Trump's Iran Ship SINKING, Israel Prepares UNTHINKABLE | Lt. Col Anthony Aguilar & Ray McGovern

Lt Col Anthony Aguilar and former CIA analyst Ray McGovern expose the truth about the midterm election and the geopolitical implications of a defeated Trump and a rapidly moving Israel toward an unthinkable escalation with Iran. Something big is coming, and it's only just beginning. Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis! Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: https://twitter.com /DannyHaiphong Telegram: https://t.me/DannyHaiphong Support the channel in other ways: https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: $Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: https://paypal.me/spiritofho #iranwar #nuclearwar #trump

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. As you can see, I am joined by former Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Aguilar and former CIA analyst Ray McGovern to go over the latest developments. Well, let's begin, gentlemen. This was said today by J.D. Vance after a blue wave in the midterm elections, a major defeat for Trump. The Iran ship is definitely sinking now. And J.D. Vance cited the Iran war as the reason that the Republicans lost so badly in the midterm elections. The polling numbers going into the vote were just so clear that so many voters switched their votes. If they weren't going to vote Democrat, they voted Democrat. This was a crucial issue for voters all around. Still, though, Trump is talking to the media about doing something large about Iran. This is what he said to Fox News today.

#Donald Trump

What do you say? I mean, in a short period of time. Now, that's also subject to Iran because, you know, we have to do something large. If we do something that some people would love me to do—you know, some people would love to do that. I listen to Jack Keane and other people on your various shows, and a lot of people would like to do the heavy hit. A lot of people would.

#Danny

So, he’s still intimating a possible strike on Iran despite this vote. Israel is also preparing, it seems, to continue the war. It warned U.S. and Arab intelligence officials yesterday that Iran is considering

using chemical weapons, which is pretty rich since Israel loves to use white phosphorus and other chemical agents in warfare and in its genocide in Gaza and Palestine. Channel 14 reports that Netanyahu is holding an emergency meeting with his cabinet today, in the hours after the midterm elections are finally decided. I think that has already happened, but the cabinet meeting has not. So, Tony, how about I start with you? What do you make of these developments? How will the midterm elections impact this war, if at all? Do you still foresee a resumption of major kinetic action?

#Anthony Aguilar

Well, I do still think there is going to be a restart soon because the new Congress that we've elected, the 120th Congress, will not convene until the 3rd of January, 2027. Despite the overwhelming wins by Democrats throughout the United States, flipping states and winning traditional Democratic states by some of the largest margins we've seen, you know, their control of the House and the Senate doesn't begin until the 3rd of January. So, in that time, anything in terms of escalation is certainly on the table, and I think it's very likely.

And when you look at Israel, I think that with Donald Trump endorsing Netanyahu in the days leading up to the Israeli elections of 27 October, there was some type of deal brokered between Netanyahu and Trump to wait until after the U.S. midterms before either doing something together or Israel doing something unilaterally to begin with that would then bring in the United States, much like we saw in Midnight Hammer, much like we saw in the beginning of this conflict where we are now. So now that the U.S. midterms are over, I think that we are going to see Israel either act unilaterally in...

#Anthony Aguilar

You know, in some type of operation that will then involve the United States because of the inevitability of it happening, or the United States will join in after the fact, depending on what Israel does. And, you know, I think that's inevitable. I think that, at this point, that is going to happen. Now, we've heard the president say that something big is coming. And it's sometimes concerning to me because of those who have the ear of the president. He even mentioned, you know, retired General Jack Keane. Retired General Jack Keane is nothing more than a white supremacist, racist, warmongering war hawk. I have no respect for him.

If he is the type of guy that has the ear of the president, that should be concerning. This is also one of the guys who talked about wanting to go to war in every war that we've been in. And it's unfortunate that those types of individuals have the ear of the president. Now, politically, you can look at it one of two ways. Either this is a check on the president's power. Obviously, this election was a referendum on the Republican Party vis-à-vis the leadership of Donald Trump. And I'll agree with J.D. Vance on one point: this war impacted that. But it's not only this war. This war is one aspect of the totality of the rejection of this president.

And we're looking at other issues that are certainly connected to this war with Iran. But the war with Iran clearly demonstrates the inability of this administration—not just the president, but his secretaries and his cabinet—to understand the geopolitical situation, its misunderstanding of warfare, and its lack of respect for the constitutional process within our country involving Congress. Now we're in a position where, you know, this war was never funded by Congress. So the unfortunate part of this is that some people may think, "Oh, well, come January, or maybe between now and January, Congress won't fund this war anymore."

Well, Congress has never funded this war. As we've seen, there was never a war declared by Congress. Therefore, there is no funding or appropriations line for this war. This entire war thus far—the half a trillion dollars that have been spent—has come out of already appropriated funds, meaning this will either be reconciled through reconciliation or through increased funding to the Department of War, which already has a $1.5 trillion budget. So the best way to explain that is if I gave my son $20 and a very clear list of things to get at Walmart: "Don't get anything less. Don't get anything more."

"Stick to this specific list. I've calculated it down to the dollar to include sales tax and state tax. You will have exactly enough, to the penny, to buy exactly what's on this list." And my son goes to the store. And while he's there, he's looking at the list, and he buys a few things, but then he decides, "Oh, well, I want some candy," or "I want a toy." And he buys that, and he comes back home and says, "Look, I bought these things." And he didn't get some of the essentials, like, I don't know, baby formula or diapers or things that we needed. So now I'm in a position as the parent where my son—one of my secretaries, if you were applying this to the government—took the money that I appropriated.

I appropriated this money in a budget for household necessities, and I entrusted my agent, my child, to go to the store to get them. They came back, and they didn't buy what I asked for. But not only that, they spent the money. The money's spent, but I still don't have the essentials. So now it looks like, well, if I don't take money out of my savings or if I don't take money out of other expenses to pay for the essentials, well, then I can't provide the essentials. In a political environment, the Democrats or the Republicans—it's not always Republicans; it's sometimes Democrats. Obama did this as well, where we spent the appropriated money on things that weren't part of the budget. So now, Congress, you have a choice.

Either you appropriate those funds to us in the next fiscal year, or we go without and we don't fund those things. And what we've seen the Department of Defense do in typical years, as part of the executive branch, is say, "Oh, well, sorry, we spent way more money on these weapons or on these research and development programs for weapons, and we don't have enough money left to pay for housing, soldiers' benefits, and all those other things. So either you appropriate more money or we don't pay for those things. And you, the current government, will then look like the party that doesn't care about the soldiers and the troops." We've seen that time and time again. So that's the situation we're now going into.

And I want to remind everybody again: this conflict was never funded by Congress. It's being funded through funds that will have to be reconciled. And that's what we're going to face as the new Congress takes over on January 3rd, the 120th Congress of the United States. They have to deal with the fiscal year 2028 budget come October of '27. Right after they take office in January, they're going to have to start working on that. So is this Congress going to have the backbone to stand firm against the executive branch and say, "No, we are not reconciling those funds. The money you spent in direct opposition to Congress and to what the people wanted, as shown in this election—you are going to have to cover that out of your appropriated budget"?

"We're not reconciling and giving you more funds on top of that." Will this Congress have the backbone to do that? If not, then we really are just continuing to reward the problem, maybe not in rhetoric, but in action. So what I fear now, in this particular time frame between now and January 3rd—so two months—is what Trump is going to do in order to try to salvage this conflict for the potential future of the Republican Party going into 2028. And Donald Trump has to win. Winning is impossible. So what is Donald Trump then going to do to give the perception of winning—his version of a mic drop: walk away, "We won, period"? Because continuing the war as it is—is it going to work?

Is Iran going to surrender? No. Is the United States going to surrender and give Iran everything they want in this? No. So where does it go from here? And I think that is going toward escalation in a major way, with the use of weapons of mass destruction, including the massive ordnance airburst, the massive ordnance penetrator, and aerial bombardment. And it is ironic. You mentioned, Danny, in the beginning that now we have Israel talking about, you know, trying to use chemical weapons as a red herring, when Israel is probably the biggest violator when it comes to the use of chemical weapons in the modern history of warfare, with white phosphorus and other types of chemical weapons used.

And there's no indication that Iran has these weapons, nor any indication that they will use them. And, you know, this is once again the same rhetoric that Netanyahu has been spreading since 1994: that Iran is two weeks away from a nuclear bomb. Well, now the indications are that that's just not true. Now the narrative is shifting to the usual go-to, right? Weapons of mass destruction, or whatever the case may be. Oh, it's nuclear, chemical, biological. They've got chemical weapons everywhere. We did the same thing in Iraq. You know, that was the whole premise for going in.

You know, even when people questioned what the Taliban were supporting in Afghanistan, it came down to, like, "Oh, we can't have a rogue nation that could potentially get its hands on chemical weapons." That's always the fallback, go-to fearmongering narrative: chemical weapons. So Netanyahu is now pulling that one out of the hat to use as justification to restart escalation and hostilities. Unfortunately, I do think that is coming. That is coming in the coming days, when we will see escalation once again, provoked by Israel, joined by the United States. And now we're in a political position where Donald Trump either feels that he has to go all in or that he has nothing to lose.

#Danny

Yeah, and Ray, whenever I hear Israel talking about someone else using chemical weapons or anything of the sort—nuclear, all of this—I get more concerned about what Israel will do. But Ray, what's your reaction to the elections, and is there anything else you want to add?

#Ray McGovern

First, let me say thanks for having me on, especially with Tony, my good friend. And it's really clear that at West Point, Tony learned a hell of a lot more than just how to deal with weapons and strategy. He learned how our government is supposed to work, including funding wars. With respect to chemical weapons, I think, Dan, you said this is pretty rich for the Israelis to be accusing the Iranians. You know, it's even worse than most people realize. Not only did we pretend to believe that Saddam had chemical weapons and had already used them on his own people—which, if you looked very closely, happened under very special circumstances there in Halabja, or whatever it was called.

Okay, but more importantly, we gave the Iraqis the precursors, all the necessary things to put chemical weapons together, which they used with our blessing against whom? Oh, against the Iranians. Oh, just one shot? No, it was eight years, all right? It was eight years. And the rulers of Iran, many of them are people who survived those chemical attacks. And when they told the Supreme Leader, "We need to reply," you know, after they lost a million men on the battlefield, he said, "No, we don't do chemical stuff. Those are weapons of mass destruction. We don't do nuclear. We don't do chemical." Wow. So you put this in context here. Iran is looking at this stuff, saying, "Oh, my God. Is Bibi going to do a false flag attack using chemical weapons and blame it on us?"

My God, they have to be on tenterhooks. Now, a couple of things. I made some notes while you and Tony were speaking. I have to tell you that, first off, Jack Keane, General Jack Keane, with not one, two, three, but four—four stars, right? He was in ROTC at Fordham. He was five years behind me, so I used to see him every five years at college reunions. Let's just say that Tony's been very, very gentle with the sobriquets or the adjectives he used for General Jack. I'll just say he's not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but he's the most pliable. He's the kind of Petraeus-like guy who could get four stars for saying, "Yes, sir," even if it's the dumbest idea in the world.

Now, you don't have to believe me on that. When even Rumsfeld was going wobbly—"Oh, my God, it's not working out in Iraq. My God, what are we going to do?"—this was before the midterms in 2006. And so Bush, in his wisdom, said, "Oh, we'll get Bobby Gates in there." And when Bobby said, "Well, I don't know much," Bush said, "Oh, we'll get Jack Keane and Petraeus. They can run the whole military part of the surge." And Gates said, "What does that mean? Are you saying that maybe I could be Secretary of Defense?" "Oh, of course, Bob. That's the deal." So he did. Up to 950,000—that's exactly the figure—perished in that unnecessary surge, including Cindy Sheehan's son and lots of other people.

So all I'm saying is, here you've got Jack Keane. Why is it important? Because the president watches Jack Keane. That's what he said. He said, "Your people had Jack Keane on there on Fox Business." My God, that's what we've come to. The president listens to Jack Keane. Now, enough about Jack Keane. He's still around. He's causing all kinds of disruptions. What else? Well, you know, let me just comment on what Vance said. I mean, these are not idle statements. They are very purposeful. And they don't appear on, like, WION or, you know, some website. They appear today in The Washington Post, okay? And so what did Vance say? "The reason we lost yesterday, the reason we lost, is because of the war." Pretty clear, huh?

#Anthony Aguilar

What else does he say?

#Ray McGovern

"Voters reported, even before the election, that they would vote against Republicans because of the war. If you'd like to argue that it was worth it, that losing the Senate for the next six years was worth it, then do so," he says. "But everyone knows why we lost, and any honest conversation about where we go from here must start from there." So, any honest conversation. Will there be any? Well, not if Trump limits his purview to Jack Keane, for God's sake, or Petraeus, or those other people who still linger around. Okay, don't get me started here. So, what am I saying here? I'm saying that I can appreciate Tony looking at the balance of forces and saying, "Oh, my God, it's almost inevitable that there will be a big strike. The forces are in place."

Trump has threatened that. He says it's going to be a big thing. I'm from Missouri on that, still. I think there are real, real inhibitions there. We didn't really know how bad yesterday was going to go for the Republicans. Now we have Vance taking a separate stance on it, for God's sake. Vance, who wrote that letter to the Iranians. Now, the Iranians say he didn't meet our conditions, but it was very cordial in tone. What does that mean? That means it didn't start out with what Rubio wrote: "You head of all the terrorists in the world, this is what we're going to do to you." No, it started out, "Dear Supreme Leader." That was the difference, okay? But it was Vance. So is Vance going to prevail here with the Republicans? I don't know. But that's a new element, given what happened yesterday.

And it all depends. It comes back to two things: an unpredictable president—who can wager a guess on what he will do?—and, more important in these cases, a Netanyahu who dearly needs some kind of military action so that he can prevail in setting up some kind of new government. He's got a personal interest in that. He's got an overriding political interest in that. And so the question is, will he be able to send his new head of Mossad into the White House? And will Trump listen obediently or watch the video here and say, "Jack Keane, what do you think of that?" "Yes, sir." "All right." Will

he do that again? Or will he learn from George W. Bush, for God's sake, who said, “Fool me once”? Well, he didn't get it right, but he was supposed to say, “Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.”

Fool me three times. Well, you're suggesting negotiations, and you're talking with the Qataris? Forget about it. We have our terms here. This is what we're going to insist on. How will Trump react to that, with Netanyahu goading him on and Jack Keane in the background? I don't know. But I think there's a much better chance today than yesterday that he'll see so many inhibitions there that, even though he doesn't give a rat's patootie about the GOP, the Republican Party, the pressures are big on him now to cease and desist and make the best deal he can. The makings of a deal are there. He just has to make some concessions and dress them up so that he can walk away and say, “We won.” And most Americans will be relieved and will not look into how, as Vance said today, we lost.

#Danny

Yeah, well, Tony, according to reports, Donald Trump is being advised that the Iran war is indeed possibly causing a huge issue for his legacy. But, you know, I'll pull up the tweet again because what Vance put up was extraordinary. So timed, so curated, focus-grouped, it seemed like, in many ways. Very long, very much almost like an apology without an apology. Now, I wanted your thoughts, though. Given what you said earlier, is this enough? Both Trump's legacy and Vance's obvious personal misgivings—is it enough to arrest escalation? Because we know that even Trump said it in the media: there are people who really want this. And I'm guessing a lot of those people might reside in what some people call the deep state or the real state, which may have a bigger say than the results of an election. But your thoughts on that?

#Anthony Aguilar

Well, the way that you put it, I think, is a good way to understand it: is there time, or is there the will, to arrest the current escalation? By that I mean, you know, is there a way to stop it? Is there a way to stop it in terms of where it's heading? And in terms of this war being a smear on Donald Trump's legacy, that should have been clear in the first few days of this conflict. You know, he was obviously told by advisers and by Israel, “This will be quick. This will be over in just a couple of days. This will be your legacy: the only president willing to go toe to toe with Iran. You're amazing. They'll build statues in your name. This will be over quick. Trust us. Just trust us, sir.”

This will be over quickly. So, in terms of this being a stain on his legacy, in terms of this war having another negative impact on these midterm elections that we just saw the results of, all of those things were clear months ago. I still think that, going into yesterday, there was still some Republican hope, some Trump hope that, okay, the Democrats are going to take the House, but we still have

the margins to win in the Senate. But not only did they fail to win the House, they also failed to keep the Senate. It was a total landslide, as we've seen. But the question I ask is: what would prevent Donald Trump now that didn't prevent him from continuing this before?

So when we go back to the Islamabad Accords, the 14-point memorandum of understanding, at that point, it was very clear that this war was unpopular. It was very clear that we went into this war under the false pretense of a quick victory. It was very clear at this point that Iran was not going to just roll over and surrender. And it was also very clear that U.S. military might, with all of its advanced technology and naval supremacy and air power, wasn't going to bring the quick end to this war that Donald Trump had hoped for. We already knew that months ago as we approached the negotiating table with a real, possible exit strategy—a deal to end this war on the table. And you're right, Danny. You're right, Ray, in terms of the negotiation.

Yes, we can negotiate on sanctions, frozen assets, how the Strait of Hormuz will be administered, and what controls or oversight could be put in place for nuclear monitoring or nuclear control to save face for Donald Trump. All of those things could have been negotiated. What it comes down to is that, unless something has drastically changed in the last 24 hours, which I don't think it has, Iran would have to be willing to completely walk away from its position on Israel occupying southern Lebanon and Gaza. That condition would have to be met. Either it has to be met, or Iran has to be willing to walk away from that condition. I do not believe that Iran is willing to walk away from that condition. I do not believe that the United States has the ability to demand or force Israel to meet that condition.

So it all comes down to the fact that, yes, it should be even more evident now that Donald Trump should be seeking a way to end this conflict with some type of Islamabad Accord-like agreement, in which Iran will have even more leverage and demands. But when it comes to all the questions of how the war would end and all of these conditions, it goes back to Israel. One of three things has to happen. Iran is willing to walk away from that condition—I don't think that's the case. Or Israel is willing to meet that condition and completely withdraw from Lebanon and completely withdraw from Gaza, allow aid to flow unimpeded, and allow Gaza to, you know, no longer be under Israel's oppression.

I don't think Israel is going to meet that demand. Or the United States would then have to detach, cut away from, and turn its back, so to speak, on Israel and say to Iran, "Hey, they're on their own on this. We don't support it. We don't back them. We're not joining them in this war and further escalation. They're on their own. Negotiate with us, the United States, without Israeli conditions, because they're on their own now. And if you want to strike them and whatnot, go ahead, Iran. We're not going to stop you." I don't see that condition happening either. So, of those three conditions that could halt the current escalation, I do not see any of them happening. I surely would like to. I just don't see it. There's no indication of it.

So as we approach escalation, we know Israel was intent on striking before their elections. I think the United States got involved in saying, "Hey, hold off and wait. If you go early, we're not going to help. Wait." And they did. Now, you could argue that by invoking war powers and starting a direct, hostile, destructive war with Iran, Israel would give Netanyahu the power to seize control amid the current disarray in the government structure, where there is no clear winner. There's no real clear path to a unified bloc with 61 seats. Netanyahu would surely benefit from this state of chaos to seize power for himself in a state of war. And now we know that Israel is convening their emergency cabinet.

We know that Israel had plans on the table for strikes. We know that Israel has the aircraft lined up to do it. The question will then be: Is the United States going to go in with them at the beginning? Or is the United States going to be pulled into this, much like we saw in Operation Midnight Hammer, when Israel started this 12-day war, couldn't finish it, and then the United States got involved? Or even in this conflict, we heard Marco Rubio himself say, "The reason the United States got involved is because we knew that Israel was going to strike, that Iran was going to retaliate, and that Israel would retaliate. So we preemptively struck Iran first to prevent Iran from retaliating against Israel." That was the reason we got involved.

So looking at those conditions, what has changed in terms of Israel's ambitions to strike? Nothing. In fact, I think that Netanyahu is even more emboldened to do it now. What has changed in terms of the United States going along with it after the fact? Nothing. All of those conditions where I could say, "Oh, well, now it's a matter of affecting Donald Trump's legacy"—that's been the case. That's been the case for months. That reality has been there. So, you know, what this election has done is call it by its name. It's put a clear picture on the truth. But what has it changed in terms of this president and that beholdenness, that control by Israel vis-à-vis this war with Iran?

Looking at this in terms of, okay, we now have the new Congress coming in on the 3rd of January. Okay, so what I think we're going to see in these coming months is that Donald Trump won't acknowledge that the war is a failure. He'll acknowledge that his people failed him. Pete Hegseth will be the first to go. I think Pete Hegseth is not only potentially facing impeachment, but will be fired by Trump beforehand as a scapegoat, to say, "Hey, the war wasn't a bad idea. Pete Hegseth just did it poorly. It was bad people, not a bad plan. It was not a bad policy. It was a bad secretary of defense."

So I think Hegseth will be gone. But then how does the conflict end or get cleaned up? Donald Trump cannot walk away from this. Donald Trump, at this point, cannot just walk away from this conflict. There either has to be a deal, or the war has to continue until there's a surrender. So I don't see Donald Trump making the deal, because the deal right now would be a maximalist deal from Iran saying, "You want to walk away from this war, Trump? We see the writing on the wall. You want out of this? You have to meet all of our demands." And surely on that list of demands is going to be Israel leaving Lebanon and Gaza. Who thinks that Israel is going to do that? I don't.

#Ray McGovern

Yeah, right. Without U.S. support, there's very little that Israel can do. And that is the main lesson of this election. For one, people are taking an anti-Israeli stance. And even Trump, on Election Day, said, "I don't think we want to give any more money to Israel." I mean, what's that all about? I see this as much more in flux. Let me use a term that Trump uses and I never do, although in Queens and the Bronx it was often used: Trump is a loser. Okay, so is Netanyahu. That's what's changed, okay? Now, Trump may have promised Netanyahu, "Look, just hold off. Hold off before your election. Hold off before my election." And so he did.

And Trump, of course, will keep his promise, won't he? Well, if I were Netanyahu, I would say, "Oh, my God, now it looks really bad for me unless I force this thing." So what I see is a false flag operation by Israel to force Trump back in. And I don't think that Netanyahu can be very sure that he can get Trump back in with both feet as he did on February 28th. Another thing—and Tony, I'd ask you this question specifically, because unlike me, who rose to the exalted rank of captain in the Army, you got to deal with four-star, three-star, two-star, and one-star generals, and you were yourself a field-grade officer.

So here we are. You've got Dan Caine, with whom you have dealt in the past, and for whom you had some hope at least last month. And then we have Hegseth, and we have—what's this guy's name? Oh, Admiral Cooper, Brad Cooper, who briefed the president himself this week. Why the hell? Well, okay, he briefed the president personally, okay? So the president says, "Brad, Pete, Dan, can we win this thing?" "Yes, sir. We can prevail." Now, is the president smart enough to ask a question that Jack Keane would never ask? Namely, how long could we last? How much ammunition do we have? Have you thought of that this time?

I mean, what do the British say? "Inventories." You know, we haven't looked into our inventories. Okay, so this is the question for you, Tony. What is the likelihood that when Trump asks his top brass now—let's say we know what Cooper's going to say, but let's say Vance is there, right? And you've got Hegseth, and you've got Dan Caine, whom you know personally. What are they going to say if the president is compos mentis enough to say, "How much ammunition, how many missiles do we have? Can we last more than four days?" What will be the answer from these top military officials and civilian military officials?

#Anthony Aguilar

Well, at the executive level, the national command authority level—i.e., the president, the secretary, and the chairman—and then among the military planners, what you expect from the commander at the highest levels is: "Don't tell me how to peel the egg. Just tell me what you want with the egg. Do you want deviled eggs? Do you want egg salad? What do you want? Don't tell me how to peel it. Tell me what you want at the end." So I think what is critically missing in the military strategy here

is an understanding of the reality of the situation. I think, in the beginning, Donald Trump was very much being pushed by Hegseth, pushed by Israel through U.S. policymakers, to go to war. Then he said, "Okay, we'll do it."

"We're going to go in. What's the likelihood of success?" And everybody around him says, "Hey, we're going to win it quick. It's going to be over real quick. We've got the Ayatollah in our sights. He'll be dead. The IRGC will give up. We'll wipe this out. It'll be over in hours, maybe days. And this will be easy. What do you say? What do you say, Don?" "Okay. Okay. Yeah." And then, as a leader sees things not going to plan as he's been told—and it's organic—I don't think that Donald Trump is a good leader. I also don't think he's very intelligent, nor is he very attuned to understanding the military problem. But he is a human being.

And even in that, you start to ask, "Okay, I trusted you. It's not going like you said. So now I'm going to start giving you left and right limits. I want this, but don't do this." And I think shortly after we saw that the attacks from the 28th of February into the 1st of March didn't yield the result that Donald Trump was promised, then the options were, "Okay, Dan Caine. Okay, Pete, what now? What now? Because this didn't work." "Oh, sir, we got it. We got it. Not to worry. Not to worry. We have a military plan." And I think the president probably sat down and said, "Okay, well, I don't want boots on the ground. I don't want large-scale conflict with a lot of American casualties."

"And I don't want to see American aircraft being shot out of the sky in large numbers." Okay, so then the military has to come up with a plan: "All right, sir, you don't want to fly planes over Iran. You don't want to put boots on the ground." Because I guarantee you, I absolutely guarantee anyone listening, that courses of action or contingency plans for boots on the ground, or for airstrikes with aircraft having to fly into Iranian airspace, or a combination of the two—I absolutely guarantee you that those options have been planned and are on the table. Are they being executed right now? No. Will they be executed? I don't know. But those plans are absolutely on the table.

It's the full spectrum of operational planning. You don't leave anything off the table in terms of feasibility. So those plans are on the table. Now, I think that what Donald Trump has said is like, "Hey, I don't want this to look bad politically. I don't want to lose a bunch of American lives." So these are called restraints in military planning. You always have constraints and restraints. Restraints are what the command authority puts on you: "Don't do that." You can do it, but your leadership has said don't. That's a restraint. A constraint is that it doesn't matter who wants you not to do it.

You can't because of a certain physical condition that can't be changed. For example, we can't just go straight across the land into Iran because there's the Persian Gulf. So that's a constraint. So you take the constraints, and now you take the restraints. Before, we had to conduct this operation using long-range precision-strike missiles: ATACMS, JASSM-1 and 2, Tomahawks, and PrSMs. We then had to have the ability to intercept a whole lot of stuff because we weren't striking launchers or missile sites within Iran directly. We were using intelligence for long-range strikes, and we weren't diminishing their ability to conduct these strikes.

So now military planners present those options and say, “Hey, the constraints have changed. You, sir, Donald Trump, need to change the restraints because we're now more constrained. Not only is it a matter of time, distance, and geography, but we don't have any more long-range precision missiles to do this type of military operation. We can't do that anymore.” So your choices are—and this goes back to strategic terms. As a strategic planner, you're always balancing termination of an operation and culmination of an operation. Termination of an operation is when you, the one conducting the operation, dictate when it's going to end.

Culmination of an operation is when either the operation has achieved success or you've run out of the means to fight. You don't want culmination to happen before termination because then you fail to meet your objective. What you want is for termination and culmination to meet, or for your ability to continue to exceed what's needed to meet the objective, meaning you've got more in the tank afterwards. Well, right now, the United States is in a position where, with the courses of action we tried to implement at the beginning and are pursuing in this war, we've reached culmination before we've been able to terminate hostilities based on winning or meeting our conditions.

So now military planners have to go back to the drawing board, or really just pull out the other plans that they had. “Okay, sir, either we walk away or we take deals. But if you want military action to continue, it can't be done this way because we have nothing left in that option.” So now, is that going to look like escalation? Is it going to be pushing U.S. naval assets from the Gulf of Oman closer into the Strait of Hormuz, therefore putting them at risk, but also bringing those naval systems closer to the targets, to where you're not having to rely on your long-range precision missiles? You can use your shorter-range, your SHORAD missiles.

Or are you actually going to have jets flying into Iranian airspace, dropping precision munitions from aircraft—not long-range precision munitions, but aircraft-based munitions, which we have a lot of—specifically on those targets, therefore increasing the risk of aircraft getting shot down? So the options now are either to escalate with whatever military power and capability we have available, which is no longer long-range standoff capability—it now means having to get closer—or we don't do that, and we no longer have the ability to pursue military operations to leverage a political end state. So we'd better just take a deal now. That's what's on the table.

I don't see this president, nor do I see Israel, accepting a deal on the table as it stands now, because the deal has only gotten better for Iran in terms of political, economic, and military leverage. So I don't see this president or Israel accepting that reality. What I do see this president and Israel doing is acting out of hubris, just like we've seen previous presidents do in all of these wars that we've fought. Iraq was going to be over in 30 days. Afghanistan was going to be over in 30 days, maybe two months. Syria, we were going to go in and out. We'd have the caliphate defeated in weeks. It would be over. Every time we get into these situations, we have presidents or an executive branch that thinks, “This will be quick. We can do it quick.” But what they don't account for is the fact that the enemy has a vote.

The enemy has a say. And if the president thinks, "Oh, now we're going to have to go to this course of action. We're going to have some losses. We're going to have some American dead. We're going to maybe lose a ship or two. We're going to lose some aircraft, but it will end it. It will end it," that will be a mistake. So, it's not the option I would choose, but I've been in the military long enough, including briefing this president, to know how he thinks when he looks at an end state to a conflict. And it is very much transactional. It's very much this cost for this reward. And if anyone thinks that American lives weigh into the cost in Donald Trump's thinking, other than as a political consideration or a political optic, well, I'm sorry to tell you, you are mistaken.

He does not care about American lives. And now that the political optics aren't as important as winning this war or finding a way out, that's the risk we're facing. And it's not something that I like or that I agree with or that I want, but I'm simply looking at things in terms of the reality. I'm looking at these things very much like they're sitting right in front of me on the table: okay, option A, option B, option C. What's the reality or the likelihood of these options—option A, B, or C? I don't see this president or Israel backing out with maximalist demands being handed to Iran. I don't see Iran stepping out, retreating, surrendering, and giving maximalist wins to the United States and Israel.

So if those two things are true—that neither side will give in to the other's maximalist demands—then there has to be a deal between them. What indications are there that a deal is coming together when the United States continues to strike Iran? We just bombed them two days ago on Qeshm Island. That doesn't give the impression of peace. "Hey, we want to negotiate." "You just struck us. You just destroyed another site on Qeshm Island." "Oh, that wasn't, you know, real. That wasn't us. You know, that was just kind of a little strike." That's what Donald Trump called it, right? A little strike. So how does the United States show a genuine desire to negotiate peace as we are actively striking Iranian soil? Iran is not stupid.

#Danny

Ray, to you. Yes.

#Ray McGovern

Yeah, a lot of food for thought there. My first thought is, damn, I wish, Tony, you were in the Pentagon or in the White House or somewhere where you could speak sense to these people. But my second thought is, you're far too modest to explain what you meant when you said you had personal experience with Donald Trump. Because you were an operations officer and you dared to ask questions, you got Dan Caine to ask questions when he was a one-star in Syria. And the issue was that Trump wrote a tweet and said, "We're getting out of Syria." And all the three-stars and four-stars were afraid to ask him what he meant. "Do you mean right away? That would mean a billion dollars' worth of weaponry and many thousands of people killed." And no one would ask him.

And so you said to Dan Caine, "For God's sake, ask the president if he had considered other options." And Dan Caine did. And the president said, "Sure, what are the other options?" They said, "Well, you can do it gradually. We can get this stuff out. Nobody will be killed." And he said, "That sounds reasonable to me." So the teaching point here is that Trump is surrounded by the Jack Keanes of this world and all those three-stars and four-stars, some of whom are still around, who just say, "Yes, sir, can do," despite the consequences. Now, just a couple of things while I have the floor, so to speak. Those strikes that you mentioned on Qeshm Island on Election Day—now, I don't know if they violated any restraints or any constraints, but it's hard for me to believe that they asked the president whether that was okay.

In other words, I think the Iranians themselves see that there's a degree of autonomy that not only Brad Cooper, admiral of CENTCOM, but also Hegseth feels quite comfortable exercising. That's the point about constraint or restraint. The weaponry, I think, is the key thing. I've said that forever. Now, let me just talk about one aspect that really is never addressed, but that we did address in the Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity memo that we put out yesterday. We talked about all the things that Trump should know, like, "Hey, Mr. President, there's an increasing likelihood that Iran will strike first." Whoa. He needs to think about that. There were a whole bunch of other things. But then, toward the end, we said, "Look, there may be an off-ramp here."

Now, I hate to bring Jack Keane into this again, but 40 years ago, at a reunion at Fordham University, he got up, all dolled up in his fancy suit, and said, "I'm going to Europe right now to tell those Europeans that Iran is this far away from a nuclear weapon. And I'm going to tell them the straight story, and we can't be cowardly." McGovern raises his hand—the skunk at the picnic—and says, "Jack Keane, are you unaware that the intelligence community has said that Iran stopped working on a nuclear weapon?" I don't know. It made me no friends, actually. Who are they going to believe, a four-star or a captain who got out after two years? Anyhow, what he's saying here, and what Trump is watching on his TV, has to do with Iran's nuclear program. And what Trump always says is, "Iran must not get a nuclear weapon."

Now, the reality is, as we pointed out in this memo—I'll just read it to you—U.S. intelligence in 2007 concluded unanimously and with high confidence that Iran stopped working on a nuclear weapon in 2003, okay? And there's no hard evidence that Iran has reversed that decision. No hard evidence at all, except there are some public statements suggesting that maybe they ought to think about that, okay? So most Americans, out of their ignorance, believe that Iran is working on a nuclear weapon, and they must not have a nuclear weapon. Okay, good. Here, Mr. President, here's your off-ramp: secure from Tehran a public statement that they are committed to stopping work on a nuclear weapon. Get the picture? Not many people can understand the subtlety.

Stop working on a nuclear weapon that they're not working on. At least, we have no evidence that they're working on one. Okay, that's number one. Then you obtain an agreement to an inspection regime. Now people say, "Oh my God, the Iranians will never tolerate that again." Well, let's see, for God's sake. In February, two days before the invasion, the Omani middleman came to Washington.

All he could see was Vance, and he told him, "Vance, look, we're this close, we're this close on the nuclear issue and other issues, and this would include inspections." Then he went to Margaret Brennan of CBS, for God's sake, and talked to her for an hour about all this—how close they were.

Two days later, boom. Okay, Mossad comes in, and Trump's at its side. So, okay, number one: secure a public statement—"We will stop working on a nuclear weapon." Two: an agreement for some kind of inspection regime. The IAEA has shown itself to be treacherous. Maybe we could come up with something else. Number three: persuade Iran to ship at least some of it, maybe all of its uranium enriched to 60%, out of the country. Russia keeps saying, "We'll accept it." Russia accepted it last time, in 2015, under the JCPOA. So we finish this up, and uncharacteristically, we make a policy proposal. Intelligence officers aren't supposed to do that. But we have enough policy guys. Anyway, we tolerated this.

This is what we said: "Netanyahu, of course, would not approve. But he has been lying about this issue for decades. He wants more war and probably thinks that he can veto any such off-ramp proposal." And this is the last sentence here: "It is time for you to let him know that he can't veto any such proposal." Oh, now, our editor added that. I let it go, even though it's a policy proposal. But that's the meat of it. It's time for you, Mr. President, to let Netanyahu know that he can't run the ship this time. Fool me three times? Forget it, Bibi. Fool me three times? Fool me three times, Hegseth? Forget it. Again, I will take a more optimistic note here.

Given the tragedy for the GOP yesterday, given the fact that Trump doesn't feel bound by any previous promise to honor what he promised Netanyahu—who knows for sure? He's mercurial. But I think this time there's a good opportunity. And this is a specific off-ramp. That sounds weird. It sounds weird on the face of it, but it might work. And there are other things they could do. In other words, they could let him down, let the president down, so he could put enough lipstick on this pig of defeat to claim victory and not get embroiled in a war that he has only three days' worth of ammunition for. I'll cease and desist there.

#Danny

Well, maybe I can get final words from both of you for the show, starting with you, Tony. One thing I wanted to add is that I just don't trust the Democrats, the Democratic Party. We've been through this rodeo so many times before, when they win a majority, and oftentimes we get very little out of it. And the Speaker of the House—or who will be the Speaker of the House, Hakeem Jeffries—just so happens to be one of Israel's best friends. So, your final thoughts for the show, and anything you wanted to add.

#Anthony Aguilar

What I'll say is, to your point, Danny—and I want to cover one quick point that Ray made that I think is important to understand—but to the point about the elections, I am happy to see that we

had so many Americans show up and vote, either by mail-in ballot or in person. My wife and I went to the polling site yesterday and voted in person. We're both military service members. My wife served a career in the Army in the 82nd Airborne Division. I served a career in the Army. We take voting very seriously. And we also enjoy going to a polling site, getting our ballots, voting in person, and exercising that constitutional right.

But I know that many still vote by mail-in ballot, et cetera. But the fact is that a lot of Americans came out to vote. Americans weren't satisfied with the status quo. They weren't going to sit at home and just let the current government roll over from what it was to what it will be. And that's encouraging. That's good to see. But to think that the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, or the individuals within those parties—you know, Hakeem Jeffries, for example—are any different in their relationship to Israel in terms of taking money or being in some way pulled into this and complicit in what Israel is doing? That's not going to change in this election cycle.

This doesn't change that. So we need to be clear-eyed going into this. Yes, it seems like the citizenry of the United States rebuked this war and the policies of this president. But we're replacing it with some of the same old actors. You know, Hakeem Jeffries, who's now going to be the House Speaker in place of Mike Johnson, also takes a lot of money from Israel and is also pro-Zionism, pro-Israeli Zionism. So in terms of that, a lot of things aren't going to change. So we all have to be very careful to pay very close attention to what the Democrats say and what they're doing.

You know, two parties, two sides of the same coin, two wings of the same bird. Now, one thing that Ray mentioned that I think is important to highlight is that military planners, or even leaders and general officers, often think, "Well, the president or the SECDEF or the CENTCOM commander, of course they know what I know. They know the things that I know in terms of how I see it from my position, being involved in this part of the operation as a military planner." You know, I do recall when we were in Syria and that tweet came out: "We're leaving Syria."

And all of these questions that people ask, like, well, has the president been briefed on how many billions of dollars of equipment, weapons, ammunition, vehicles, et cetera, we'd leave behind that we can't get out if we just leave? Or the fact that the Syrian Democratic Forces that we've empowered, that are here now, could then be at risk of total wipeout by Turkey? And therefore, who would then continue the fight against ISIS? Has anyone told the president that ISIS is not yet defeated? He may think it is based on what some people have said, but that's not true as we know it on the ground. Is anybody going to tell him that? And, you know, these three-stars and four-stars were like, "Oh, of course he knows that."

Okay. How does he know that? Who told him? The SecDef? The SecDef doesn't know that. We know that. He hasn't asked any of us. Has he asked you, sir? Has he asked you, four-star general? No, he hasn't asked you? Well, then how does he know? I don't think he does know. That's not fair to whoever the president is who's making decisions. If he doesn't know, it's our job to inform him. "Oh, well, you know, we're just going to do what we're told." And then, sure enough, when certain

officers had the backbone to come up and say, “Hey, sir, Mr. President, with all due respect, sir, are you aware of A, B, and C?” “Oh, no, I wasn't aware of that.”

“Oh, I wasn't aware of that at all. Well, how would that impact the decision that I made that we're leaving?” “Hey, sir, you're the decision maker. If you're telling us to leave, got it. Just be aware this is what we're leaving on the table.” And then, as soon as he was notified or made aware of that, he was like, “Oh, well, maybe we shouldn't leave.” “Well, sir, that's an option. Here are the options.” And, you know, so oftentimes I think there are people in the military who have this idea that the boss knows, the commander knows. No, they don't. No, they don't. And it's the job of those below them, like Admiral Brad Cooper or the commanders therein, to have the intestinal fortitude to inform the executive decision makers of the truth.

Not the sugar-coated, rose-colored-glasses truth that they want to hear, but the truth as it is in reality. And that doesn't always have to mean rebuking the president or being disrespectful. It's just a presentation of the truth. “Hey, sir, you think that that's blue. Have you seen it? Oh, no, you haven't seen it? Who told you it was blue? Oh, someone else who hasn't seen it? Okay, well, I'm telling you, because I'm sitting here and I colored it, that it's orange. It's not blue.” “Oh, well, so-and-so said it was blue.” “So-and-so is wrong. I'm sorry. I colored it. I drew it. It's orange.” “Oh, man, that changes my decision.” Exactly. So that's also part of it: the president right now is surrounded by people.

Pete Hegseth, Dan Caine—now, unfortunately, because he's been sidelined—and Brad Cooper, who know that it's orange, but the president wants to believe that it's blue. So they're going to convince the president that it's blue and try to make this orange thing look blue. And it's not. And that's what's led us to where we are right now: military leaders not providing clear, honest, and realistic assessments to this president. Would that president still go with what was right or wrong anyway? I don't know. But it's clear to me, based on what we hear this president say, that he's not even informed of the truth and the reality of what's happening, because we see that.

I can see, based on how this president responds to certain things, that I don't think he's being told the truth. Again, if he were told the truth, would he still acknowledge it or do the right thing? Probably not. But it's clear to me, in the way he communicates, that he's not even tracking what the truth is. And that is a failure of those military leaders like Brad Cooper, like Dan Caine, you know, or Pete Hegseth. I know it's almost futile to say that Pete Hegseth would lie. Oh, my God. But yeah, Pete Hegseth's a liar.

#Danny

Ray, final words. Hold on one second.

#Ray McGovern

Well, God told them to lie, you know? I mean, Hegseth—you have to look at his frame of mind. Well, this is not really funny, is it? We had hopes for Caine based on the experience you had with him, Tony. I mean, you did the background work. You were the ops officer, right? And you encouraged Caine to ask his question as a one-star. He was there, right, in Syria. "Mr. President, have you thought about this?" And you changed his mind. And the notion that there are no people with your kind of integrity and guts to tell the president now is an indignity in our system that didn't exist way back when—when I was in the Army, anyway. Now, let me just say this.

It is another indignity, in my opinion, that General Caine doesn't quit. You say he's been sidelined. He knows which end is up. He knows what a disaster this war would be, not only in military terms, but worldwide. A depression? Worse than the 1930s? He's smart enough to know that. Has he got no Lieutenant Colonel Tony Aguilar to tell him that? I suppose maybe he doesn't. But you ought to quit, Dan Caine. And you, General Sylvia, a three-star, head of operations for the Joint Chiefs—you already quit, but you ought to speak out, for God's sake. What is this omertà code that you generals keep when you get to be four-stars or three-stars? I mean, it can't be that all of you are lusting after defense industry jobs.

There have to be a few people with integrity like you, like Tony, or like Dan way back in Syria. Speak out, for God's sake. You owe it to us to speak out now. Sylvia, again, Sylvia, you were dismissed for cause. Tell the American people what the cause was instead of sipping martinis in the officers' club for free—virtually for free. So if you have the president listening to these sycophants, not to mention my old friend General Payne, right, this is a really bad situation. So what does that mean to us? It means that it's really up to us. It really is up to us. We have to find our way onto programs like this. Danny, thank you. And just speak to the American people, because now they're willing to listen. We learned that yesterday, okay? So I'll quote my favorite theologian again, Annie Dillard, who died two months ago: "It's really up to us. You know, there never has been anyone other than us." Let's keep at it. Okay.

#Danny

Very well said, Ray. That definitely is one of the more encouraging things. There certainly is more room to get the message out, more ears willing to listen. Everybody, hit the like button before you go. That helps boost the show in the algorithm. Tomorrow I have Patrick Henningsen and Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson on at 1 p.m. Eastern time, November 5th. So do check us out then. Hit the like button before you go. Check out all the places to support the show in the video description below. Thanks to everyone who viewed and to the moderators. Thanks for the super sticker. Appreciate it. Thanks, gentlemen. We'll head off together. Appreciate all of your time. And until next time, everybody, see you tomorrow. Bye. Thanks, Danny.