerging from this with such a masterful victory—as a nation, as a people, as a collective. They have every reason to be proud. So there's no reason for them to commit suicide. That's why I think Iran is, you know, swallowing this little cup of poison—because of pride, maybe. But again, look at Donald Trump. It wasn't Iran that was told, when the ships were tolling, to back down. You can't do that.

Donald Trump saying, "Yeah, well, maybe we'll work with the Iranians to come up with a joint tolling process, you know, where we both make money off this deal." And there are a lot of people saying, "Why would Iran do that?" Why wouldn't they do that? I mean, again, throwing Donald Trump a couple of bones to keep him in this game—to bring down Israel, to bring down the United Arab Emirates, to bring calm—so that, you know, there are deals to be made here that don't mean Iran lost this war. There are deals to be made here to guarantee that Iran benefits tremendously from this. But it's going to require the United States to pick up the phone and put Israel and the UAE on notice. If Trump isn't willing to do that, then I don't think there's a ceasefire, and that'll be the end of Donald Trump politically.

I mean, the thing we all have to keep in mind here is that while the grip Iran has on the Strait of Hormuz results in a global energy crisis and creates geopolitical problems, that's not Donald Trump's foremost issue. His foremost issue is that his base feels betrayed, and he needs to repair his relationship with them. To do that, he needs peace—he needs to sell himself as a peacemaker. So there's room here for Iran, China, Russia, and everyone else to make Donald Trump look good. But the losers in this game are those who joined in cheering for the war—the United Arab Emirates and Israel. They aren't going to emerge victorious. They may not be defeated in the sense of being driven to their knees, but they're not going to come out on top. And this could be the end of Benjamin Netanyahu; already the opposition is calling for his head.

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I think the Trump administration has sacrificed a lot for Israel so far. I think, as you mentioned, they're getting to the point where that's enough. Maybe. I don't know. But how do you see the negotiations? They're saying that on Friday they're going to meet, and then they said J.D. Vance isn't going to be there because of security issues. I don't see Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner as—well, Iran doesn't consider them serious negotiators. That's why they need to bring in something new, some fresh air into the negotiations, which would be J.D. Vance, by the way, and that would help him in the upcoming presidential election.

#Scott

Yeah, we'll see how it plays out. I agree with you. I mean, Witkoff and Kushner have no credibility whatsoever. They were the guys who negotiated when the United States committed perfidy in June and in February. There's zero trust—nobody could trust them. J.D. Vance is the solution. You know, how do we get J.D. Vance to the table? Do we have to change venues? That would be a blow to Pakistan, which has done a lot of work getting this up and running. But no, I agree, I don't see how the Iranians could deal with Witkoff and Kushner. They need a J.D. Vance. And for J.D. Vance, he needs this as well. He's on record as opposing this war, and he could help Donald Trump get the peace he needs, but he could also burnish his credentials as a national leader on the global stage. So they'll find a way to get J.D. Vance connected with the Iranians. I'm confident about that.

#Nima

We thought—I talked with John Helmer, and he mentioned two factions within the Trump administration: the Jewish faction and the Christian faction. He said that J.D. Vance is in the Christian faction, which is why he wasn't really in line with what's going on with Iran, or against Iran, with the war. Do you think this faction is going to get stronger as time goes by and somehow save Donald Trump and his administration?

#Scott

Yeah, there's a potential. I mean, the whole reason for this peace plan is to save Donald Trump's administration. And I think Donald Trump has woken up to the fact that he's been led down the wrong path. You know, this pro-Israeli crowd just about killed him politically, and the Israelis failed to deliver on anything. They delivered on nothing. You know, politics is the game of making manure look like ribeye steak—but you still need some reality here.

And I do think there are going to be people rallying around J.D. Vance now who are going to provide the medicine the MAGA base needs to rally back around Donald Trump and, you know, first, get him through the midterms. J.D. Vance will not become president of the United States if the Democrats win and take the House in November, because J.D. Vance is going to become tainted with this administration—the impeachment hearings and the criminality, straight-up criminality across the board. That needs to be avoided. And so Donald Trump, I think, is going to do whatever he can to get the J.D. Vance image polished up, because it'll help Donald Trump.

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I think, Scott, the latest operation in Iran—as they call it, the rescue operation, the rescue of the pilots, the second pilot operation—that was hugely influential, somehow connected to this decision on the part of Donald Trump. Because right after that, he said that on Tuesday at 8 p.m. we're going to have some sort of ultimatum for the Iranians. But what actually happened in that operation? Because we had Donald Trump talking for more than an hour, explaining every detail.

Then we had General Kim come to the podium, saying that everybody in Iran was shooting at us—you know, with rifles, with everything. This is totally different from the image the Israelis and the Trump administration had suggested before, because they said the people were ready to be, you know, liberated by our forces. But when they go to Iran, they see something different. And the operation—the whole operation—what was that operation? What was the consequence of that operation that led to this sort of ceasefire, this two-week ceasefire?

#Scott

Well, the operation wasn't a rescue mission by design. It may have turned into one, but the fact of the matter is, this was a joint special operations task force working under the direct command of the National Command Authority. I mean, it's outside of Central Command circles, carrying out a mission directed by the White House. You don't put something like this together on the fly. We know the United States had a good idea where the nuclear material was. Why? Tulsi Gabbard told us that in a public hearing. She didn't get into too much detail, but we know she said it.

And we know that the Wall Street Journal started publishing details about the preparations for a raid to seize the 60% enriched uranium. This became the new way to manifest victory, because up until now we're losing this war. So how do we declare victory? We need something. So Donald Trump could say, "We need to either seize the material, open up the Strait of Hormuz, or do both." And so

you have military planning for both options. This nuclear raid—and I believe it was a nuclear raid—there's so much information that suggests that's what this was about.

It failed. The Iranians beat us. They detected it and made it impossible to carry out. Now, whether or not there was, you know, an adaptation to the mission plan before they launched or after—I think after—because I think they got on the ground, the mission failed, and they said, "Well, get the pilot out at least." Or the pilot could have been a ruse. We don't know what was going on with that pilot—if that was all real or just a cover story invented to disguise the fact that the premier commando unit in America failed. This was a failed mission.

You know, I think we can carefully reconstruct where they were going. There are enough hints about that. Tulsi said she knows where it's at. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists published a very detailed paper on the IAEA and satellite tracking, showing they're confident that at the south tunnel entrance of the Isfahan tunnel complex, a truck took twenty-eight blue storage cylinders—consistent with what overpacking looks like for carrying uranium hexafluoride containers—and that they were at the south tunnel. That south tunnel has been sealed.

So if it's there, how do you get it? You're not going to have a bunch of Navy SEALs and Delta guys, no matter how big their biceps are, sitting there digging that out by hand. You're not going to be able to bring in a bulldozer or anything like that. Go to Firdos for guidance. Firdos was the underground enrichment facility that was bombed by the United States in Operation Midnight Hammer. You know, everybody said you can't collapse it—it's too deep and all that kind of stuff. But DARPA spent years finding a ventilation shaft, did the technical assessment, and we put two bombs straight down that shaft, and we achieved some sort of result. Even the Iranians were like, yeah, you achieved a result. They're not telling us what we achieved, but we achieved a result.

My guess is based on what the president said—he said we had scaling equipment to scale mountains. Well, we weren't scaling mountains; we were going down a mountain. I believe there was a ventilation shaft somewhere in the south tunnel complex that had been discovered. The engineering drawings had been found, and we were going to land on top of that ventilation shaft, go down it, pull the material out, take it back, and fly it out. I think that was the mission, and it could unfold over several days. We were supposed to land at an airfield, seize the airfield, hold the airfield. Notice Trump said we had anti-aircraft missiles—that implies we were deploying out, securing a perimeter. We had aircraft, B-1 bombers, that were specifically designated to cut off the roads to that area.

And they started that mission. We can sit here and talk about how it was to block people from getting to the pilot—no, they bombed those roads to block heavy military equipment from reaching the airfield we were holding. We had aircraft flying in. The problem was, the Iranians were able to shoot at us. We didn't control the skies. It appears the first C-130 landed on the airfield relatively unimpeded—got bogged down at the end, but that's a different story. The second one coming in, however, seems to have been engaged successfully and took damage. There's physical evidence of

damage on it. We don't know if there were casualties, but it took damage and landed. The question is, was it able to leave? And what happened to the equipment on board?

You know, some of the helicopters—the Little Birds—were parked outside and were destroyed, but some were still on the aircraft. The implication is that they were hit and became non-mission-worthy. So the mission was aborted when that second C-130 came in, got hit on the way in, and was aborted there. Okay, and that's when the realization hit that we didn't have sufficient resources to carry it out. We were compromised. You can't—if you need to operate for several days—the idea is that you land at night and operate at night, but during the day you sort of lay low. But now we had to operate, and we'd been compromised. The Iranians were coming in. This mission just went to hell in a handbasket. It was a huge embarrassment.

That's why so much effort was put into spinning this as something other than what it was. This was a failed mission to raid Isfahan that got converted into a cover story. I mean, you know, I'm not an expert on technology, but this whole "heart-murmur CIA detecting the beating heart of a pilot from forty miles away" thing—yeah, that smells like such horse manure. It's not even funny. You know, they've got to come up with a better story than that. And no one's quite explained how the pilot made it from where he ejected to his mount with a broken ankle. The more I look at this, the more I just see it not being a good story. Who knows—eventually the truth will come out, because people will talk, and books will be written, and movies will be made. So we'll find out. But the bottom line is, we failed.

This is a huge embarrassment for the president. So then he turned to, "Can we take the Strait of Hormuz?" And I think the military came back and said no. Now the president was confronted with a failed mission to get the nuclear material, so he's no longer invincible. You know, Pete Heggseth said, "We're lethal, we're better, we could do it better." Well, Pete, you got beat by a bunch of farmers with bolt-action guns and some police units using the ZSU-2, popping you as you came in. You weren't defeated by high-tech Iranian technology; you were defeated by Iranians defending their country, who shot your planes out of the sky. And that's it. Now you want to go in and take an island that you can't take. And I think the military said, "We can't accomplish this mission." So now Trump is—oh, I'll stop, because I don't know where we are.

#Nima

Scott, I had some sort of problem with the internet connection, but it's coming back. Anyway, just some breaking news here: we've just learned from the Wall Street Journal that Iran has informed the mediators it will only attend the meetings in Islamabad, in Pakistan, if a ceasefire is guaranteed for Lebanon. Yeah, I think the situation with Lebanon is getting serious. What do you make of it? How do you see things right now? Because it's crucial, it's fragile. We know the ceasefire is still in its initial hours. How do you see it evolving as time goes by, and how do you think both sides will manage it?

#Scott

No, as I said, the United States is going to have to step up and bring Israel to heel, or else there is no ceasefire. And Donald Trump has no choice. He's not playing games here—he doesn't have any cards to play. Donald Trump has to bring Israel to heel, or else this war continues. And now, you know, Iran will have an even higher moral ground to say, "We wanted peace, but Israel was committing genocide against the Lebanese, and we said that had to be part of it." The United States refuses to cooperate—squeeze the Strait of Hormuz.

Yes, it's getting serious, but I honestly believe the United States isn't going to sacrifice Donald Trump's political legacy because of Israel's ambitions in Lebanon. Again, you can't declare yourself a victor unless you defeat the enemy. Israel is trying to pretend it has all the cards in Lebanon. They're losing. They're not winning. You know, they're resorting to what they always do—punishing the people of Lebanon collectively. That can't be allowed to stand. So I think the United States is going to intervene and say, no, this is part of the ceasefire as well.

#Nima

I think, Scott, when you talk about the United States sitting down with Iran and with China, I'd argue Russia should be part of that as well. There has to be some sort of big agenda on Donald Trump's part to move in that direction. Do you see that happening? Because, after all, the security of the Middle East right now is based on Iran's decisions in the Strait of Hormuz. I think that reality is fully understood by the Trump administration. How is that going to play out for the region, and for the cooperation between the two countries—Iran and the United States?

#Scott

I mean, there's going to have to be—first of all, the long-term objective, of course, is normalization of relations. That would be the goal. I don't see that happening overnight. You know, I don't see embassies opening on each other's soil at this point in time. Through BRICS, through China, through Russia, meetings can be held where Iranian and American representatives are in the same room. Maybe they can meet on the side and begin a dialogue, begin a discussion. But trust has to be built. The ceasefire has to hold. Peace has to break out. That has to happen. And then the Iranians have to see the benefit of it. It's all just words until the money starts rolling in and Iran begins to deliver on its promises to its people. So, I don't know— is the internet okay?

#Nima

Yeah, I'm here, Scott. The internet's back now, yeah.

#Scott

So, you know,

#Scott

Peace isn't going to break out instantly between the United States and Iran. But Iran is going to have to see the benefits of this proposal, and that has to happen pretty quickly. And Trump has to survive politically. I mean, again, Trump's not going to commit suicide on behalf of anybody. So I do think you're going to see both sides committed to making this work. They'll come up with—look, Trump's dealing with a whole new world here. Prior to this, we thought we could hold the Strait of Hormuz, which meant we thought we could control the South China Sea shipping lanes. We can control nothing. The new reality is we control nothing—absolutely nothing. You know, we couldn't even secure the Strait of Hormuz. How do we think we're going to stop China from shutting down the South China Sea in any big crisis?

This changes everything. You know, Trump has to understand that Pete Hegseth can't deliver on any of his promises—none of them—which means, you know, you go to the National Security Strategy document of November 2025, when we're talking about military overmatch with China. That's our approach in the Pacific. That's done. There's no such thing as military overmatch. What we need to hope for is that we stop militarizing these conflicts. We have to start dealing with the Chinese economically and diplomatically. And I think you're going to see this as the new Donald Trump. And the same thing with Russia—you know, we desperately need that. And it's not like, okay, the Strait of Hormuz is open and therefore we're going to be in Russia again.

The damage that's been done is going to last many months, maybe years, and we need Russian energy on the market. Plus, the world is just tired of American sanctions—tired of it. So I think Trump has to enter into a whole new world of relationships, and these relationships will be part of the security guarantees that Iran has. Once you demilitarize the American mechanism of interfacing with the world, that changes everything. And I think one of the important aspects of the Iranian victory here is that it puts Trump on notice that this military machine Pete Hegseth has been promoting doesn't provide any solutions—it only creates problems. That doesn't mean America gives up on its military, but maybe it means we start putting more effort into diplomacy.

#Nima

I think that's related to the American bases in the Middle East. How do you see the Trump administration's policy on those bases? Are they going to pull back? Because that's part of the deal Iran is asking for. And honestly, I don't see, so far, what the use of these bases has been in this war. You know, for such a long time the United States has used these bases as a kind of security guarantee for those countries, but it didn't work out after all.

#Scott

The bases were about projecting American military power into the region so we could control the oil, control the energy, contain Iran—initially to contain Iraq, and then to defeat ISIS and all that. I think you're going to see a lot of victory being declared. The United States is going to say, "We have the ISIS problem under control. We can turn Iraq over to the Iraqis, and we can get out of Iraq." We don't want to admit that we were driven out of Iraq. You know, what is the purpose of Al Udeid Air Base? There's no reason to have an Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, even if the Qataris were willing to let us back in—which apparently they're not. There's no purpose for that.

We don't need it. So we can say peace is broken up. This peace deal with Iran—I know people, I just wish I could go back in time and look at the comments where people said stupid things. Donald Trump is going to spin this as one of the greatest peacemaking accomplishments of his career. He has to spin it that way, because this war broke all existing paradigms. Prior to this war, you couldn't even begin to think about peace, because Israel and Iran—they were always at odds. We couldn't resolve the Lebanon thing. We couldn't do this, we couldn't do that. And America had to be there. But we don't want to be there. We're not the world's policemen.

So we needed this war to break the paradigm, to redefine relations in the Gulf. And now that we've done that, we'll be there economically. We'll lead economically. But we don't need to have our military there. There's peace, so there's no need for the American peacemaker. And our boys and girls are coming home—on Donald Trump, Nobel Peace Prize, "I'm the greatest man that ever walked the face of the earth." This is the kind of stuff we're going to be sold. And in some ways, I mean, let's be honest, this war—well, you can't deny it's an illegal war of aggression. But if the end result of this is peace, and Iran's selling oil and energy without sanctions, and Israel's no longer threatening Iran on a daily basis—

Lebanon living in peace. Maybe even a Palestinian state. If all of this comes from this, let Donald Trump sell it any way he wants to. Look, he's going to be out of power in two years anyway. He's not hanging around forever. But you know, we don't always have to look for the bad in things. I'm not saying that Donald Trump is good—I'm not. I don't support what he's doing. I'm just saying that because of Iran, because of the sacrifice of the Iranian people, because of the sacrifice of the Lebanese people, the sacrifice of Hezbollah, the sacrifice of the Palestinian people, we're in a situation today where United States militarism is no longer welcome in the Middle East.

And the United States will leave. That's the reality. Will we leave totally? I don't know. I think it'll be phased. But I don't think we're coming back to Qatar. I think the Fifth Fleet in Bahrain is history. You know, there's not going to be a Fifth Fleet—maybe a Coast Guard detachment that helps with, you know, rescuing drowned sailors in the Strait of Hormuz, together with the Iranian Navy and the Americans and Iranians working together in peace and harmony. Who knows? But you know, we're not going to need the military buildup in Kuwait. We can bring all those people home.

You know, the same thing with Abu Dhabi—we don't need the bases we have there. In Saudi Arabia, we might retain some sort of residual logistics capability, but eventually that'll be withdrawn too.

This is one of the greatest victories the Iranians could ever hope for. It's just important that, at this juncture, we don't oversell it as a victory. Just let it happen. Sometimes the best thing to do is just let it happen. And let Trump—who cares how he spins it? Do the Iranians care about American domestic politics? Let Donald Trump play his stupid domestic political games. As long as the troops leave, who cares how he spins it? Who cares?

#Nima

Scott, how do you see Dubai? How do you see the UAE in that scenario you just mentioned?

#Scott

Depends on how they want to play this. You know, they're out of whack because Iran's retaining control of the Strait of Hormuz, and that puts them in a delicate situation. They're going to talk about a pipeline and all that stuff, but the bottom line is it means Iran is the dominant player in the region, and Oman becomes the critical partner, not the UAE. The UAE blew this. They could have been the critical partner. They could have been a partner for peace, but they weren't—they were a partner for war. The other thing this does is, I think, it's going to deepen the divide between the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia as well. So they're in trouble. I think they're in a lot of trouble. Yeah.

#Nima

They had—Scott, can you hear me? Yeah, you're back. They had this division, Scott. They had this division in Yemen, between Saudi Arabia and the UAE. I think that's happening right now as well.

#Scott

I don't think the UAE is surviving this. Throughout the region—they had it in Sudan, they have it in the Red Sea. The United Arab Emirates is trying to go in and grab ports to compete with Saudi influence. I think the UAE has lost that status, and they're going to have to focus on survival now—literally survival. How to keep investments coming in, how to keep financial centers interested in Dubai. Look, Iran and BRICS—again, I can't predict the future—but maybe Iran builds a new capital, and maybe that capital becomes a financial hub for the Eurasian Economic Union in Central Asia. And, you know, maybe Iran starts attracting the kind of foreign investments that Dubai had been seeking to attract, because Iran is a better player for that.

Um, I just see that Iran is going to be competing with the United Arab Emirates on a lot of fronts, and they'll have far more influence. The UAE blew it. They tried to call themselves the Sparta of the Middle East—they became a very militaristic nation. They were seeking to challenge Saudi Arabia for preeminence, and it's collapsing around them. How far the collapse will go, I don't know. But I honestly think the ruling family has to start thinking about its own survival, that this thing could spin

out of control to the point where people turn on them and they find themselves fleeing. And they're not going to be fleeing to Riyadh. So where are they going to go? That's a good question. Maybe the Iranians will take them in. Who knows?

#Nima

Scott, I think the policies of Israel should basically depend on Israel's current capabilities—in terms of defending itself, its interceptors, its radars. We know that Iran basically destroyed most of these radars inside Israel, not outside. I'm not talking about the GCC countries. So, do they really want to stay in this fight, to continue this war? Because look at this photo we've seen—one of the interceptors Israel is using for David's Sling—and it shows the missile was produced in 2026. And, you know, that's the reality. I think one of the main reasons Donald Trump doesn't see a military solution to what's going on, if he literally believes that...

#Scott

Israel's in trouble. I mean, that interceptor you showed—I think it was a David's Sling interceptor—but it had been adapted for use in an Arrow system because they're out of Arrow missiles. So they don't have... Israel's in trouble. They're in deep trouble. They have a very strong military; I mean, they still have the ability to launch airstrikes, not only against Lebanon but against Iran. You know, they've proven that capability. But that's all they have. Economically, they've collapsed. There's no economy for them right now.

How do they— you know, no one's talking about reconstruction, the reconstruction costs. Where's that money going to come from? Is the American taxpayer going to pay for that? No. Are the Chinese going to come in and pay for that? No. Who's going to pay for it? Israel's in deep, deep trouble right now, and they have a huge political crisis—Netanyahu versus the opposition. I think Israel's going to have to downsize and become a more responsible player, focused on preserving what they have instead of trying to create something they don't have, such as a greater Israel.

#Nima

I think the question right now is whether the United States is going to negotiate in good faith, or if they're going to make some sort of Minsk II-type agreement—if you remember, that was between Russia, Germany, and France during the conflict in Ukraine. Is there anything to be understood about that? Do you see this administration as capable of understanding what's at stake for them, and the history behind these kinds of fake negotiations? Because I don't see that happening. I don't see that helping or advancing anything in the Middle East, or helping the situation there.

#Scott

Sadly, you're right on that aspect of it. But sometimes you get a convergence of things. This administration is about preserving this administration, plain and simple. And therefore, it's now in its interest to have stability in the Middle East—not fake stability, because, again, they have to understand that if you play stupid games, this thing could unravel in the summer, and that's it. That's the end of Trump. If this thing unravels in the summer, if we get war breaking out all over again, it's Donald Trump's legacy. It's finished. And so, they will have to bring in people who are experts. The people that promoted this war aren't going to be promoting the peace. They're going to have to bring in people who understand Iran and, you know, understand things in a more comprehensive fashion. You know, there's some potential here. Again, I'm going to get your audience mad, but I don't care, because Iran—

#Scott

This Board of Peace is a joke. We know it's a joke. We know it's a Donald Trump ego game. But sometimes jokes can be useful. Look at the composition of the Board of Peace—look at the people who did the buy-in. They're all regional actors, and they were originally brought in to manufacture some sort of solution for Gaza. But these are the same actors who would have to play a role in the Persian Gulf. Same actors. There's potential here. And again, Donald Trump has created something—his ego is on the line. But if he can take the Board of Peace and listen to the people in it—not the Kushners and not the Americans, they're just political actors—but listen to the players from the Gulf Arab states, who now have to be committed to this peace because it's in their best interest to have a peace agreement.

You can use this Board of Peace to engage in a larger dynamic of peace and stability, and that would be to Donald Trump's benefit. See, now you have Trump doing something that's to his political advantage, but also something that actually has to take into account the history, the cultures, the realities. And not by having Jared Kushner or Steve Witkoff as your filter, but by having the actual players—the heads of state, the prime ministers, the people who were standing with him on that platform when he declared the Board of Peace. Now get them to come together and buy into this. There's potential here. It doesn't mean it's going to happen. It doesn't mean Donald Trump has the skill set necessary to pull this off. But there's still potential for something good to happen here.

#Nima

How do you see Iraq? Iraq was something different, Scott. Before this war happened, we were talking about Hezbollah in Lebanon, we were talking about the Yemenis, but nobody was talking about the resistance in Iraq. That was the new factor in this war. And how do you find Iraq as time goes by? We know that these NATO countries withdrew their troops from Iraq. Right now, Iraq is a totally different sort of phenomenon, in my opinion. How do you see that?

#Scott

You can't sustain Iraq without the overall infrastructure of the military installations that were in the region. Al Udeid Air Base served as the command and control hub for projecting air power over Iraq. Kuwait was the logistics base that sustained it. We're losing all of this. There's no reason for us to be in Iraq—it was a legacy mission. We get out of Iraq; I think that's what's going to happen. It's unsustainable. And we have to accept the fact that Iran is going to have significant political influence in the future of Iraq. Iran's smart enough to know they don't want to alienate the Sunni.

Solving the Kurdish issue is, you know, a chance to work together. But, you know, the Kurds once again destroyed themselves by siding with the United States. I think you're going to see Iraq purge itself of American influence. But the other thing to remember is that there's a lot of foreign investment in Iraqi oil, and Iraq doesn't want to lose that. So I think you're going to see a much more stable Iraq. I don't think ISIS is going to raise its head again, and I just see the United States leaving Iraq. There's no reason for us to be there—and we'll leave Syria as well.

#Nima

I'd say if J.D. Vance tries to deal with the situation in Iran, and then with Ukraine, he'd definitely have a chance of winning in 2028, Scott.

#Scott

Again, you remember I went to Russia, and what I talked about before going there—the grand deal, the grand bargain with Russia. I think this is happening. I think it's happening as we speak. And this, again, you know, all the Trump haters out there say, "Scott, you're defending Donald Trump." No, I'm not. I'm just talking real, guys—reality. Donald Trump, you know, could work with the right people. It's in Russia's interest to have stability, to bring an end to that conflict. Russia doesn't want this war to go on forever. Donald Trump needs this war to wind down this summer. He needs to be able to say, "I brought peace to Ukraine."

I brought peace to the Middle East. That's the only way he escapes from this. And I see that happening—I see that happening in spades. So let's see what happens. It doesn't mean that I'm thrilled about Donald Trump, and I'm not promoting him. I despise the man. But I also believe that peace is better than war. And I don't want to bring down Donald Trump at the expense of millions of people who live in the Middle East and in Europe, who are suffering because of these endless wars. If part of, you know, making Donald Trump feel he's in a better position come November means that peace breaks out in the Middle East and peace breaks out in Ukraine, I'm all for it.

#Nima

Before wrapping up, Scott, I think the issue of NATO is really important right now. How do you see it? We've had the war in Ukraine, we have the war in the Middle East, as we talked about—and what do you think the outcome of these two wars means for the future of NATO?

#Scott

We can whistle caps all day. It's over. NATO's finished. It's gone. Goodbye. Adios. Auf Wiedersehen. There's no mission for NATO. It doesn't have a mission—it exists to do nothing. You know, Russia is not a threat. They can talk about it, but Europe now has to look at its own survival—economic survival, energy survival. So it's going to have to turn to Russian energy. They can't keep going like this; America's going to walk away. NATO failed the litmus test—the Strait of Hormuz test—it failed it. And there's resentment right now. Look, Trump needs to, you know, blame people. I think Pete Hegseth is history. I don't think he survives the summer.

I think some other people may go as well. And I think NATO gets thrown under the bus. We whistled, and our dog didn't show up—so we're not going to keep feeding the dog. It's over for NATO. There's no reason for it to exist. What's interesting is that the demise of NATO now has Europe talking about a European—well, you know, the role of the EU—that the EU should now take over some sort of military alliance. And the Russians are like, "Well, you just made it pretty easy for us," because Russia in the past had said, "It's NATO expansion we oppose, but we don't oppose you joining the EU." Now Russia is able to say, "No, we don't support you joining the EU either."

For instance, with Ukraine—Ukraine was saying, "Well, we're going to join the EU," even though the EU said, "No, you're not." But now Russia is going to say, "No, you're not." It simplifies what a peace deal will eventually look like with Ukraine, which is complete and total abdication to Russia's demands. There will be some spin, but what is the peace deal that's going to happen in the Middle East? A complete and total abdication to Iranian demands, with some modifications, some adaptations. But Iran gets what it wants. Russia is going to get what it wants. And Europe is going to be, you know, where it should be when you pick the wrong side and you do everything—there are consequences for actions.

#Nima

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

#Scott

Thank you very much for having me.

#Nima

Yeah. See you soon, Scott.

#Scott

Okay.

#Nima

Bye-bye. Bye-bye.