

Ray McGovern: The Way a Long Iran War Destroys Israel and the Entire GCC

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#Nima

Hi everybody, today is Wednesday, April 22nd, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother Ray McGovern, is here with us. Welcome back, Ray.

#Ray

Thank you, Nima. Glad to be with you.

#Nima

Ray, let me start with the situation between Iran and the United States. Yesterday was the deadline for the ceasefire last night, and Donald Trump was trying to force Iranian negotiators to go to Islamabad. But that failed because Iran doesn't see the negotiations going anywhere good for them, and they don't see anything good coming out of that for the chaos that is happening in the Middle East. We had the head of the Iranian parliament, Qalibaf. He said that before going to negotiations, they have to put an end to this blockade. And not only that, the war on all fronts should end. What is your understanding? Donald Trump is talking about Sunday as a deadline for the Iranians, and we know by Sunday the aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush is going to be in the region. That's why he's putting three to five days. Your understanding of the current situation?

#Ray

Well, Nima, I think the latest tidbit and the latest deadline come from the Israeli media. Am I correct in that?

#Nima

You're right.

#Ray

Oh, well, I wonder how they know about it first. I mean, hello. The whole thing is being driven by Israel. You mentioned the parliamentary speaker, who is the lead negotiator. And, you know, I want to quote something he said about three or four days ago. And this is what he said, quote, "The U.S. government claims that 'America first' is the most important thing to it. But in practice, it has shown that 'Israel first' is what it's really all about, because the U.S. government makes decisions based on false information from Israel." End quote. Well, now, my God, people might be tempted to think, were we broadcasting in major media? Oh, God, how are you going to believe the Iranians, for God's sake? You don't have to believe the Iranians.

I will say one more time that this is an open-and-shut case. It's never been clearer who's driving our policy, who made us, who led us into this war in Iran, because our Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, who was also the National Security Advisor — namely, the guy who has the little funnel that he puts what he chooses the president to read through, okay? He declared just two days after the attack on February 28th — well, I don't want to paraphrase it — this is what he said, Reuters, okay? This is a quote: "We knew there was going to be an Israeli action. We knew that this would precipitate an attack against Iranian forces. And we knew that if we didn't preemptively go after them before they launched their attacks, we would suffer higher casualties."

And so we did what we did. Hello? If you look at those sentences very closely, what is this guy admitting to? Now, there's a video on Reuters that still carries this. It's not been pulled from the web. And I looked at it again just before we went on. It also says, Rubio, quote, "Did you know that the Iranians' terrorist regime has the ability potentially to shut off 20% of global energy? That's the leverage they have because of the Strait of Hormuz. But that's their navy, and we are destroying their navy." End quote. I'm like, they can't. It's the IRGC. It's built into those cliffs — artillery, or whatever you call it, rocket launchers. So this is the kind of naivete that not only is advising Trump, but makes no disguise of the fact that this is all about Israel. They went first.

Isn't this a nice phrase? We decided to go after them. We decided to attack the hell out of the Iranians. So this is the kind of advice that Trump is getting. And when he laid on that embargo, or whatever you call it now, that was after he had made the sensible decision to defer whatever deadline he had at the time. I forget which deadline, but that was to show strength. And who told him to do that? Probably this guy Rubio, or probably even Netanyahu himself. They're, you know, they're very close. And, of course, Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, used to give his bed to Netanyahu when Netanyahu visited his father, who was convicted of various corruption crimes. He's now our ambassador, I think, to Paris. My God, it doesn't get — I mean, you couldn't write a novel on this. They wouldn't believe it.

#Nima

Ray, I think, Donald Trump—I want to focus on what is going on in the Middle East, considering the regional issues. But let's get back to the United States, which I think is so important when it comes to domestic policy—how the domestic policy is working for Donald Trump. And we learned yesterday that Tulsi Gabbard is going to leave the administration. What does that mean to you?

#Ray

I hadn't seen that, Nima, but I trust you implicitly. That means that she's finally decided that she can't have any impact among the people like Rubio and Haspel. I think she was... I guess to her credit, if she thought that she could influence things, she was better hanging around than just being gone and have some clunk come in of the Rubio stripe or the Haspel stripe and lead all our intelligence agencies. So I guess she's had it up to here. What it means to me at first glance is that it was informed by the White House.

#Nima

By the White House. Yeah, they informed that Tulsi Gabbard has until the midterms to resign.

#Ray

That's a White House spokesperson?

#Nima

It seems, yeah. It says the White House announced that, yeah.

#Ray

All right. Well, that is for sure. I just missed it—I was giving a speech last night. I haven't caught up. So, yeah, I think that's not a good sign. I mean, Tulsi should have—she should have quit when one of her deputies, Joe Kent, did. This is most remarkable. This is the highest-level resignation on principle by an intelligence officer since Plato or Socrates. Now, here it is. I have him, too, because I think what Joe Kent did was so remarkable. People need to remember, okay, this was the day before Tulsi Gabbard testified by order of Congress on the annual threat briefing, okay? Now, one of the senators, the younger senator from Georgia, he said, "Now, Tulsi, this is the annual threat briefing. Was there an imminent threat? Is that why we attacked Iran?" And she says, "Well, I can't really say. I can't really say because it's a—let me get rid of that."

#Ray

I'm sorry about that. I thought I had turned it off.

#Ray

I can't say because the president is the only person, the only person in the whole world who can say that it's an imminent threat. Well, the point is that Joe Kent saw this coming. And he said, OK, I'm going to quit. I'm going to quit with you, with no disclaimers, just say, I'm quitting and why I quit. And I'm going to write a letter to the president, whom I adored, who I thought was the cat's meow, OK? And so he said in this letter, the day before Tulsi testified, Joe Kent to Trump—this is a virtual quote: In good conscience, I have to resign. I cannot, in good conscience, support the attack on Iran. Iran posed no imminent threat.

We started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American-Israel lobby. Whoa! No wonder they went after him the next day, saying he's under FBI investigation and all this kind of stuff. He said it: I resign, and this is why. That's never said, especially if it has to do with Israel. Now, that was on the 17th of March. You may not know this, but that's St. Patrick's Day. I think St. Patrick breathed into Kent's ear and said, look, tell the truth for once. All kidding aside, two weeks later, March 31st, this is what Kent said. While all these peace deals were being bruised about—quote—"For any peace agreement to work, we must first restrain Israel."

Israel will thwart any peace deal unless we take away the military aid it needs to attack Iran. I mean, hello, this guy's got guts. This guy is pointing out the real fly in the ointment. And even though the press is pretty much suppressing this, you and I aren't, and any American can read this and say, look, what Gallup has said is not only led off by what Rubio and Joe Kent have said, but it's been the case forever. It's just now that people have been able to realize that. The other good news is that Israel's standing in the United States among the people—we have a Pew poll. I think I may have mentioned this already, but it bears repeating.

60% of Americans across the board have an unfavorable view of Israel now. Netanyahu, not so bad—only 59%. Netanyahu's a fool, okay? Not a fool, but just trouble. That's a sea change. And when you talk about younger voters and people who are more aware, an increasing number are watching programs like yours, Nima, or others. So this is not what Netanyahu had bargained for. Now there's kind of a stuck-in-the-mud sort of morass. And if Trump laid on this extra blockade or maritime—whatever it is he calls it—because Netanyahu said, no, you've got to show strength now, if you're going to miss the next deadline, you've got to show what you can do. And look, you can do this with a couple of ships out there in the Indian Ocean. Give me a break.

So I think that by and by, the U.S. Navy will tell Rubio and Hegseth, look, we can't really enforce this. It's a really big ocean. You don't look at the map—it's a real, it's almost like, you know, it's a big ocean. And if we board a Chinese-flagged ship, we don't know what's going to happen because there are Chinese warships headed in this direction too. Bear in mind that that container ship that was trying to get back to port in Iran—not through the strait, but just trying to get back to Bandar Abbas, I think—bear in mind, that was coming back from China with Chinese goods, I suppose, a container ship. But, you know, that was a Chinese operation that came through the Strait of

Malacca. And another thing, of course, is that some people are thinking now about these various straits.

If Iran can do that to the Strait of Hormuz, who could do it to the Strait of Malacca? And the Chinese are terribly sensitive to that because that's their main supply route, not only for Iranian oil but for so many other things. This has all kind of broadened out into a global problem. And people like Hegseth and people like Rubio are not really equipped to deal with this kind of thing. And that, I think, plus Netanyahu, is why we're in this mess and why I still hope we can get out of it when it becomes clear not only the Pakistanis feeling betrayed, but the rest of the world is feeling betrayed because of what this is inevitably doing to the price of gas, natural gas, and oil. For many months now, bound to happen, needs to stop, like, soon.

#Nima

Ray, just the breaking news here: Somalia announced a ban on all Israeli ships passing through the Bab el-Mandeb in the Red Sea. Somalia is not Yemen anymore.

#Ray

We're losing our allies. Somalia was on that list of seven that we were going to kind of take over. Well, look what happened. This is the trend. All kinds of erstwhile allies are jumping off the ship, okay? Well, some of them like rats, others just sensible people. Europe is in really bad shape. NATO is over. NATO is not a viable entity anymore. No one can depend on Trump coming to the rescue of some crazy Estonian who shoots a missile into St. Petersburg, for God's sake. So the world has changed in a marked way. And of course, with Russia and China together as never before, and really together on Iran, they're not going to let Iran lose. For the nonce, they're being perspicacious. They're being careful and cautious, as they always are.

But if they're shoved in the direction of having to defend Iran with more than weaponry and supplies and intelligence, there's a good chance they'll do it. Where they do it, well, they have lots of options to do it. They can do it in the Baltic, they can do it in the South China Sea, they can do it in the Taiwan Strait. I don't think that's likely to happen just now, but it's one of the things that Hegseth and Rubio and the others are probably totally oblivious about. And I just cite that one thing I caught—I watched the whole thing again. Here's Rubio talking about how, in effect, Israel made us do it. They moved, and we were anyhow. So at the end of it again, I'll just say, ha ha, you know, they have the ability to interdict 20% of the world's energy. That's why we're destroying their navy. Ha! You know, it's crazy. Look where we are now.

A couple more ships have been boarded. It's getting pretty tentative and pretty dangerous. But I believe that our military—whether it's the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who seems to be a real nothing, or it's the Joint Chiefs themselves—saying, look, you know, you want a wider war? We could do that, but we could lose. I mean, you want to lose a wider war? So I hope there's enough

resilience or enough strength on the part of these people that bubble up to the top and get four stars for it. I hope they can just come in and say, look, not only are we not going to let you play with the nuclear codes, Mr. President, but could you just go into the next room while we figure this out? And then we'll tell you what's the best course of action. I think it's come to that. I sure hope it has. I wish I were more confident in my hopes.

#Nima

Ray, you know that the support Donald Trump is receiving from the Republican Party is shrinking as we speak. And one of the main reasons is what Tucker Carlson is talking about. Megyn Kelly recently—she's not happy with the situation and the way the Trump administration is running the foreign policy of the United States. And there are many people within the MAGA movement, within those influencers who were so important for Donald Trump being elected in the United States. And they're talking right now. They're just saying that this is not the way we wanted the United States' foreign policy to be. One of them is Tucker Carlson. Here's what he said, Ray.

#Speaker 03

And now it's my biggest regret. I regret helping put him back in power. At the time, I believed the promises. I believed he stood for us. But looking at it now, it feels like a betrayal. I'll be tormented for a long time by the fact that I played a role in getting Trump elected. And I want to say that I'm sorry for misleading people. That's the hardest part—feeling like we were needed for votes but not valued after. He speaks about strength, loyalty, and putting the country first. But when you really pay attention, it's obvious who comes first: his own interests, his image, and his alliances beyond our borders.

Meanwhile, those of us who believed in him, who showed up, who voted—we're the ones left dealing with the fallout. I'm done pretending otherwise. Supporting him was a mistake, and I know more people are starting to come to the same conclusion. Because while ordinary Americans are struggling—rents rising, food prices climbing, health care becoming harder to afford—our tax money keeps flowing overseas. Billions spent on foreign conflicts while families here are just trying to stay afloat. That's not America first. That feels like America being left behind.

#Nima

What is it, Ray, and is that important for Donald Trump? Do you think when he hears something like this from Tucker Carlson, how does he take it?

#Ray

If he's in his sane mind—and that's a major question, in all seriousness—he's got to take that as a dangerous signal. What about Charlie Kirk? What about all these people? Now, Tucker I admire

greatly. I mean, you could take a frivolous attitude. There was a cartoon I saw today with Tucker with a great big black feather coming out of his mouth, and the caption was, "I think that's a crow feather, okay?" In other words, Tucker's eating crow. Well, so much the better for him to admit this. I mean, these were violated promises. I mean, when you see who Trump was running against, there's even more understanding. Now, I could never vote for him, but that was for domestic reasons. I was not deceived on the other stuff, but, you know, in my ethos, you take care of the poor, you take care of the widow or the orphan, the refugee.

No human being, in my view, can be illegal. My folks were illegal when they first arrived. Well, they weren't illegal because they were all kinds of Irishmen and not so many Jews, by the way, you know. So there are all kinds of things that have happened. So I was against it on the basis of his internal thing and what I knew to be his bowing to the Epstein class, the people who were running him, and Israel. But I could see where other people would see. Some of my closest colleagues admit this—Scott Ritter, Larry Johnson, the others—they all thought that they could take his word for it when he said, no more eternal wars and I'm going to stand up, you know. Well, it turns out he turns out to be worse than Biden on Israel. And, you know, Biden, bad enough, tolerating, arming, enabling genocide, for God's sake, forced starvation, the whole nine yards.

But here comes Trump doing all these same things and then starting a war, or acquiescing in Israel starting the war against Iran, which no president before—he brags about it—no president before me has ever, well, no president before me has been so hooked to Netanyahu or Ariel Sharon as I am. And of course, I raise the question again, what is that extra hook? And I think it's the Epstein thing. I have no great proof of that, but logic suggests to me that Netanyahu has the tapes, has the videotapes with underage girls and all the whole Shamir thing that the Justice Department in our country has been able to suppress so far, but they're there. And that would be the end of Trump personally. And I think he puts Trump personally above America first. It's really Trump first, Israel second, and maybe America if they qualify.

#Nima

Ray, our mutual friend Larry Johnson reported that in the latest security meeting yesterday, there was some sort of discussion about the use of nuclear weapons, and Donald Trump was asking for nuclear codes. How serious is that, do you think? You see a lot of desperation in the attitude of this president, Donald Trump, but how far is that gonna go?

#Ray

Well, Nima, as you know, I spent a half century trying to look at the world through the shoes of those in the Kremlin. My God, you know, if there's anything that can be said for the Russian outlook on American presidents, it's that they have to be predictable. OK, that's why since 2015, 2016, I could say with confidence the Russians would never want Trump to win. He's mercurial. He's crazy. They would prefer Hillary Clinton, though known, as obnoxious as they thought she was and knew

she was. And, you know, I have proof now. Some of the CIA analysts who were overruled by Brennan and the others were saying precisely what I just said. Oh, no, no, he wants Trump and blah, blah, blah, blah.

So, suffice it to say that these stories, if they have substance—and I've learned to trust Larry Johnson on his sources—the very specter of raising the question of the nuclear codes must have the Kremlin really, really up in arms and on high alert. The only saving grace now, I hope, is that we still have this secret channel, not only between Putin and Trump, but also with our military. So that's new. That didn't exist, I don't think, under Biden. There may be a fail-safe mechanism there. But, you know, with the symptoms of Trump acting as he is, as a narcissist to the nth degree, who would say that he would not sacrifice or risk major war to prevent Netanyahu from pulling out some of those videos that I believe he has?

#Nima

Ray, to your understanding, the way that you see this situation in the Middle East, do you think it's possible to reach some sort of security architecture in the region? I'm talking about West Asia, between Iran and the GCC countries. Or maybe, because as time goes by, Donald Trump — we've seen that Donald Trump, the United States under the Trump administration, is not willing to put Israel aside, to see the region without this sort of Israeli mindset of the Greater Israel. Because all they want is the Greater Israel, and they want to expand their borders. That's the main agenda. That's why I don't see anything good coming to the region going through that sort of mindset. But how do you see that working together with Russia and China? Is that going to be possible, to reach some sort of understanding among the countries in the region?

#Ray

I guess it will be possible, in my view. And this is not Pollyanna speaking. If you look at the world at large and what the old Soviets used to call the world correlation of forces or power, it's shifted to the East. Now, Iran is right in the middle of things. They have to deal with stuff in the West, but they have great support not only from Russia and China, but the other BRICS countries. Iran is going to survive. Greater Israel is not going to survive. Now, what gives me to believe this? What's his name—Ghalibaf, the head of the Congress or Parliament, the Majlis, as they call it in Iran. You know, he made it very clear. Let me just put it in human terms, my terms, that if Iran got a good deal, made a deal with Trump, and they got Trump to agree to various things, why would they want to include Lebanon, for God's sake?

Why do they care about Lebanon, okay? I mean... the Arab monarchies, they don't give a rat's patootie about Lebanon or Palestine or their fellow Palestinians or their fellow Arabs. Do your deals with Trump and the Epstein class. Well, there's an altruistic element to this, and it's hard for Westerners to understand from this realpolitik sort of thing. But when this chairman of your parliament says, look, we insisted on Lebanon—Lebanon is part of the ceasefire—in other words, we

care about what happens to those people in Lebanon that the Israelis are suppressing. You know, we talk about the arc or the axis of resistance—not of terrorism or evil—resistance. Now, please, Americans, try to understand what I'm saying. Look, resistance is not only allowed, it's totally legal.

In 1967, when Israel acquired the occupied territories—that was in June. In November, the UN Security Council voted unanimously, Resolution 242, unanimously, that Israel must withdraw from occupied territories. Well, they left the Sinai because the Sinai didn't really matter very much. But how about these other occupied territories? And they're occupying, what, about a third or a fourth of Lebanon, okay? Palestine, Gaza, for God's sake. So what McGovern is learning is that some people can really adhere to principle. And even when it makes it more difficult to conclude an agreement with the likes of Trump, Lebanon counts, all right? Lebanon counts because it's a victim of the same kind of aggression by Israel. Israel's not going to be allowed to do this.

We're in enough power to cut off the streets for as long as we want to. We're in power enough to... We have not only a navy, but all kinds of things to wreak mischief in the world. And so I guess I have to say this with some wonderment, that whereas the Arab monarchies and so forth—I mean, as you know better than anyone, Iranians are not Arabs—but they are Muslims, and they do care about other Muslims who are being persecuted, whether it's by Shia or by the powers that be, by the Epstein class, if you will. So it's not going to end well for Israel. That is, and let's all pray about this.

That is, if Netanyahu is somehow restrained from using the nuclear weapons that he has—not one or two, but several—to hit major Iranian cities, I think he would know that's the Samson option indeed, meaning he will perish as well, and good riddance. But my God, do we want that to happen? Do we think that Trump will be strong enough to dissuade him from doing that? That's the thing that worries me, keeps me up at night. There's got to be some kind of gingerly, cautious way for the Chinese, for the Russians, for the Pakistanis, for everybody who has a head on straight to dissuade Netanyahu.

Give them just enough to let Israel win, exist in its pre-1967 borders, for God's sake. Let them have that. But give an end to this greater Israel dream and try to suppress these... these Zionist Christians and Zionists, this and that, that can't abide by the fact that Israel cannot go back and do what is on page 67 of their Bible, you know, the great old Israel. Bibles are Bibles. We have different kinds of Bibles, and I have a different interpretation. I don't think that Yahweh was a real estate magnate apportioning little pieces of plots of various peoples, and I don't think he prefers one chosen people over the other. I don't even think he is a he, I think.

I think the worst insult we can give to the supreme being is to mold him in human terms and give him the qualities, masculine, feminine, which he transcends. But he has as many qualities—favorable, wonderful, feminine characteristics—she does, as he does. So, God Almighty, if there is one, is not like Hegseth thinks he is, right? And there's hope, and people waking up to the fact that, look, you know, why is Trump—why did Trump pick a fight with the Pope, for God's sake? Why is Hegseth, a newbie Catholic, that kind of Catholic I am, disputing the Pope on theological grounds?

My God, you know? So in all seriousness now, 55% of Catholics voted for Trump last time around. Okay. He needs, he needs the Catholic vote. Does he not care?

The midterms are coming up. Does he not give a rat's patootie about the midterms? Maybe. Does he have something else in mind? Does he intend to put ICE and the National Guard, and maybe even the armed forces, into action to protect the polling sites and make sure the election doesn't come out the way it inevitably should if it's legal? I don't know, but it gives me great pause that he would resort to that, and it would help explain why he doesn't seem to care about losing the Catholic vote, or picking a fight with the Pope, or losing the younger people who no longer support Israel no matter what. So that gives me additional pause, and I think that's the main short-term challenge we have in this country—to make sure that doesn't happen.

#Nima

Donald Trump is going to go to China on May 15th, and he's trying to make some sort of leverage for himself before going to China with the case of Iran. I don't see the Iranian government being willing to help him save face in the current situation that he is confronting. What is, in your opinion, what would be the off-ramp for Donald Trump in a way that he's not going to be that much, you know, influenced by the picture of the war in the Middle East to go to China, to have some sort of, you know, some sort of balance between the United States and China, talking with Xi?

#Ray

Well, Nima, there's many a slip between cup and lip. That's about three weeks away, isn't it? Call me a doubter, but I don't know if that's ever going to happen. And if the situation is as fraught as it is now, I don't think it will happen. Now, let me give you an amateur psychology diagnosis of Trump and China. Do you remember, I think it was the first, second, and third of September last year—Victory in Asia, victory over Japan—the Chinese and the Russians and everybody else celebrating to a fare-thee-well, 50 heads of state there, all kinds of folks, big, big parade. Who wasn't there? Trump. Trump wasn't there. And, you know, I saw a change in his demeanor.

When he looked at that and sort of realized, whoa, everything's kind of going in that direction. I wasn't even invited, for God's sake, you know. And I think it was at that point that he realized, wow, I've got to do something here. And, well, what do I do? And Israel comes in, oh, we'll show you how to assert your might. Iran must not have a nuclear weapon. So make sure you follow our lead here. We're going to attack on Saturday. We told Rubio, and he's going to tell you. So, you know, it doesn't make a lot of sense. But I think that Trump does sense the shift toward China. And he wants to go to Beijing, too. It's a year late, or 10 months late. But he'd be there, and he'd be talking with Xi, who is a master diplomat.

And Xi's not going to give him a lot of slack on this thing. And particularly if U.S. Naval or Special Forces paratroop down on ships plying trade between Iran and China. So in a way, if Trump really

wants this visit, maybe there's some deterrent for him to shoot up Chinese-flag or Iranian-flag ships doing business with China. But I think that this is kind of just a wish on Trump's part to go there. Xi's not going to say, no, don't come, because there is a chance it could influence Trump. The big thing here, Nima, is that what I've seen since I came on duty, it's almost exactly—well, I won't count the years—1963 in the CIA, my first portfolio was the Sino-Soviet conflict, okay?

They were shooting at each other across their riverine borders. China was claiming 1.6 million square kilometers of Siberia taken under unequal treaties. Was that true historically? Yeah, it was. It was just crazy. They were vying for leadership of what was then the communist movement, right? And so I had a ball trying to persuade people this was real, okay? They're not making it up. It's really real, okay? Now, when I saw it turn, just as I was leaving the agency, late '80s, there was a turn. More enlightened leadership in Russia and China. I said, you know, we don't have to disarm ourselves with all the attention we're giving. Let's fight.

Let's get together and see if we can be strong against the United States. So now I'm seeing the fruition of that. Here's an example: in 1964, the total trade between the Soviet Union and China was \$200 million. Total trade, okay? Last year, it was over \$200 billion. Now, I'm not really good at math, but I'm told that's a big, big increase. And that's just one mark of how China and Russia are very complementary in what they bring to the table. And the Russians can easily make up for what oil China will miss coming from Iran for the nonce. Not for the longer term—they'll start hurting—but for the nonce. And I hope the nonce comes to an end pretty soon.

#Nima

Ray, NATO is experiencing something new in the Middle East, which we haven't seen before compared to the war in Ukraine. We had some sort of disagreements over Ukraine since Donald Trump was elected in the United States, between Europeans and the United States. But the division that is happening in the Middle East is somehow significant because Donald Trump was desperately asking Europeans to join in the Strait of Hormuz, to open up the Strait of Hormuz, and they said no to Donald Trump.

They helped him in terms of defense, with radars, bases, and everything to defend Israel. But when it came to the offensive, they said no to Donald Trump in the Strait of Hormuz. And Donald Trump today, there is a list coming out dividing NATO countries into two parts: bad and good. The bad are those countries like the United Kingdom, Spain, and France that didn't help Donald Trump. And the good ones are Poland, Romania, and the Baltics who helped him. What is your understanding of NATO today?

#Ray

This is a really bizarre reflection in reverse of what Donald Rumsfeld called old Europe, right? Old Europe—France, Britain, Germany—and the new Europe, the ones right on the border: Poland,

Czechoslovakia, or Czechoslovakia, the rest of them, Hungary. It's bizarre because NATO has just fallen apart. The EU is a subject of ridicule by the Russian ambassador there in the UN. I mean, he's got the story right—the foreign policy person. And these people are subjects of ridicule because they don't know their basic history, among other things. So the Europeans, I think, are being forced now to come up with a realistic appreciation of things. At the last NATO summit, that fellow, the new Secretary General, Rutte.

#Nima

Rutte, Mark Rutte.

#Ray

Right. He was waiting for Trump to arrive. When Trump came in a little later, oh, thank God, daddy is here, daddy is here, everything up here. Well, daddy has turned out to be a deadbeat daddy, okay? No alimony, no child support, no nothing. As a matter of fact, unwarranted, really unwarranted criticism of NATO countries for not helping him out in the predicament that he caused in the Strait of Hormuz. Give me a break. I mean, did he really expect these people to be able to come in there when the U.S. Navy couldn't do it? So if I'm a European, I'm looking at this and I'm saying, well, you know, NATO is over. It's over. I don't—well, Marco Rubio didn't even show up for the latest NATO ministerial.

What does that tell you? So not only is NATO over, daddy is a deadbeat. And the next summit's supposed to be in Albania. I've been saying ever since the last one that I don't think that's going to happen because it would just demonstrate the fissures in NATO rather than the unity that they really need. And my hope is that despite all this warmongering and all this feeding of their military-industrial complex, when they find out they don't have the money to do this, when several of their leaders lose their jobs, the European people are smart enough to put two and two together and ask, well, wait a second now, why do we have to believe what Joe Biden says about the terrible Russians?

I mean, you may recall his last inaugural. I remember very... okay. Is there anyone in this room that believes that Putin would stop in Ukraine and not go to Poland and the Baltic states? Anybody in this room? Well, my God. There is not one scintilla of evidence that Putin has this in mind. As a matter of fact, he already stopped. As I said before, he stopped in April, six weeks after he started into Ukraine. They had a deal: no Ukrainian NATO, we'll work out the rest of this stuff later, we'll have a ceasefire. And the U.S. and the U.K. said no. No, we want to weaken Russia. So you Ukrainians do what we say, and we'll support you for as long as it takes. And I feel sorry for them. Now it's as long as it takes.

They're left on their own. They have to get rid of their totally corrupt leadership. And the Europeans themselves have to get rid of their totally corrupt leadership. Look at Starmer, for God's sake, the way he's in trouble. I don't think he may have left today, for all I know. I think he's really about to

leave. And, you know, Scholz, Macron, I mean, these guys are from hunger, as we used to say in the Bronx, and they're on their way out. And my hope is that the American and the European elite, the newspaper people that are so much beholden to the money they get from the corporations, they'll finally see, well, you know, maybe it's not such a bad thing that NATO is no more.

Because maybe then we don't have to spend so much of our money and sacrifice social programs, which always made life so nice for us in these countries. And maybe it's all because, well, maybe we ought to at least talk to the Russians, because maybe they don't really intend to do what Joe Biden told us they would want to do. As a matter of fact, did they really stop with Ukraine? What does that mean? So I think there's hope there. In other words, I would suggest it's a good thing that NATO is falling apart. The only thing that would make it a bad thing is if the Russian threat to take over the rest of Ukraine and Poland and the Baltic states was real, and it's fake. It's fake news. Pardon the expression.

#Nima

Yeah. Ray, before wrapping up, it's been a while since we talked about Ukraine. How do you see the situation in Ukraine? Do you see, as the war in the Middle East is getting much more complicated, I don't know if you predict that we are going to see some sort of massive escalation with the new aircraft carrier going to the Middle East. But putting that aside, how has the war in the Middle East influenced the conflict in Ukraine, in your opinion?

#Ray

Well, there's a simple technical thing with respect to weapons. We used to give all our extra weapons to Ukraine. Now we're giving them to Israel or using them up hither and yon. It is a major problem who runs out of missiles first. And all the indications are that the Iranians are not running out of weapons. And just like the Russians weren't running out of weapons back in 2022, when the Director of National Intelligence told President Biden, the Russians are running out of ammunition there in Ukraine and they have no indigenous capability to replace the weapons that they're leaving on the battlefield. Oh, we got them. We got them. And then two months later, the head of the CIA, Bill Burns, tells the president, Putin has already lost.

You go tell the world, Putin has already lost. So what do we have now? We have a different situation. And I just hope that people come to their senses and say, look, Ukraine, that was something, a big mistake. Russia is inexorably winning. Russia has the wherewithal to finish this off this year for sure. There's still attriting, attriting, attriting. And what does that mean? In my view, it means that they still want a bigger deal, okay? They don't want to just beat back the Ukrainians and the NATO forces to the Dnieper River. You know, they'll do that, but they don't want to do it real swiftly because they want to leave the thing open for a broader arrangement, a new security architecture in Europe, which is what started this whole war, okay?

Which was what the Russians offered and were denied, and that started the war. We have the NATO Secretary General saying that this was about NATO, not about this other thing. So... so I'm hopeful that it'll come around, that the Ukrainians will finally see the light. And one of the rays of light comes through when we hear Sergei Lavrov saying, as he said twice in recent weeks, look, this is on hold, the Ukrainian thing. We still want to work with the United States. We, the Russians, want to work with the United States to get a security architecture, to get some of the final settlements so this doesn't happen again, okay? But we have to take care of Iran first, okay? So that's what we're doing here. We're taking care of Iran first.

And my bet is that the attrition into the rest of the Donbas—there's not much left—will continue. I doubt that they'll make a major offensive. They don't have to, okay? They're sparing their own troops and, you know, they're not demolishing cities as other countries are inclined to do. So I see new hope for a resolution in Ukraine, but that will require getting rid of some of the Nazis in that government, or maybe all of them. And as you'll recall, Nima, that was the twin objective that Putin announced at the outset: demilitarization—that is, getting rid of their army—and de-Nazification, getting the people that rule in Kiev away from this notion that they can proceed as the Nazis did, especially with respect to the very large Russian-speaking population.

#Nima

Yeah. Thank you so much, Ray, for being with us today. You're most welcome, Nima. Thanks for the chance. Thanks.

#Ray

Thank you.