

Matthew Hoh: US Missiles Are GONE – What the Pentagon Isn't Telling You

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Wednesday, April 22nd, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Matthew Hoh, is here with us. Welcome back, Matt.

#Matthew

Hi, Nima.

#Nima

And Matt, let me start with what has happened. So strange yesterday, Donald Trump unilaterally announcing a ceasefire, and then it's an indefinite ceasefire. What does that mean to you? Because so far, to this moment, we haven't heard anything about the ceasefire from Iranian officials.

#Matthew

Yeah, I guess we shouldn't be surprised he did something like that. He constantly upends deadlines all the time. None of the constructs that I think you, I, anybody who's reasonable or accountable would ever hold themselves to, Donald Trump does. So for Donald Trump, just this willy-nilly, I'll change it, I'll do something different, I'll just make pretend I never said it before—it's just part of the psychopathy that we have to deal with, this man in charge of the United States. It's incredibly concerning. But in this case, okay, he didn't have to go, he didn't feel the need to start the war again. That's great, actually.

That is terrific. No one has died yet. You know, I mean, that's good stuff, but that's balanced with this—this man holds nothing, has respect for nothing. So you've got these two sides: someone who's willing to change his mind, but also someone for whom nothing means anything, you know? I mean, so it's very dangerous. But what I think it means going forward though, I think—and this is hard because, you know, as Yogi Berra said, predictions are hard, especially when they're about the future, and they're pretty much impossible when they're about Donald Trump.

Uh, but I think what we're looking at is a modus vivendi that has been, uh, agreed to tacitly. You know, maybe they spoke to it, but I think it's just an unspoken agreement here that Donald Trump gets to declare victory in whatever form. The United States gets a way to withdraw from this war by saving face. The Iranians, I'm assuming the Israelis, get southern Lebanon. The Iranians get sanction relief in the form of control of the Strait of Hormuz. You know, JP Morgan did an estimation a week or two ago. It found that that control of the Strait of Hormuz, and if Iran does the toll as they said they were going to do, the toll is \$1 per barrel of oil.

That's going to bring in the Iranians \$70 to \$90 billion a year. That's 25% or 30% of their GDP. So I think what you'll see is a modus vivendi here that everyone goes forward with as things are. There's occasional bouts of violence, they all get to declare victory, which is what they're all looking for, and then we go on with this until the next crisis. For the Americans, it looks like the sanctions—I mean, it looks like the containment of Iraq in 1990. There's the continued hope for a regime change, sectarian uprising. The Kurds are going to come out of the mountains and take Tehran, or whatever their fever dreams are. The Israelis get, as I said, the conquest of Lebanon.

Uh, but, you know, I think what this means, though, is that you're in a stasis. It's, it's, uh, there's a, uh, again, uh, until the next crisis. You know, excuse me for that. But until the next crisis, this is what we have. And that's the danger—when is the next crisis going to be? Four weeks from now, four months from now, a year from now, three years from now? So until the next round of American and Israeli leadership feel that the status quo, that this modus vivendi, is not working for them, I think this may stay in place. But again, who knows? Who knows what's going to happen? I wish I could be a little more certain than that, but with Donald Trump.

#Nima

It's too difficult to understand what's going on because, you know, he announced an indefinite ceasefire. Then we learned from Israeli Channel 12 that it's going to be until Sunday, or three to five days. And then people came up with this idea that the aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush is getting there in three to five days. That's why he's talking about five days. Then today, the White House is saying he set no deadline for a ceasefire. There is no deadline, three or five days—just ridiculous.

#Speaker 03

He said nothing of the sort.

#Nima

And what is, Matt, there was a report on CNN showing how the United States is running short of missiles. That's one of the main reasons Donald Trump is somehow trying to continue with this ceasefire. Here is what was reported on CNN.

#Speaker 03

According to this new study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, their findings were confirmed by three sources familiar with recent Pentagon assessments of U.S. stockpiles. The U.S. is running dangerously low on some of these key munitions that would be required to confront a near-peer adversary in the short term, like China, for example. So while the U.S. does still have sufficient munitions to continue bombing Iran, for example, if the shaky ceasefire were to fall apart, if they were to need to confront an adversary like China or like Russia, for example, then that could pose significant problems for the United States.

Now, just to give you an example of how much the U.S. stockpile has been depleted over the last seven-plus weeks of war on Iran. According to this assessment and the sources that we spoke to, the U.S. military has expended at least 45 percent of its stockpile of precision strike missiles, at least half of its inventory of THAAD missiles, which are designed to intercept ballistic missiles, and nearly 50 percent of its stockpile of Patriot air defense interceptor missiles, which are, of course, very key air defense munitions.

Now, the U.S. military has also expended approximately 30% of its Tomahawk missile stockpile, which are those long-range munitions that are really key to attacking targets farther away, more than 20% of its stockpile of long-range Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles, and approximately 20% of its SM-3 and SM-6 missiles. Now, this is important because these munitions take a while to be replaced, and according to our sources and this analysis, it would take anywhere between one to six years to replace a lot of these munitions. And so this is a really big problem that we should...

#Nima

You get the picture, and you understand that. You're taking that, Matthew.

#Matthew

Well, and that's—importantly, that's juxtaposed about—that's why I was looking it up on my phone. I couldn't remember the source for it. But several days ago, the New York Times reported that it had been given information from the Pentagon that the Iranians had 70 percent of their missile fleet, they had 60 percent of their launchers still, and they had 40 percent of their drone fleet still. And we know how quickly, particularly the drones, they can produce drones. So how many drones did the Iranians produce in the last two weeks? How many have they produced in the last six weeks? I mean, so their ability to keep themselves stocked, right, to provide the ability to maintain their capacity to fire drones.

Essentially, after the first couple of days, the Iranians were firing on average about 110 missiles and drones a day, I think it was. You know, indefinitely, I think, is the answer to how long they can do that for. And then that just was reported there by CNN, which is something that would not have

been reported if that's not what the national security establishment of the United States of America did not want them to say. I think that's the most important thing about that piece, because we all know this. We knew this before the war. You and I were talking about this. You and all your guests were talking about this. I wrote a piece about this back in February. If I wrote something about it beforehand, then that's how obvious it was to everybody.

Right. I mean, so, you know, this is not a surprise to us. But the important thing is that it was allowed to be spoken about on CNN just a couple of days after The New York Times was allowed to talk about how many missiles and drones the Iranians had. Because remember, the storyline for most of this six, seven-week war was just how punishing the American and Israeli attacks were on Iran's military and how the missile fleets, the drone fleets, the launchers, the production facilities, etc., were just being laid to waste by the Americans and Israelis, and that they were, you know, what was the number? We've curtailed the missile and drone fleet by 92 percent. That's what they kept saying over and over again. And it became 80 percent. And it became, you know, 70 percent.

And now, no, it looks like you've curtailed their missile fleet by 30 percent. And almost all of those were destroyed because the Iranians used them against you. I mean, so that's the importance of this, that this information is being said out loud, openly, very clearly, by the major American media establishments — two of the most friendly, if not the friendliest, to the national security establishment — CNN and The New York Times. So this is just more evidence of what has been said, that this ceasefire was done because, well, the war wasn't going well, but because the Americans and the Israelis needed to refit, reset, resupply, rotate in new forces, as well as pivot to another form of this campaign, another phase of this war. Unlike the previous, because the previous phase — six weeks — was unsustainable.

It was untenable. The Americans and Israelis were eventually going to run out of missiles to shoot down the Iranian missiles and drones. You know, and so I think that gives more credence to, you know, the understanding of what comes next as, again, sometimes a modus vivendi that does have violence, that does have moments where the, quote, ceasefire, unquote, is being violated. Not nearly like we've seen it be violated in Gaza or in Lebanon, but enough so that the American and Israeli politicians can give some red meat to their people, but not enough that the Iranians feel that they have to respond in a way that would reignite the entire war. Um, so I think this is where we're at, and this is where it's going forward. Um, you know, maybe, you know, we'll see, we'll see, we'll see what goes.

#Nima

Matt, I think what is happening, besides what is going on between Iran and the United States, what is happening between Lebanon and Israel is of particular importance, because somehow it's so strange looking at what is happening. We had the ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel since 2024, you remember that. And Israel was attacking Lebanon, Hezbollah was not responding to Israel. And right now what's going on is somehow strange — Hezbollah is attacking again and responding to

Israel. All these gathering points close to the borders of Lebanon, they're attacking today and yesterday.

We have rockets going to Israel, and they're not holding back anymore. They have the ceasefire, which I don't know what that means anymore, because the two sides are attacking each other—not intensely, but they're attacking each other. But we've seen some sort of reduction in the attacks by Israel on, for example, Beirut or some other areas. And they're mostly continuing with assassination operations. And you don't see that much escalation while both sides are attacking each other. What is that? How can we understand that?

#Matthew

First, the ceasefire was between Israel and Lebanon, not Israel and Hezbollah. Its purpose was to allow for the larger ceasefire between the United States, Israel, and Iran to go forward. This is one of those sticking points. I think what you'll see is you'll see commitment—hate using that word, because I was going to say commitment and then the Israelis, and the only thing they're going to commit to is mass murder. But the Israelis will restrain their attacks outside of southern Lebanon; they will not attack, as you were just saying, areas of Beirut up into the Bekaa Valley, things like that.

And they will really contain their militarism, their attacks, to the area south of the Litani River, and even more so to their yellow line. And if people haven't been following this, the Israelis instituted a yellow line just as they did in Gaza, basically marking off that portion of southern Lebanon as Israeli territory. And they have a firm presence there; they've expanded their presence with more bases happening there. The Israelis destroyed all the bridges over the Litani, basically isolating that southern Lebanon from the rest of Lebanon. You know, technically, the Israelis now control more of Lebanon than the Russians do of Ukraine, percentage-wise.

They've essentially—the Israelis have told the Lebanese, "You cannot come back, especially if you're Shia." And so what will occur is you'll have, I think, in that area south of the yellow line, that will be Israel proper, right? Israel de facto. And that will have an Israeli ground combat presence. North of that line up to the Litani River, I believe the Israelis will have a no man's land created. And they don't need to occupy that with troops; they can occupy it with drones. And it's the same as we saw in Gaza—kill anything that moves.

And so between blowing up all the bridges across the Litani, making our point clear to the Lebanese they're not welcome to come back, and then putting the drones in the sky over there and killing anything that moves, that part of southern Lebanon, south of the river, north of the Yellow Line, will essentially be depopulated. And I think that is what the Israelis see as their victory here in this war. Now, what's Hezbollah going to do about that? Hezbollah is not going to tolerate that. You saw the amazing strategic patience Hezbollah demonstrated during the 2024–2025 ceasefire—and put that in air quotes, of course—with Israel, that Hezbollah held back and waited for this larger war between the United States and Iran to begin, and did not take the bait from the Israelis.

So Hezbollah had the patience and the maturity and the wisdom to accept those—I don't want to call them nuisance attacks, because the Israelis were doing it every day and they killed hundreds of people, a couple hundred of them civilians. But they knew that if they were to respond in kind, that would give the Israelis everything they were looking for to launch the war again and to take Israel. So, I mean, the patience of Hezbollah to hold back on that. And now we'll see what they do going forward. I can't imagine them allowing this trespass to go uncontested. And then the question is, what do the Iranians do?

Is the idea of the Iranians controlling the Straits of Hormuz, getting sanctions relief that much, causing enough contention and stress not just through the region but through the world—does that, one, give them the sanctions relief, restore some degree of sovereignty, give them some recovery to their economy, as well as cause that political stress and economic stress throughout the region and the world? Does that establish the deterrence they're looking for? And is allowing Israel to occupy southern Lebanon something they're going to be okay with living with in order to allow this motive to go forward? I don't know the answer to that. I'd like to think no, they're not going to allow them to do that, and they'll chuck it all out the window, but that doesn't really make much sense. So, well, you know, we've got a lot of questions here, Nima, about what's going to happen—a lot of predictions we can make, a lot of speculation we can make. And we try and do our best in terms of understanding who the actors are and what they've done in the past, right?

Best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. The Israelis, that's pretty easy to understand. The Americans, it's more difficult. And the Iranians, I think it's difficult as well at this point to understand what they're going to do in terms of whether accepting the status quo as it is today in the Persian Gulf versus the occupation of Lebanon. And I imagine they're having quite the debate about that in Tehran.

#Nima

I think today, the latest tweet from the head of the parliament in Iran, he mentioned that in the case of Lebanon, he says they're not going to back down on the case of Lebanon. And it's going to be part of the, you know, he said that there is no ceasefire when we have this blockade. He mentions if we have this blockade and the case of Lebanon, he mentions that. And I think the situation is somehow getting—if you look at the way that Donald Trump, you know, we had the Iranian commercial vessel being destroyed, taken under the control of the United States in the Arabian Sea. And we had two tankers today, two tankers from Iran, two tankers from—they say it's from Greece, but Iranians say it's linked to Israel. That's why they're doing this. And this is the game that is happening right now.

I don't know how long the United States wants, because the ceasefire doesn't make sense for Iranians. That's why I think so far they haven't commented on that. If you have a blockade, if you have the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, the blockade on the part of the United States, and

everybody, you know, they're trying to avoid, they're trying to prevent these vessels from getting in and out. Iran is preventing the UAE and other countries from receiving anything from outside. You know, the situation is getting desperate somehow for the region. How is it? Do they have anything in their mind, or is there anybody asking Donald Trump what he wants to do? Or maybe a short-term strategy or a long-term strategy? Do we have any of that sort happening, in your opinion?

#Matthew

I mean, you have the national security strategy that they published at the end of the year, at the end of 2025, that articulated—I'm sorry, I'm sorry, the mailman across the street just drove into a trash can. So, I'm sorry, it was pretty awesome. Anyway, excuse me. So, you had that national security strategy that articulated, you know, a pretty reasonable approach to the multipolar world. It's not something I think you or I agree with, but there's an argument behind it. They make a case that this is how we're going to recalibrate the American empire. We're going to center or anchor on the Western Hemisphere.

We realize we're overextended. We're realizing the great suck of all our previous military adventures overseas, on and on and on. And then they go and do this. Right. So I think there is that mindset within the administration. I don't know how many levels you've got to go down to find it, who the men and women are who drafted that national security strategy. But there is that understanding that if the American empire doesn't just want to compete in the multipolar world as one of several, but it wants to dominate, it needs to recalibrate. It needs to adjust. It needs to remake itself.

And, of course, doing exactly what they did in the 20th century over and over again, as well as, you know—and that's why I like to describe this war as being a war between the 20th century and the 21st century, a war between the old American imperial order, the American century, if you will, and the 21st century. But for Donald Trump and the men and women around him, everything's about narrative. Everything's about optics. I'd say the same thing about the Democrats as well. And is it enough for both sides to give a little bit so the other side can have its moments of power, publicity, right?

To have its ability to put out videos of U.S. Marines seizing an Iranian cargo ship. The Financial Times had a report this morning that in the course of 24 hours, 34 ships evaded the American blockade. You know, the Americans seized two ships. So is that the calculation that both the Iranians and the Americans make? The Iranians say, you know what, out of 36 ships, one of those ships, the second ship the Americans took, was 400 miles southeast of Sri Lanka. So, I mean, it's not even in the AO, essentially. It's so far removed. But this is what the Iranians say, is that, look, 36 ships, they take two. That's good enough for us. We're still doing so well in terms of our exports as well as this toll system. That's good enough.

And the Americans say, you know what? Taking two is good enough for us because we can show it on the morning and evening news. The American networks aren't going to cover this, or they're

maybe going to brush over the fact that all these other ships are getting through. I mean, so is that the determination here, that what is happening is a good enough story for both of them to live by? I mean, again, this point about Lebanon just keeps sticking in my head, because what are the Iranians going to do about that? But for the Trump administration, I think it's just this desire to get out of this, find a way to save face, find a way to make some kind of political hay, find a way for us to allow Donald Trump to post triumphal Truth Social messages, right?

I mean, I think that's what you're looking at. You know, is this enough to get the Israelis off the Americans' back? It's not enough to correct the economic consequences, because we're still going to have this energy-induced inflation for months, and it may stay well into the congressional midterm races and until the election in the U.S. And the possibility of there being a recession, particularly with some of the economic numbers coming out of the U.S. over the last several months, yeah, that's still there. But is it too late now at this point? You did this war. You made your bed. Now you've got to lie in it. I think they hope not. But, you know, we'll see.

#Nima

Matt, there was a report in the New York Times about how this war started, and it shows the important role of Benjamin Netanyahu and how he came into the room and changed the whole atmosphere. And Donald Trump, at the end, said, "Donald Trump, I'm okay with that," confirming what Benjamin Netanyahu was asking for. John Kerry was asked, how do you interpret the article in the New York Times? He said that this guy was around, and every time he was asking for this attack. And Donald Trump just accepted the attack and went along with the Israeli plan. Looking at what has happened so far, when is that going to be enough for the, I don't know, for the leadership in the NICC? That's enough, that's the end. Are they going to say that, Benjamin Netanyahu?

#Matthew

Not the Republican Party won't. I mean, they're so tied in on the Christian Zionist end. It's so much a part of their evangelical voting base that they won't, as well as many Republicans really do believe this. I mean, that's one of the things you've got to be careful of, thinking that just because AIPAC, the Israel lobby, gives millions and millions of dollars to these men and women.

You know, Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House, got \$650,000 from the Israel lobby in the 2024 cycle. Just because he got this money doesn't mean that he would think differently otherwise. Johnson gets to the place because he's a believer in Israel. The money is just to make sure that he's successful and also to show that, you know, because he's also the Speaker and everything else, it's kind of like an honorarium, but also to always remind them that this money could be going someplace else—you could have it, you know? So, we have to remember that there are plenty of people in Washington, D.C. who really do believe in Israel. It's just not the money that makes them vote the way they do, and that's because they're in those positions—you don't get to those positions without believing that, you know, about Israel.

You don't get those positions unless you believe in, uh, the fairytale of capitalism either. Right. Or you don't believe in, or I mean, whatever the trope or the myth or, uh, the story, uh, that your party, uh, is built upon. So, um, I think, you know, with the Democratic Party, and we've seen the poll numbers, you know, especially like, say, in the last week, you know, across the board, except for elderly Republicans, most Americans are opposed to U.S. support for Israel, including many Republicans, especially younger Republicans. In the Democratic Party, I don't want to say it's universal, but it's an extremely high majority among certain demographics. But you see the Democratic Party leadership as being insulated from the concerns and needs and thoughts of their base, of their constituency, of their members. I mean, Chuck Schumer, for example, you've had more conversations in the last week, but up until recently, even progressives like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez or even Bernie Sanders, the way they spoke about Gaza or when you talk about aid for Israel, they talk about defensive weapons. I mean, so you see that even among the progressives in the Democratic Party. I can tell you that they don't believe it. They don't believe what they're saying, but they know that they have to couch it like that. They have to hedge like that to protect themselves politically. So I think for many years, you're still going to have that party leadership that really does believe in Israel. It's all they've ever known. It's all they've ever heard about.

This is part—an Israel-first policy makes as much sense to them as American exceptionalism or for-profit health care or whatever it is that, you know, is their article of faith. So you have that, and you will have that for years to come. And maybe in five years, I think longer, ten years, you'll have a Democratic Party leadership that's willing to make a break with Israel. But the Republican Party won't. And then that will become a defining cultural issue, which in many ways it already is. It just hasn't been demarcated or delineated by democracy—the difference between the parties. But Israel will become a cultural issue in the U.S. that is one of the things that differentiates the parties. So I think that's where we're at for the time being. I think the Israelis don't have to worry about losing real political support in the United States.

They certainly lost political support of the American public, but the American public has very little impact on the policies, the decisions, the budget-making of the United States government. But five, ten years from now, yeah, we may see a Democratic Party that has made a break with Israel, and then that becomes an issue between the Republicans and Democrats. But the Israelis aren't going anywhere. Benjamin Netanyahu has been there for as long as I've been paying attention to all of this. If there's one thing you can say for him, man, he's consistent. You know, there are these great stories of Bill Clinton meeting him for the first time and Bill Clinton saying something along the lines of, who the hell does this guy think he is coming in here and talking to me like that? I'm the president of the United States.

Because I guess Netanyahu went into the Oval Office and told Bill Clinton how it was going to be. You know, and the same thing, too. Supposedly, I think it was Sarkozy who was talking to Obama, and Sarkozy was complaining about Netanyahu. And on a hot mic, Obama got caught saying, you know, you think you've got it bad? I've got to deal with that guy every day. You know, I mean, so if

there's one thing to say about Netanyahu, he's consistent. You know, I mean, so... But, yeah, I think that's where we're at politically. It's going to be an issue that defines or differentiates more and more the Democrats and Republicans. And then, you know, in 2036, maybe that is when the Democrats have a really clean break, a platform that says no more money to Israel, you know, et cetera, et cetera.

#Nima

I think he has reached the peak of support from the United States with the Trump administration. He had it with the Biden administration, looking at what has happened in Gaza and the support that the Biden administration gave him. And right now, with the Trump administration, he's really reaching the peak of support, even with the war against Iran. And then I think we are going to see—you look at the polls right now, it's just amazing how everything is collapsing before our eyes in terms of support, how the American people see Israel right now. And it means the whole journey of Benjamin Netanyahu, just looking at the last decades, how he started, he got to this point, even achieved the war he was seeking for such a long time. And then everything is just going down. Is this reality perceived by Israelis, in your opinion?

#Matthew

Yeah, well, let me first just also clarify what I said about cultural history in the U.S. It would be centered on the political parties. And it's more about the Democratic Party seeing Israel as a form of Trumpism or as a holdover from the old Democratic Party, from the Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, Hillary Clinton Democratic Party. Right, so as the Democratic Party loses that skin and becomes a new party, which it is in the process of—and it's going to take them time to do it, but it will do that—they'll still be controlled by its donors, but, you know, it'll just... so, but that's what I mean by cultural. There'll be a cultural difference. I think the Israelis understand this. They certainly have been panicked by the large support for the Palestinians shown in the U.S., by the turnaround in support for Israel.

The poll numbers are not hidden from them. They know this. We saw how they reacted, putting the pressure on media establishments, putting the pressure on universities, putting the pressure on politicians, right? I mean, we saw the censorship that occurred in the U.S., the cries of anti-Semitism that were used to try and silence people, to censor people. They did all that, and they shot it all off. They expended it, and now here they are, right?

I mean, because what they were doing was bankrupt, it was superficial, it was vapid, it had no basis to it, and so it just fell, right? It just made no impact whatsoever. In fact, it probably upset people because of the hypocrisy of it all, the superficialness of it all, the ridiculousness of it all. It probably got people to turn against them more than if they had just said nothing—about the protests, about the TikTok videos, about the few politicians who had the guts to say anything. So we saw how they mobilized, and we saw how they purchased TikTok, right? How they purchased CBS News, how they

shut down free speech on colleges. You know, New York University—and I'm sure there are others—but New York University, NYU, will not have a commencement speaker.

There will not be a graduating student delivering a graduation address at commencement at NYU this year. Why? Because they're afraid that student will say something about Palestine. And I'm sure there are other universities that are like that, right? I mean, so you saw that. You saw the censorship and the bias in the media. You look at this—it was like a Saturday Night Live skit watching some of the things that they would say on CNN, what Jake Tapper or Dana Bash would say on CNN, defending Israel and demonizing the Palestinians. So they did all that. They used all that. And look where it got them, right? Again, you look at these poll numbers where the Americans, except for the oldest people in the GOP essentially, are in favor of Palestine, not Israel.

And so the Israelis know that. But they also know the American system is insulated by money, and they know they have time. And so that's why I said earlier, that time frame—it's not going to be until four or five years, maybe more like ten years, before you see any real impact on American policy toward Israel if everything holds constant. And I think what the people at the DNC are thinking to themselves is that Americans are fickle. Foreign policy is something people don't vote on. This is mainly the younger people—they're going to age out of it. It's not going to be a concern, right? I mean, so I think that's all the rationale and excuses that are being percolated among the DNC. Remember the DNC—well, one, we had polling data that showed that if Kamala Harris had said she wasn't going to send weapons to Israel, she would have won the election.

Institute for Middle Eastern Understanding and others did polls that showed that she lost essentially millions of votes because she continued her ironclad support for Israel. And the Democratic Party said, we'd rather maintain our relationship with Israel than win the election in 2024. Now, we get into other aspects about this. We've talked about this, about how the Democratic Party had essentially written off 2024 already. And they just wanted to use this as a chance to get Harris out of the way, even though she's still there. She's going to run again in '28, to their dismay. But I think for the Israelis, they understand all this. And they understand that they have the backing of the American political establishment now.

They have it back in the short term, and it's a question of time as to whether or not there are real, serious impacts on American support for Israel. Consequence, not just because—remember, the United States is a place where ninety-some percent of Americans are in favor of some form of gun control. And, you know, anyone can have a gun here. Anyone can have a gun, you know, so it's just—not to get the 2A folks all upset. I'm a 2A supporter, guys, don't get me wrong. But like, you know, 2A to a degree—I shouldn't really say it like that—but, you know, I mean, this is a country where ninety percent of the people can be for or against something, and it doesn't matter, because if the special interests want it, they'll get it, because we are a system of legalized bribery. And that's what the Israelis are banking on.

#Nima

I think the need for having a third party in the United States is growing by the second with the Trump administration. People are coming out talking totally against the establishment. It doesn't matter if it's Republican or Democrat. And how do you think the case of Trump is helping that case, the third party?

#Matthew

Oh, absolutely. For independents and Republicans, absolutely. For Democrats, it only drives them deeper into the party. But for Republicans and independents, you certainly see a willingness to say, you know what, Trump was not the answer. And maybe some will even say, maybe if Trump hadn't been part of the Republican Party, it would have worked out better. Right? Because, well, one, they make excuses for him for everything. But, you know, there is that logic there that as long as you're within the party system, as long as you're part of the duopoly. Right?

As long as you're part of this two-party system, which is essentially a uniparty when it comes to the major issues of war and peace, banking and finance, housing, health care, etc.—excuse me—uh, agriculture, you know, uh, you are looking at the same party with some differences, of course. But, uh, I think many people do look and say, if Trump couldn't do it, if Trump fell victim to it, just like many Democrats looked at Obama and said, if this happened to Obama—Obama became the deporter-in-chief in terms of deporting 400,000 undocumented aliens, you know, waging war in seven different countries, persecuting Julian Assange—you know, if Donald—if Barack Obama, the constitutional lawyer, was going to do that, then what hope is there? It just shows that the party system is corrupt.

I think that's what you get with Trump. So I think you do have many who supported Trump now looking for something else because they're not going to go—they don't want to stay with the Republican Party, but they don't want to be with Mike Johnson and Mitch McConnell, I mean, or John Thune, you know what I mean? So if Trump couldn't do it, then it has to be that the system is broken. All right. And so then maybe you see more people heading towards independent politics, heading towards third parties. The major issue for them, of course, for independents and third parties, is the money. It's the amount of money involved here. I mean, you just even look at this referendum that they just had in Virginia last night or yesterday, where they were voting on redistricting the state essentially to give Democrats an unfair advantage throughout the state.

This isn't democracy. This is just a reaction to Trump. This is anti-democracy. So the Democratic Party will now control Virginia. Ninety-four million dollars was spent on that referendum, right? I mean, so if you have a voice, if you have an issue, you have a cause that doesn't have that type of backing, if you are arguing for something that's not going to be able to raise ninety-four million dollars in one state, what chance do you have? You know, I mean, so I think that's where a lot of

Americans mash up against the rock on—the reality that it's rigged. The system is rigged. It's corrupt. It's meant to serve donors and special interests. And at best, it doesn't pertain to me, and more than likely, it takes from me.

And I think that's the way many Americans view the system now. The reason why you actually see rates as high as 50 percent of Americans, 50, 55 percent of voter turnout in the United States, in my opinion, is because Americans still hold on to a lesser-evil view. And in their mind, in their head, in their worldview, they have a construct that, well, at least the Republicans aren't as bad as the Democrats, or the Democrats aren't as bad as the Republicans. And I think that's the only reason that explains to me why you actually see turnout at all in the United States for elections. You know, why you even get 50 percent, 55 percent turnout in elections—because of basically a lesser-evil voting on fear. You know, that type of thing.

#Nima

Matt, we learned from the news that there are some reports that the White House has informed Tulsi Gabbard that she has until the midterms to resign. What does that mean? So far, we've had Joe Kent, we've had Pam Bondi leaving the administration, Dan Bongino left the administration, and now they're talking about Tulsi Gabbard. The Trump administration is facing a midterm election that's going to be, I think, harsh for them. Let's see what happens with that. How do you see the Trump administration, you know, while having this turmoil with foreign policy, dealing with the domestic side and what's going on domestically?

#Matthew

I think you've got Susie Wiles cleaning house right now, trying to cut off any of the more cancerous growths of this administration. I mean, Noem was the Homeland Security Secretary. Not only was she incredibly incompetent, she was incredibly corrupt. So not only was she at the top of that chain that executed the terror raids by ICE and other federal law enforcement agencies on American communities throughout the last year, which united Americans against the federal government, she also was incredibly corrupt. She was giving business to her husband. She spent \$200 million on a political television ad series where it just basically featured her. I mean, you saw also, too—excuse me—the Labor Secretary just resigning. She was corrupt as well. She was taking trips on the government's dime. She was sleeping with her security guard.

She was giving jobs to friends. So she's gone as well. You had the ones you rattled off there. And so I think you've seen a cleaning house, trying to get some sense of order, trying to put some people in positions where things can actually get done. I think that's also tempered by Donald Trump. And so I think where Susie Wiles watched Pam Bondi's appearance before, you know, the Congress, particularly when the Epstein victims are standing behind her and Pam Bondi is going on about the Dow and just how awful she was, I'm sure Susie Wiles looked at that and said she has to go. She should have never been there. She's got to go. She should have been pushed out before, but now

it's the end of it. And meanwhile, Donald Trump, I think his view of Bondi was like she didn't do enough to go after my enemies.

That supposedly was the story behind his being upset with her — that she wasn't prosecuting his enemies well enough, as well as going after—yeah, you know, I mean, so I think you've had a few things there. And then with Gabbard, you know, Gabbard's been quiet, and she's put out Truth, she's put out X messages supporting the administration. But she's there just like a bright red sign of somebody who is a hypocrite, and somebody who disagreed correctly with, say, this war in Iran before she took this office. And it's just inconvenient, it's problematic to have her sitting there because people ask questions about her. So we've got to move her out. And also, too, now we can get somebody in there who is more of a loyalist, someone that we trust, someone who we can rely upon, someone we can put in front of the cameras. I mean, it's very uncomfortable for the White House to have to explain—not that many American journalists ask this question—but how come the Director of National Intelligence is not here?

Where is she? How come she's not involved in this discussion? So they can't do that. Vance has his issues, but Vance has proven to be sufficiently loyal. He's willing to humiliate himself, debase himself, whatever he needs to do to stay in the good graces of the president. And so I think Gabbard has to go for that reason. You know, she is problematic to be in front of a camera. And Susie Wiles, I think, is trying to get the ship in order before you go into the midterms. And so those that she's given the axe to, you can understand. And so we'll see going forward who they replace Gabbard with.

And Gabbard, for her part, she could say that if she lasts until the midterms, then she can say she lasted for two years in the administration, and she'll get a podcast or a slot on Fox News or wherever she's going to, and she'll triangulate and try and figure out how to continue climbing the ladder, the political ladder, where she'll go. Who knows? But she has no principles. She doesn't believe in anything. She's a total political chameleon. So who knows where she'll end up? Maybe she'll end up in the Green Party or something. Who knows?

#Nima

Yeah. Donald Trump is going to be in China. He's going to go to China on May 15. And I would say he wants to have some sort of leverage, some sort of balance when he goes there. And with the case of the Middle East, how do you see that? Is that manageable for him before getting to China and preparing or doing something that would put him in some sort of better position than he is right now?

#Matthew

Well, I think the only way he goes to China in a better position is to have the Straits of Hormuz open. That's the only way he goes there. And he can't do that militarily, so he's going to have to

either actually agree to a deal with the Iranians, which I think we all kind of agree we don't see that happening, or just let the status quo, just let this thing exist as it exists today and don't talk about it, or just make proclamations about it. No one push too hard on it. Yeah, because I think the thoughts were in Washington, D.C., that the United States would have defeated Iran, it would have taken an ally off of China's chessboard, that this would have humbled China.

I think some of the more idiotic minds in Washington, D.C., of which there are a lot, really did think that regime change in Iran would cause economic decline, difficulties, or even implosion in China. Rick Scott, the senator from Florida, certainly believes that. Lindsey Graham thinks so as well. So, you know, that was the mindset — that the United States was going to go to China, Trump was going to meet Xi in this position of power, having just taken out China's ally in Venezuela and just done the same in Iran, and that Xi and the Chinese were going to be in a position from which the Americans could dictate to them too. And that's certainly not the case. And even if the Straits remain closed, that leverage the Americans have with that — give them the benefit of the doubt.

Let's just go along for the sake of argument on that. Well, it's completely overwhelmed by China's leverage with critical minerals, critical metals, magnets, etc. You also have an American economy that is weak, that without this war was struggling, having real problems. The fear of recession is there, inflation appearing again before the war. And so you have an American president going to China who is not going there hat in hand, but he's certainly not going there, I believe, from the perspective of equals. He also is an American president who, if he is honest — and who knows what's going on in Donald Trump's head — but certainly has to recognize that twice we failed to defeat the Houthis in the Red Sea. We failed to defeat Iran twice in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea.

And we have predicated our entire relationship with China over the last 25, 30 years on the idea that they're going to attack Taiwan and we're going to defend it. And we have just shown clearly that we are incapable of doing that. So the American president, if he's honest, should be approaching the Chinese in that way, with a degree of humility, a degree of circumspection, a degree of honest appraisal of America's limits of power, as well as its declining economic health, its declining, you know, empire essentially — wrap it all in there. And I would like to see that's how Donald Trump would go there, but of course that's not what's going to happen. I think the outcome of what has happened so far, if we would be somehow humble to understand what has happened, could be a good path for the United States to make new partnerships. I think that's a huge step for any administration in the United States. I don't know how that is going to happen. I think it's impossible with the Trump administration. What is your understanding of that? I'm talking about Russia, China, Iran, and these are important players right now.

#Matthew

You know, there's no sense of that at all in Washington, D.C. On the Democratic Party side, the worldview is essentially that still of Joe Biden, Tony Blinken, Jake Sullivan. There is no multipolar

world. The United States and the Europeans, the West, are still paramount, and we don't have to change anything. We just need to dig down, and we need to remain committed to our ideals, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. That's the Democratic Party view on the world. The Republican view, at least again, as we saw through the Trump White House's National Security Strategy, was that we are in a multipolar world and we need to reestablish ourselves.

But the idea of forming partnerships, though, of getting into a relationship of equals — no, not at all. The Trump administration. So what we're going to do is we're going to rule the Western Hemisphere with an iron fist, you know, and this is going to be our base, and this is going to be where we're going to extract our resources from. And from this hemisphere, we will then remake the American empire. And that's how we will confront the world and dominate the world. You know, so there is not anyone at all, Nima, who has any political legitimacy whatsoever in Washington, D.C. I shouldn't say legitimacy, but power in Washington, D.C., who believes like what you're saying.

You know, even if you saw the Democratic Party's progressives, how they went to the Munich Security Conference back in February, was it? And particularly, say, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, you know, and just how she fumbled and how she just embarrassed herself, asking questions about international—trying to answer about international relations. But also, too, what you could make out from her was that she was just essentially repeating what she had been taught, what she had been told was the party line on all these things. What's the conventional wisdom in Democratic Party circles? What are the think tanks funded by the weapons industry, the tech industries, and the service companies?

What do they think about foreign affairs? That's what we, the Democratic Party, think about foreign affairs. And you could see that's what Ocasio-Cortez, who never should have been put in that position—she doesn't talk about these things, but she wants to consider a run for 2028. Whitmer and Newsom and others are going there, so she had to go there, and she embarrassed herself. Now, among those circles, they don't see her embarrassing herself. They say that maybe she stumbled over her words, but she had the message right. Right.

And so she was talking about things that make her really no different than Hillary Clinton, in terms of her estimation of the need for an American presence worldwide, for that relationship between the United States and NATO. You know, all these euphemisms, all these words that are utilized to dress up the American empire and to make it something other than what it is—an empire. I mean, these people, if you bring... if you and I go to Washington, D.C., and we go to one of these conferences—Hillary Clinton's talking, or Jake Sullivan's talking, or Ocasio-Cortez is talking, or whatever—and we use the word "empire," people will look at us.

They will hiss us out of the room, you know, or more actually how you'd be referred to—because this is how I would be referred to, you know—or how, like, these people you have on your show: Mearsheimer, Wilkerson, right, Johnson, McGovern, all these folks. How come they're not up in Washington, D.C., giving this wisdom to those who need to hear it? Because these are unserious

people—that's the way it's described. You're not serious. You know, if you use a word like "empire," you're not serious. And so that dissonance then, right, it's just mind-boggling. You know, am I taking crazy pills? We have 750 bases around the world, but we're not an empire, you know, and somehow I'm not serious, you know. But that's the reality of Washington, D.C.

#Nima

Yeah. Good point. Thank you. Thank you, Matthew, for being with us today. Great pleasure, as always.

#Matthew

All right. Thanks, Nima.