

Col. Jacques Baud: Israel Just LOST – Trump's Last-Minute Move Changes Everything

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Monday, April 20th, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Colonel Jacques Baud, is here with us. Welcome back, Colonel.

#Jacques

Thank you very much. Hello, and thank you for inviting me again to your show. Happy to be back.

#Nima

Let me start with what is going on right now. Yesterday, we had an Iranian commercial vessel attacked by the United States. Then they took control of the vessel, and Iran said the response is coming. I think it may happen today. But after all, what is happening is that Iran is trying to remove the U.S. blockade. One way or another, basically, they're thinking of the end of the ceasefire. They're going to force the United States out of the region by firing at them. What is your understanding of the current situation?

The other point is that yesterday, the United States, Donald Trump, and the Trump administration basically said, if you look at Fox News, CNN, they all reported that there's going to be a second round of negotiations in Islamabad — direct negotiations — where J.D. Vance, together with Siv Vetkov and Jared Kushner, are going to go there. And it would be today, Sunday and Monday, going to Islamabad, and the negotiations starting on Tuesday and going through Wednesday. But so far, Iran said no, there are no negotiations, and the Iranian delegation is not going to go there. Your understanding of the current situation?

#Jacques

Well, first of all, when it comes to the blockade, or the blockades in plural form, because we have many, many layers here, it's fascinating to see how the Americans can forget about their objectives. The whole idea of the discussions and the talks that we had on the 10th and 11th of April in Islamabad was precisely to have the Strait of Hormuz open. And that's the reason why the Americans proposed a ceasefire in exchange for a discussion on a solution to the problem. And in fact, that's the reason why you had the 10-point plan provided by Iran that Donald Trump declared as a workable basis for discussion and apparently accepted a few points of this plan.

We don't know exactly which ones, but apparently there were some positive steps, at least from what we heard from both sides — in fact, the Americans and the Iranians. In any case, as soon as we had this ceasefire declared and therefore the Strait of Hormuz opened, the Israelis started the action in Lebanon, and that led to a collapse of the ceasefire, essentially. So that means that the Iranian side said, well, we stop, we close the Strait of Hormuz. And then the Americans worked on the Israelis so that they would start a negotiation process in order to have a ceasefire in Lebanon, although the ceasefire was already decided beforehand, because what was decided on the 7th of April, starting the 8th, was a ceasefire for the whole region.

That means Iran plus Lebanon. That was confirmed by the Pakistani prime minister. So we know that Israel basically broke the ceasefire. So that's what we know. The Americans tried to bring the Israelis back on track, but instead of trying to fix the situation and resume the ceasefire as it was planned, the Americans decided to add a new layer to the problem by making their own blockade of the Persian Gulf blockade. So now we have a situation where nobody really knows exactly what happens if you cross the Strait of Hormuz. The Iranians have stated that they allow their friends to go through. There is still this idea that you must pay something to go through the straits.

But essentially, the Iranians have at least a selective authorization or filtration system, if you want, to enter the Strait of Hormuz. The Americans, we don't know exactly what their rules are. Initially, they lifted the sanctions on Iranian oil and Russian oil, by the way, because the whole purpose of having both the ceasefire and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz was to stabilize the oil market. That was the point. And that also explains all Trump's declarations on “we are finding a solution, everything is fine, we will reopen everything,” and all that. All that has as a purpose to reassure the oil market, and also the lifting of the sanctions, the same.

But now we see that apparently the Americans are still blocking everything. They stopped the Iranian ship. So we don't know exactly what the rules are. The effect will probably destabilize the oil market again, and not just the oil market, but in fact also some other trade markets, because helium, tungsten, and all these kinds of materials that may go through the Strait of Hormuz cannot. So aluminum as well. So we are in a very confused situation where nobody knows exactly who to believe. And the Americans, by constantly changing their policy—I mean, from one day to another—you don't know exactly what the actual status of the policy is.

They create a problem in the overall market. You know, in economics, what you want to achieve is essentially stability, because instability creates, in fact, price problems, and instability creates most of the problems. So no, we don't really know exactly what's happening. A lot of actors are afraid to go through the Strait of Hormuz, meaning that regardless of whether or not the Americans want to allow some nations or ships to enter the Strait of Hormuz, people will not dare to do that because they don't know if they can come out of it. They don't know at what price. Therefore, insurance companies are discouraging people from going there.

And even the actors themselves, they say, well, they don't want to take the risk. So we have an extremely volatile situation there. And we don't know exactly why, because, in fact, had the Americans stayed on the previous path—that means the ceasefire that was decided and, as I said, bringing Israel on track but keeping the same as what had been decided before—that would have been the best path possible towards a positive negotiation. But by changing their mind every day, they are losing credibility, especially with the Iranians. And then comes the whole issue of the second round of negotiations in Islamabad. Now, here we have two factors. First of all, the Americans also changed their mind many times about whether or not they would send a delegation to Islamabad.

And eventually I heard that they would send Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, and J.D. Vance would not go. And then they said, well, he would go. So here again, we don't know exactly what the Americans are up to, and that makes things extremely difficult. Now, from an Iranian point of view, the Iranians had a bad experience. I think we addressed this question last time, if I'm not wrong. In any case, the Iranians don't trust either Jared Kushner or Steve Witkoff. They are not really negotiators. In fact, they are simply messengers, and they are messengers in the deal or the kind of deal that Trump wants. That means that basically you come, you bring a message to your partner.

You say, we want this. And if you don't do that, we strike at you. That's essentially blackmail. It's not a negotiation. This is blackmailing. The so-called art of the deal of Donald Trump is nothing else than blackmailing, period. So it's one proposal: you take it or leave it. But if you leave it, then we destroy you. That's not a negotiation. So in the last round of negotiations, and we can go back to February, when the Iranians were also facing Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff in Geneva, again, that was not a negotiation. It brought absolutely nothing, although there were positive signs, but eventually it led nowhere. In fact, it led to the operation of the 28th of February.

So now the last round of negotiations in Islamabad didn't bring anything else or anything additional. And now the Americans want another round — I mean, a second round in Islamabad. The Iranians may not be interested in that just for the sake of negotiation. I mean, the Iranians, and Araghchi has clearly stated that what you understand as a negotiation is where you have two sides, parties bringing their proposals. They put the proposals on the table, and we find a way to accommodate those two proposals and to get closer and closer to each other in order to achieve a common result. And that's what they figured out. And that's why also last time in Islamabad, by the way, the Iranians expected to stay longer than just one day.

After just 21 hours, the Americans decided to leave, but the Iranian delegation apparently was ready to stay another couple of days. They were ready to stay for having a real discussion. I mean, we are in a complex discussion, and this kind of negotiation normally requires patience — days, maybe weeks or months — in order to find harmony and a common understanding of the problem, a common solution to the problem. Here, the Americans, they are very impatient. And if it is the same thing, probably the Iranians don't want to talk again to the two real estate agents who have no real understanding of political and diplomatic negotiation because of the previous bad experience. That's the first aspect. The second aspect is that the Iranians are not so keen on having or supporting the idea of a ceasefire.

This was an idea that was decided more or less — not really decided, but proposed by the Americans through Pakistan. This idea of a ceasefire and then eventually a discussion on the proposal, the 10-point plan. But again, the Iranians are not so keen. I mean, they accepted the idea, but this is not their preference. They know that a ceasefire has the only purpose of reinforcing the weaker party, namely Israel and the U.S. presence in the Middle East. Basically, we have a very similar situation to the one we have in Ukraine with the Russians. The Russians have said, well, we don't need a ceasefire, we need a negotiation. And the negotiation must be to achieve peace, not a pause in the conflict. And I think that was initially the position of the Iranians.

To be honest, I didn't understand well why Iran eventually accepted this ceasefire, because the problem was exactly the same. They don't want a pause. They want a solution. And the solution must be addressed through a real negotiation that will take, as I said before, days, weeks, months, even many years — but at least you have a process, that you have a commitment from the U.S. to engage in this process. And that's what Iran wants. So this ceasefire was obviously not in favor of anything. It just helped the Americans to replenish the number of missiles that are missing in Israel, period. Second thing is that today, you know, the party that requests a ceasefire or a pause or negotiation is in fact usually the weaker party. And that's exactly what we have here. The Americans have asked for the pause.

The Americans have asked since the 21st of March also, they have asked for a ceasefire, for a pause, for negotiation and all that. The Iranians know that the Americans don't want to have a real solution to the problem. They just want to buy time. And that's not what the Iranians want. So the Iranians are, in fact, dominating the situation. They are not keen to have a ceasefire. I mean, they want a solution. If the Americans want a ceasefire, they need to show that they want to solve the problem. And that's what the Americans have not demonstrated so far. So the Iranians are ready to fight. What we hear from Iran is exactly that — that basically they are ready to continue the fight because they want to have a real solution. And I think accepting the ceasefire was probably a mistake from the Iranian side.

#Nima

Colonel, just moments ago, we have TankerTrackers.com talking about Iran-linked tankers that haven't yet been placed under U.S. sanctions continuing to move freely in and out of the region. And it's not just that, but they're trying to make difficulties for the Iranians, because the blockade — the Iranian blockade — is to not let, or to make problems for Iran to get out, to send something out and in, get something from outside or send something out of the region. And this is the problem that they're making. I don't know how long they can continue with that. As soon as the ceasefire is over, that's gonna be hugely difficult for the United States to stay the course. Is that the case?

#Jacques

Well, I don't know exactly, because it's very hard to know exactly what the Americans are up to. It's very hard to estimate exactly what are the capabilities of Iran in the level of resilience. I mean, economic resilience — not the psychological or mindset, but the physical, economic resilience. What we can say is that Iran is a country that has been under sanctions for years. For years, it has been prevented from exporting its oil and things like this. So it's a country that is used to such a situation, meaning that if we have an extension of the blockade, if we have any additional difficulties to the shipping and things like this, probably Iran can sustain that.

Remember that in addition to that, we have this railroad that has been constructed between Iran and China. That is quite important; it allows export and trade between China and Iran. I mean, it cannot replace 100% of maritime shipping, but nevertheless, it remains important — a lifeline, if you want. And you have others also between Iran and Russia. And so Iran is not isolated, and there is a capability and capacity for Iran to sustain, to endure a stronger blockade on the seaside. So I don't know exactly what the Iranians are capable of, but we don't know either what the Americans are up to, as I said. We don't know exactly what the Americans want to achieve.

We know that the Americans have not achieved any of the stated goals they had. Well, they came with, they added new goals and new objectives and new rationale for the action. So you see that the whole operation was made in an intellectual mess, so to say. And we don't know exactly what they want to achieve at this stage. My view is that the Americans are in a face-saving process right now. They know that they cannot defeat, that they cannot have a decisive victory over Iran. They know that Iran will not be defeated or destroyed or whatever as easily as initially planned. And therefore, the Americans need to withdraw from the region with a sense of victory.

So that's probably what we are witnessing today. They tried to find a solution where it looks like the Americans are winning. It's a way to hide their defeat, if you want. And probably, as we know, people like Donald Trump or even Pete Buttigieg, the issue lies more in the narrative than in the reality. So it's much more about what kind of PR operation you can do in order to demonstrate some kind of victory rather than having an effective victory and real victory on the ground. So maybe it's that. I don't know what the Americans, again, have in mind exactly, but I think probably we are heading in that direction.

#Nima

Carl, the other problem that is happening in the Middle East is the GCC countries. They're running out of cash, I would say, because the UAE was talking about asking the United States for an emergency credit line as the country is running out of cash. And they're talking about if the United States is not able to do it because they're not making money right now. The main source of money in these countries is oil and exporting LNG, oil, and all of this sort of stuff. And in this sort of request that they have, they're saying to the United States, if you're not able to do that, we're going to shift to China.

And here is the big change that is happening. If the war continues and the United States is not able to resolve the problem with the Arab states, all this burden is going to go on the shoulders of the United States. It's not just about what's going on in the region, because the whole economy of these countries is basically dependent on the United States. And the moment they perceive that the United States is not able to resolve the problem, they're going to move. They're going to shift. They have no other option but to shift toward China or BRICS or something of that sort, something, you know, a new move on their part. Your understanding of that?

#Jacques

Well, we are just talking about a continuation of a problem we have already identified, but probably less at the economic level and more at the military and strategic level. Remember that soon after the initial strike from Israel and the U.S., the Iranians struck those bases in the Middle East. And of course, those countries were affected by that. And they realized at this stage that the U.S. was not able to, or was not able to, protect them from that. The U.S. used their bases—these bases—making, by the way, all these countries like Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, all these countries, in fact, aggressors.

I remind you of Resolution 3314 of December 1974 that defines what is an aggressor, and providing facilities and helping a country to attack another one qualifies you as an aggressor. So basically, these countries were aggressors, but the U.S. didn't make any provision to protect them. And instead, in fact, they enhanced the protection of Israel. So these countries showed that they were expendable from a U.S. point of view, and that the protection they used to have with the U.S. was in fact just on paper. And now we have a similar problem with the economics, with the trade and all that. We see that these countries are not only dependent on the U.S., they are depending on trade, essentially.

But the problem is that if the U.S. is not able to maintain peace in the region and therefore maintain conditions so that the Strait of Hormuz is open, then of course that means that indirectly the U.S. is affecting the trade capabilities of these countries. And therefore, again, the same conclusion. And I remind you that in the first week of March, all these Middle East countries called Russia to have some kind of mediation or support. And today we see a greater involvement of China, diplomatic

involvement of China, meaning that probably those countries understand that being an ally of the U. S. is toxic because the U.S. has similar objectives as Israel, meaning that being an ally of the U.S. doesn't bring you into a safe space.

It brings you into the war sphere of Israel. And that, I think, is something that people are starting to understand. And as you rightly said, we are probably witnessing now the start of a change in the mentality of the people. Because if you had better relations— I mean, if you had, instead of the U.S., China or Russia, the whole region would be more peaceful. Remember that those who crafted the agreement or the rapprochement between Iran and the Arab community, especially Saudi Arabia, but not only, mind you, the reintegration of Iran into the Islamic Conference and things like this.

So all these efforts, diplomatic efforts, were crafted by China, not by the U.S. And when we talk about the future, I mean, you mentioned that also, we are talking about a group of countries, namely the BRICS, where obviously you don't have the Western world. We're talking about Russia, we're talking about China, we're talking about other entities and countries that are in fact more peaceful, that are not engaged in permanent wars, that have no vested interests in Israel, for instance, that are not prone to launch wars all around and have this dynamic of being in permanent wars. And incidentally, it's very interesting to see that since Donald Trump came into power last year, he didn't act differently than his predecessors, you see.

Okay, he tried to solve the question in Ukraine, but he didn't solve it. He just tried to solve it. He failed to convince the Europeans to solve the issue, and he simply withdrew. And then he addressed new other issues. He created, in fact, new crises — the one in Venezuela, the one in Greenland, and, of course, the one in Iran, not to mention Palestine, where, once again, he didn't solve the problem. He bragged that he had achieved a ceasefire, but we know, we see that the ceasefire in Palestine was just... I mean, there was nothing solid behind it. So we see that the Americans are not credible when it comes to being a peaceful power that can encourage trade, that can stimulate economic development and things like this.

It's simply a power that doesn't see any other way to exert its hegemony than through war. And that's very strange. I mean, we see that—I'm not sure we can talk about hegemony when we talk about China—but we see that the superiority of China is not related to its military power. It's related to its trade capabilities and its trade capacity, its engineering capacities, and so on and so forth. So they don't need to have guns and, as I mentioned several times here, the gunboat diplomacy of the US—they don't need that to achieve success. And that's probably the lesson of this war, and probably also from the war in Ukraine, by the way, that both Europeans and the US cannot be credible when it comes to peace. They are warmongers, all of them. And they are too weak.

That's the paradox. The Western world has become too weak to achieve peace. You need to be strong to achieve peace. If you are weak, then you try to attack everywhere and things like this. That's also the rationale behind Israel, by the way. That's because they are weak and they feel they need to be aggressive in order to have a kind of superiority. To scare others is the way to control, to

keep the feeling that you are strong. But in fact, it's a demonstration of weakness. And we have the same thing. I mean, we have a very good example with Iran, that they don't need to attack others to be strong. And in fact, those who attack are the weaker ones. So this is exactly the kind of situation we are in. The West is more and more, and the US in particular.

The weaker the US is, the more it becomes aggressive. It's an extremely paradoxical situation, but it's exactly what we see. And it will probably continue that way. In addition to the fact that by waging all these wars, the US doesn't improve its own situation domestically. I mean, this "Make America Great Again" will probably never materialize, because "Make America Great Again" is not just about making wars. It's above all to rebuild an industry, to rebuild intellectual capabilities and things like that. And in fact, the US was not able to do that. Instead, they invest money in war. So they spend money, they waste money in war, rather than using that money to build their own society. And we have exactly the same thing in Europe, at a different scale.

#Nima

Colonel, there are two issues basically with the talks between Iran and the United States. One of them is the Strait of Hormuz, and the other one is the enrichment of uranium on Iranian soil. I think both of these cases are somehow zero-sum nature issues. Because Iran doesn't, so far from what we've heard from the Iranian side, they don't... In the enrichment of uranium, they're not going to give up the enrichment of uranium on Iranian soil. And at some level, it should continue. They're ready to talk about the level of enrichment, but the enrichment itself is out of the question for them. They're not going to accept anything imposed by the United States.

One of them is the Strait of Hormuz. Iran is not going to give up the Strait of Hormuz. They're going to continue the control over the Strait of Hormuz. And on the other hand, you see, just mentioning these two important issues, look at the Israeli media. They're talking about how Israel has set a red line regarding the permitted number of Iranian ballistic missiles. They're totally disconnected from what's going on between Iran and the United States. I don't see anybody caring about what Israel is talking about because they're not even part of the negotiations. Nobody cares so far. But we know that Donald Trump is in continuous sort of negotiation or talks or connection with them.

#Jacques

Well, first of all, when we talk about the Strait of Hormuz, I mean, there is no question. I mean, the thing is that the importance of Iran for the Strait of Hormuz and the importance of the Strait of Hormuz for Iran is given by geography. So there is nothing you can change about this. The fact of the matter is that Iran somehow has potentially the control over the strait. Now, if you want to keep that strait open, then have a good relation with Iran. It's as simple as that. That's exactly what we had before the end of February this year. I mean, there was freedom of movement through the strait.

And as long as you don't look for problems with Iran, then there is no problem. But the reality, the geographical and topographical reality, is that Iran has the ability to close the Strait of Hormuz, period. And that's something you cannot change even through negotiations. The best thing you can do is to say, okay, we'll stop the war and we come back to the situation pre-February 2026. So that's the first step. The second, about the enrichment of uranium, and I think the spokesman of the Foreign Affairs in Iran said that the uranium issue is as sacred as the soil of Iran.

That sounds extremely emphatic to European ears. But in reality, what the spokesman is saying is that it's not a question of the holiness of uranium, but the fact that it's as important as Iranian sovereignty. That's why you make this link between uranium and the soil of Iran. It's a matter of sovereignty. And as a matter of fact, Iran is a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. And in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is stated that there is this inalienable right for the signatories of the treaty to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes. And that's exactly what we had. I mean, I'm not aware—I mean, it's not that I'm not aware.

We know that Iran has never gone beyond the civilian use of enrichment, meaning that even 60% is quite high for civilian purposes. There are a few uses for this 60% enriched uranium, but we are still far away from the 94% that is required for military purposes. In addition to that, there is absolutely no indication whatsoever that Iran has changed its policy of not having a nuclear bomb. Therefore, we know that Iran so far has always enriched uranium for civilian purposes, therefore being exactly in the framework of what is inalienable to Iran. So giving up the ability to enrich uranium is, in fact, for Iran, giving up a part of its sovereignty.

It's as simple as that. And for that reason, the whole issue of enrichment as a principle is definitely an issue, a fundamental issue for Iran. And I fully understand that they don't want to give up this sovereignty. It's as simple as that. And there is no right whatsoever for the Western countries, including the US, to demand that Iran give up this idea of enrichment. So we are here in an area that is, as I said, something very fundamental for Iran. And if we want Iran to stay with its declared policy of not having a nuclear bomb, then don't attack Iran. The reason or rationale for Iran to have a nuclear bomb is to attack Iran.

What the Israelis and the Americans have done on the 28th of February is exactly giving a rationale for Iran to have a nuclear bomb. So since we know that Iran has not engaged in any process of having a nuclear bomb, since we know that they haven't enriched uranium at a level that allows them to have a nuclear weapon. By the way, even if they had, that would require some time before they could have a workable nuclear bomb, but that's a discussion we don't want to open here. But if we want the situation to stay that way, then talk to Iran, relax the sanctions, lift the sanctions, reestablish diplomatic relations, have good relations.

That's the best way to achieve security. There are no other ways. The example of Europe, not the European Union, but Europe after World War II—they also understood that the best way, after two world wars, not to mention the wars before, the best way not to have a third world war in Europe

was to have good relations with each other. And that's exactly why they started to develop trade and cooperation and all that. That's exactly what made Europe great, especially in the post-war period.

Now, we need to have the same kind of rationale in the Middle East, specifically with countries like Israel and the US. They have to understand that if they want to have a framework that allows for development, economic development, more trade, and things like this, the best way to do this is to have good relations. And those good relations are not depending on Iran, because Iran has always been, uh, the, um, I'm going to say that they were the ones who requested the good relationship with Europe, but with the West. But the problem is that in the West, especially in the United States—and that's very true when you listen to people like Lindsey Graham, Bolton, and others who have an inflammatory narrative regarding Iran—I mean, those guys were, in fact, traumatized by what happened in 1979 with the occupation of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran by the students at that time.

And that remains the main, how to say, the main way for the Americans to understand Iran. They understand Iran through these events. But now, almost 50 years later, we need to go further, to go beyond this experience. A lot of things have changed. Iran has always demonstrated it was positively oriented. I mean, even during the war in Iraq, Iran maintained a neutral posture, even helped the US in fighting terrorism. General Soleimani was a case in point, where the Iranians have always demonstrated goodwill to have some kind of diplomatic rapprochement with the West. The problem is the West keeps maintaining those claims about nuclear bombs and things. We know since at least 2003 that Iran doesn't want to have a nuclear bomb.

#Jacques

We know that. I mean, this is in all the reports of the CIA and the Office of National Intelligence in the US. So we know that. So why do we keep maintaining this claim that Iran is about to have a nuclear bomb? There is absolutely not the slightest indication of that, meaning that everything we do against Iran is simply based on claims, on allegations. So it's time for the West to mature a little bit, to stop reacting or acting as teenagers. And that's exactly what we have. I mean, Trump is no different from an average teenager who is TikToking and making his decisions based on TikTok and Twitter or through social media. This is the whole issue. And I think what this conflict may bring is probably more maturity.

The West in Europe, they start to understand the whole problem. And we have seen that, in fact, since October 2023, Europe starts to understand that Israel is not the best partner. They understand that Israel is not a faithful partner, is not of good faith, doesn't share our values, not at all. Israel has no common values with Western Europe, not the slightest. And now we see, we saw that against the Palestinians, and now we see that against Iran. Because regardless of how people understand Iran, everybody understands that there was no reason to attack Iran at this stage. And that was also acknowledged, by the way, by the US intelligence. The West starts to understand that we are on the wrong path with this war.

So this war may probably help the West and the Europeans, maybe to some extent, to mature. And when I say the Europeans, I'm not talking about the European Union, because they haven't understood anything yet. But probably individual countries start to understand. We are talking about Spain, maybe Italy, maybe others who start to understand that it would probably be a good idea to revise our understanding of what Iran is exactly. Of course, there are still those claims about the killings in January and all that. But the more it goes, the more we understand that this was all an engineered situation. It was engineered by the U.S. It was also widely exaggerated. I mean, the 30,000 people killed was widely exaggerated.

#Nima

Donald Trump said 45,000, 40,000. He's just updating.

#Jacques

Oh, yes. No, no. On Swiss TV, they say 50,000. So, you know, there is no limit. You just don't know where they draw their figures from, but the more, the better. This is all the fake, the type of disinformation that you have on state media. Switzerland is a case in point, but others do as well. I encourage people to go. There is The Grayzone, who did research on this issue of the 30,000 people killed, and I encourage people to go there and see where these 30,000 come from. And you will be surprised. So people start to realize that, and we realize that the allies we thought were solid allies are in fact not. Nothing.

They don't represent anything. They have nothing in common with us. And I'm not saying that the Europeans are perfect. It's far from that. But in any case, the fact that you think that Israel has shared the same values as the West, I think is totally wrong. This has never been the case and it will probably never be the case unless they have a radical change in their mind, which will probably require some time. But in any case, now we have the West starting to think about all this. And maybe the whole conflict will help to solve not the issue in the short term, but probably help to understand that probably another way is possible.

It's not just that we don't need to be aligned with the U.S. And probably, I mean, the example of Spain towards Israel is a very good case in point, where a state says, well, no, we are not going that way. This is not our view. This is not the way we understand cooperation. And we have nothing in common with people who try to destroy the statues of Jesus Christ or kill children as a hobby, as an Israeli general said, by the way. He said that he was afraid to see that the IDF was killing children as a hobby. And that created outrage in Israel. But again, that comes from an Israeli general. It doesn't come from me. Meaning that we see that we are always further away from the initial, let's say, values we probably had in the 50s or 60s, I don't know.

But today it has become extreme. And well, why should we continue on that path? And that is regarding Israel. But in turn, that can also explain why we are like this with Iran. By the way, you have more and more people in the media, I mean, mainstream media, who take a different stance towards Iran. The whole issue initially, when you talked about Iran, everybody was saying, well, but the women in Iran. Yes, but the women in Iran. Okay. What about the women in South Korea or the women in Saudi Arabia? Why aren't we so keen to protect those women in those countries? And we just focus on Iran. And you have more and more people saying that, meaning that I think somehow the perception of Iran is changing. That will take some time.

It will not come within days. But this is changing. And I think that's a source of, let's say, some kind of hope, because that means that people question Iran, the policy we had so far with Iran, and question the fact that we ostracized the country. And, um, we see, by the way, a similar situation, though not as obvious, but still we see the same thing towards Russia. Because we see that this is another conflict, there's no solution, and at one point we will have to talk to the Russians. So now it's probably a good opportunity to think about having good relations. In addition to that, I mean, the rationale behind the mindset towards Russia is also because of the cost of energy.

And now we see that, again, this is also something that I explained many times, but people don't want to understand. Europe doesn't depend on Russia; it depends on energy. And that's exactly what is exemplified by what we have in the Strait of Hormuz and Russia at the same time. And now everybody, I mean, the whole of Europe, depends on the United States. And the United States, well, they make their price. So, meaning that Europe is the loser in the whole issue. And it's the loser because it doesn't want to talk to others. That's an issue. And people are starting to realize this.

So this war might be, uh, the initial—I mean, that may initiate some thoughts in the West that probably waging wars and permanent wars is not the best solution, and it's probably more useful to engage in dialogue, to have better quality of trade, better quality of diplomatic relations, and then you solve all the problems, basically. And that would be easy because all these conflicts, all of them, 100%, initiate from the West. We have started all these wars stupidly, without objective, without strategy, without knowing how we would get out of these conflicts. That was the case in Libya, that was the case in Syria, that was the case in Afghanistan, that's the case in Iran today, that was the case in Iraq, that's the case everywhere.

We have started conflicts without even having the slightest idea how we would get out of them. As a result, we have more immigration. We have made the whole Middle East impossible to live in. And we have created situations where all these people need to come to Europe to find work, to live, simply to live. And now we have countries like Sweden, one of the most stupid countries, I think, because they made all these Syrians come, all the extremists. They took all the Islamists. And now they realize this after 10 years, and now they try to expel them. But they cannot because, of course, they created the institutional framework that prevents that. So, we have created all these problems.

They were unnecessary problems, regardless of how you assess and how you judge this country or the government or the governance at large of this or that country. What we see today is that all these wars were failures, didn't improve the situation, worsened the situation of both the countries themselves, but also the region and even the situation of Europe. Maybe Iran, because Iran is a powerful country, and because the consequences of the conflict in Iran are so powerful, maybe the West may start to understand. When I say the West, I'm talking about Europeans, because I'm not sure the Americans can understand that. I mean, a lot of Americans understand, but not those who are around Donald Trump.

And that's a problem, but eventually, when we see, for instance, the hearings that they have at the various intelligence committees, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and others, well, you realize that especially Democrats, who have started so many wars, actually start to understand the consequences of that. Again, it's very difficult to assess how long this experience and the lessons will last, but still, at this stage, people start to understand that all these wars we have waged were just a waste of money, a waste of energy, a waste of lives, a waste of everything. They didn't bring anything, not even to the military-industrial complex, by the way. They probably earned a few, some billions. But this is not the essence. We have lost much more than what we have gained during all these conflicts. So that's how I see the situation.

#Nima

Yeah. Carl, before wrapping up, I think we have to talk about what Israel is doing in the southern part of Lebanon. And is it that they're creating a yellow line as they did in Gaza? And they're talking and trying to achieve what they couldn't achieve yesterday on the battlefield. They couldn't defeat Hezbollah in the southern part of Lebanon. That's why they're drawing this yellow line. If they cross this yellow line, they're going to be hit, they're going to be killed. And we were talking about the people who were removed from their homes, and right now Israel is just saying that they're not going to get back. How do you see the situation there?

#Jacques

Well, first of all, you have to understand that the border between Israel and Lebanon is not just one border. There are many borders here. The initial border, which is the ceasefire line, in fact, because Israel has no borders. I remind you, Israel has no borders. It has only a ceasefire line, which is a tolerated border. So that's one. The other border is the border that was drawn in the 1920s, as the French and the Brits, after the Sykes-Picot Agreement, divided the Middle East. So that's the second border. There is a third border that has been drawn by the Israelis as they invaded Lebanon, and they never left 100% of Lebanon. They kept some territories, and they drew a new border.

This is the border that they drew themselves. And by the way, this border that was drawn by the Israelis is the rationale for Hezbollah to exist. Very important to say, because Hezbollah exists as long as you have an Israeli occupation in Lebanon. And this is since 1982, basically, although

Hezbollah was created in 1985. I mean, despite what people used to say, that it is 1982, it's wrong. In 1982, and I know that because I was in intelligence at that time, and we monitored all these groups in Lebanon, and there was no Hezbollah at that time. Hezbollah emerged in 1985, period. Now, that's the rationale for Hezbollah to exist — the Israeli presence.

Hezbollah has always said, the day we no longer have Israel and the Israeli threat is gone, we can fade out and transfer the responsibility to the Lebanese army. So that's the third line. This is the one that was drawn by the Israelis after the occupation. And you have another line, another border, which is the so-called Blue Line, which is an area that has been defined by UNIFIL for the United Nations that, in fact, should help to separate, to create a buffer zone, if you want, avoiding that Lebanese would be in direct contact with Israelis. The problem is that this Blue Line takes into account the new border drawn by the Israelis.

And that's why the rationale, or let's say the legitimacy, of this Blue Line is not completely understood or accepted, better said, in Lebanon. And now you have the Israelis adding a new border, the so-called Red Line. So the problem here is that Israel considers that South Lebanon belongs to it. That's a problem. It has been said many times. They consider the border, or let's say the territory, the Lebanese territory that goes up to the Litani River, as Israeli. They said so, and you had many rabbis declaring that they should deploy and create new settlements there, that it's not an Arab country, it's a Jewish territory. That's the whole thing.

And the Israeli appetite goes also to Syria. The Golan is a case in point, whose annexation has been recognized only by Donald Trump, by the way, because internationally the Golan is not Israeli. The Golan remains officially a Syrian territory. And you have, of course, the Palestinian territory, which, and I say Palestinian territory in singular form, as it was decided by the International Court of Justice, comprises the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza. So it's one territory divided in three, if you want. And of course, you see this insatiable appetite of Israel wanting to annex all these territories. And we are here completely outside of international law.

Again, what we have seen in Lebanon since the early 80s, as the Israelis invaded Lebanon, thus creating the conditions for the emergence of Hezbollah. But this whole situation was created by the aggressiveness of Israel. Now people start to understand that, because you have a lot of people in Europe who are still not very familiar with the idea of a Palestinian territory or Palestinian state. But Lebanon is a recognized state, and therefore having Israel attacking a recognized state, a member of the United Nations. And so, by the way, Palestine is also a state, and Palestine is also represented in the United Nations. It's also important to say, but anyway, a lot of people consider that it's not really a state. In any case, Lebanon is a state that everybody recognizes as such.

And therefore, you have the Israelis invading a sovereign country and occupying it. The problem is that there we have a peacekeeping force, the UNIFIL, which is composed in particular of a French contingent, which is quite an important one. But they don't do anything. I mean, this is the inability of the UNIFIL to resist the Israeli attacks for years, and even when the Israelis have directly

attacked the UNIFIL positions, UN positions, even with artillery. The famous case in Qana—I don't remember exactly the year now—but there was a famous case where the Israelis started to shell a UNIFIL, I mean, a UN position, killing several civilians and blue helmets, by the way. And now they repeated that because there was an ambush that the French attribute to Hezbollah.

But if you look at the map, there is absolutely no rationale to have Hezbollah at this place. It was an ambush, according to me, that was made by Israeli recon forces that were just beyond the Yellow Line, by the way, and the killing happened just at the border, just on the Yellow Line. A French soldier was killed there. In any case, we see that Israel has never considered the UN forces as an obstacle, and the UN has never made any effort to resist the attacks of the Israelis. You know, we have to understand that the Lebanese airspace is violated several thousand times per year. I don't have exactly the figure now because, of course, it changes every year. But the figures I had were something like 6,000 times a year.

And totaling a lot of hours because they have surveillance drones and things like this. So Israel doesn't care whatsoever about the sovereignty of its neighbors. And again, the problem is that Lebanon, especially the Lebanese army, is probably so corrupt that it's not able—and that's the reason why you have Hezbollah, by the way—because the Lebanese army is completely corrupt and has not been able to defend Lebanon. The country and Hezbollah is a better-motivated force, better organized, better commanded. And that's the reason why Hezbollah is in command. And that's also the reason why Hezbollah has always said, well, the day the Lebanese army is in a position to take over, we'll hand over then.

Hezbollah has not the idea to stay here as the main defense force of Lebanon. They are ready to hand over to the Lebanese armed forces, but the problem is that the whole system is so corrupt that it doesn't stand. And that's the whole situation. Again, we are always back to the same problem. Would Israel respect international law, everything would be solved in the Middle East. Israel would be at peace. Israel could develop normally. Its neighbors would develop normally. You would stop having people making terrorism or things like that, or attacks, because the people who are engaged in violence are because they have been expelled from their own country, from their own region.

Look at what's happening in the West Bank. There is a decision of the International Court of Justice of the 19th of July 2024 declaring the Israeli presence in the West Bank illegal. Period. The whole presence—settlers, not settlers, military, you name it—everything which is Israeli in the West Bank is illegal. And this, the same advice of the International Court of Justice, asked the international community to help Israel to solve the problem. But none of the Western countries have tried to do so. Nobody dares to go to Israel as you would go with an old friend and say, well, you have a problem.

I will help you to solve it. Now you vacate the territories you are supposed to vacate, and we solve your problem. We help you to solve the other problem with all these people, because all these people—probably something like a million people who are illegally settling in the West Bank—have to

go out. Period. But again, you could do exactly the same with the Golan. You could do exactly the same with the south of Lebanon. You could do exactly the same with East Jerusalem, and exactly the same with Gaza. So again, as long as Israel doesn't comply with international law, we'll have problems in the region. Period.

#Nima

Yeah. Thank you so much, Col. for being with us today. Great pleasure, as always.

#Jacques

My pleasure. Thank you very much for inviting me.

#Nima

Thank you.

#Jacques

Thank you.