

David Pyne: Navy Secretary Fired for Refusing to Sail Into Missiles

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Thursday, April 23rd, 2026, and our dear friend David Pyne is here with us. Welcome back, David.

#David

Hey, Nima. Great to be back with you.

#Nima

And let me start, David. Last time we talked, there was no war in the Middle East. Right now there is a war going on, and we have some sort of ceasefire, but the war is still going on. I think it's good to just step back and look at what has happened so far. We had the 12-day war, and then this year, on February 28th, we had the second round of the war. Here is what J.D. Vance said before the war — the first round of the war that happened in June 2025 — and the way he was selling, you know, he was buying the people, India and ISIS, into this war. Here is what he said.

#Speaker 03

With Americans who are exhausted after 25 years of foreign entanglements in the Middle East, I understand the concern, but the difference is that back then we had dumb presidents, and now we have a president who actually knows how to accomplish America's national security objectives. So this is not going to be some long, drawn-out thing. We've gone in, we've done the job of setting their nuclear program back, and we're going to now work to permanently dismantle that nuclear program over the coming years. And that is what the president has set out to do.

#David

Simple principle.

#Speaker 03

Iran can't have a nuclear weapon. That has animated American policy over the past 130 days. It's going to continue to be a driving force of our policy in the Middle East for the next three and a half years.

#Nima

Getting back to today, yesterday we learned that because of the consequences of the war, it seems that there are some discussions happening within the military. That's why we had the Secretary of the Navy being fired by Pete Hegseth. What is your understanding of the current situation? Donald Trump, I think, has trapped himself in the Middle East somehow. Your understanding of that?

#David

Yeah, you're absolutely right. You know, just as Dr. Robert Pape has stated, the Iran war is an escalation trap that was set by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, essentially to force Trump and the United States to fight Israel's war against Iran to the detriment of U.S. national security, to the detriment of our economic security. This blockade, you know, the war is not over yet. The blockade is continuing with no end in sight, and it's going to cause both a U.S. and a global recession. Unfortunately, that's going to affect most of the countries in the world very negatively. It's going to cause shortages. Obviously, gas prices are going up.

Jet fuel is in very short supply, particularly in Europe, as well as East Asia, South Korea, Japan, and other countries like that. So it's caused a lot of disruption. President Trump, you know, he had a plan, he had a national security strategy, which was to pull us out of Europe and the Middle East, focus on the Western Hemisphere, providing security to our Western Hemispheric allies, as well as consolidating U.S. dominance in the North America region, perhaps with a greater number of U.S. military forces in Greenland, trying to pressure communist regimes in Cuba and Venezuela, which are as yet largely untouched.

And, of course, prioritizing trade in the U.S. economy. And this war has caused all of his great national security strategy and his America First trade policy to really go down the drain. All the economic progress that he was able to make in his first, I don't know, 15, 16 months—I guess 13 months—in office has been reversed and is much worse now. Gas prices are up, I think, 33 to 40 percent. That could get a lot worse because it's going to take—I mean, it would take six months just to clear the mines out of the Strait of Hormuz.

Obviously, there's no military solution to the U.S. regaining control. We never had control of the Strait of Hormuz, but at least we were kind of able to assure that it remained a free transit international waterway. And that is no longer going to be the case because Iran has renamed it the Strait of Persia. It's now, you know, effectively under IRGC and naval control. And there's nothing

we can do about it short of making some grand concessions to Iran in a peace deal that they think are sufficient to allow free passage.

#Nima

David, what is the off-ramp? You mentioned the situation that Donald Trump is in right now. And many people are arguing the simple solution for that is just leaving the region—leaving just Iraq, Afghanistan—just leave the region. And the countries that are using the Strait of Hormuz, they're going to come and talk with the Iranians, and they're going to find their solution, their sort of solution. But Donald Trump somehow—as you know, you remember when this war started—it was all about regime change. It wasn't just because Donald Trump himself reached that conclusion.

Because Benjamin Netanyahu, as the New York Times reported, provided information to Donald Trump and his administration that they just needed to go there, attack the regime, kill the supreme leader together with the commander, and the regime would collapse. And the people were going to come out and all of that. Coming back to today, Donald Trump is posting something like this—that there is a fracture in the leadership in Iran. Some people want to talk with us, make a deal; the others don't want to make a deal. "Let's go and kill the bad guys in Iran." You don't see this sort of conspiracy theories and this sort of delusional thinking. Is it going to help the United States? Is it going to help Donald Trump and his administration?

#David

No, it's despicable and dishonorable behavior even to threaten those attacks. Obviously, we murdered 50 Iranian leaders along with members of the first family, the family of the supreme leader, both Ali Khamenei as well as Mojtaba Khamenei, the current supreme leader. And, you know, women and children—the U.S., and I guess it was Israel that did it, but fully U.S.-supported—to murder those leaders. And this was an unprovoked sneak attack. I mean, Iran had essentially been minding its own business. Yes, yes, it had conducted its Iranian proxies. It, you know, killed and wounded a few—you know, killed three men, U.S. troops, I think it was—I don't know, 2023. I think that was in response to what Israel was doing in Gaza.

Obviously, the genocide—initially it was a just war, but then Israel decided to turn it into a war of aggression by Israel, destroying 92% of Gazan homes under the pretext that the 1.7% of Gazan citizens that were Hamas were hiding there. Obviously, that was ridiculous. But yeah, this has just proven disastrous. It's been disastrous for the U.S. on every level—militarily, economically, politically. It's weakened us militarily, economically, politically. It's going to be disastrous. The Republicans are going to lose both houses of Congress, Trump's going to get impeached. There's an outside chance he could even be removed. But the bottom line is, you know, Iran is—you know, we keep saying that Iran is a different animal, that their Islamist regime is different. You know, they're terrorists. They can't be reasoned with. They only understand the use of force.

In fact, the truth is the opposite. The U.S. and Israel, you know, not that we're terrorist regimes, but we use state terrorism against other countries. Killing their leadership for no reason, with no provocation, was an act of state-sponsored terror. And, you know, a lot of Americans don't understand that. We have this idea, I think, in the United States that the lives of Muslim civilians or certainly, you know, Islamic leaders have no value. So, you know, we're indoctrinated as American citizens by our government and our education system to truly believe that. And I think it's, I just think it's despicable. I've abandoned my support for President Trump. I've supported him for almost a decade. And since he started this war, I no longer support him. It's just, it's really a sad time to be an American, to be honest.

#Nima

Yeah. You look at the Middle East today. What would you bring? What is the difference, you know, when it comes to the Persian Gulf? You mentioned the Strait of Hormuz. How do you draw the differences before this war started and right now, the situation that we're in, considering the Persian Gulf and GCC countries, Iran, and the region?

#David

Well, the U.S. has been viewed as a source of stability and security for the Gulf nations — the UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and other countries. And it no longer is, because they found out the hard way that, you know, we started this unprovoked war of aggression against Iran, and they retaliated by attacking our bases. And they didn't just attack our bases; they also attacked some, you know, government and energy targets within those countries to essentially teach them a lesson that the U.S. is not the regional hegemony of the Persian Gulf, but the Islamic Republic of Iran is.

And so, the U.S. reacted not by increasing our missile defense and troop levels in those countries, but by, you know, I believe, moving a lot of our missile defenses and troops to Israel or pulling out our troops to prove that our security umbrella was fictitious from the beginning, or at least has become such. And so I think that has shown the world, but certainly our allies in the region, that the U.S. can't be trusted to defend them and provide security. And they're wanting this war, you know, I think with the exception of maybe some Saudi leaders, maybe the UAE, they want this war to end as soon as possible. And then they're like, as you said, they're going to make a deal with Iranian leaders to ensure, you know, to collaborate, to assure Iran that they're not enemies.

They're not going to side with the U.S. militarily. Obviously, there's not a single country in the world that's come to the U.S.'s assistance, aside from Israel, of course, that started this war. All of our NATO allies, you know, they didn't send so much as a minesweeper or a military advisor, you know, showing that the NATO alliance doesn't apply outside of the North Atlantic region, which, of course, it doesn't. But, you know, Trump has responded by threatening to leave NATO, which I think would be an awesome development. If there's anything good that could come out of this horrible war, I think the U.S. leaving NATO would be a really great deal. Obviously, we could pull out of the war in

Ukraine. That war could end very quickly. And then the U.S. could go back to being a hemispheric superpower, as I've been advocating for the past 23 years.

#Nima

I remember you said that, you know, before the election, you, Vivek Ramaswamy, then you joined Donald Trump, and you mentioned that various times on this podcast. But David, we had John Kerry talking about what has happened with the case of Netanyahu. He literally said each and every administration had this proposal from Benjamin Netanyahu. He wanted this war for such a long time. How... Do you see that the only guy who decided to go to war is Donald Trump? Why is that? What was the problem? And how did he convince Donald Trump and his administration to go to this war?

#David

Well, yeah, those reports are absolutely correct. I mean, from the time of the George W. Bush administration, Netanyahu has gone to the White House and tried to do a hard sell of this kind. Really, all he was asking for, essentially, was the friend-or-foe codes so they could fly their aircraft over Jordan and Iraq and not get shot down. And Bush, Obama, and Biden all chose to deny that permission for Israel, essentially, to start a war of aggression against Iran. And it was only Trump who was foolish enough to approve it. And he did so despite the fact that the U.S. has had war games for the last 20 years that have shown that in a war between the U.S. and Iran, Iran cannot be defeated. I would call that a U.S. defeat. So essentially, we knew that such a war would be unwinnable.

And as the New York Times article stated, you know, there were heated and chaotic discussions in the Cabinet and the National Security Council where everyone essentially said that, you know, this is going to be a bad deal. It might not be winnable. And the only ones that said it was winnable, of course, were Hanks, Seth, and Trump, and Netanyahu, and their voices prevailed. But J.D. Vance did a great job trying to dissuade the president from taking this action and going to war with Iran, starting an unnecessary imperial war of aggression that's a regional war, a great power war, the first we've seen that the U.S. has been involved in since the Korean War, that had a major possibility of escalating into World War III. Thankfully, with the ceasefire, Trump appears to have tired of this war, seeing that it's unwinnable.

He can't get Iran to do what he wants them to do, so he's going to do the ceasefire. He's extended it indefinitely as of two days ago. Of course, he could change—he could change on a dime. He was famous for that. But based on other articles, there was a Wall Street Journal article that came out that said he acted fearfully. As soon as we had an airman that was shot down—an Air Force colonel who was the weapons officer in the F-15E that was shot down by Iranian air defenses—he said, "We need to get him back because I'm worried that this could sink my poll numbers." Well, his poll numbers are already in the tank, but I think he's learned his lesson that he shouldn't do a ground invasion of Iran because it would be disastrous for us.

#Nima

I think that Benjamin Netanyahu finally got to that place because he, as we talked about before, wanted this war. Why? In your assessment, what was the outcome of this war so far for Israel? Israel is different. They think differently. They don't see it the same way. Even with the war happening in Iran, I would argue the agenda on the part of the Israelis was totally different from what was in the mind of the Trump administration. But considering their agenda, their sort of understanding of the war against Iran, what have they achieved so far?

#David

Well, for Netanyahu, you're right. You know, their interests are very different from those of the United States. They don't care if the Strait of Hormuz is closed. They don't get much, if any, oil out of the Strait of the Persian Gulf. So Netanyahu's objective has been very clear over the past 20 years, maybe 25 years. His agenda has been Israeli hegemony over the entire Middle East, with the exception of Pakistan, essentially. So Iran was really, you know, after he succeeded in getting the U. S. to help him overthrow the Assad regime in Syria, which I would argue was much more favorable than the al-Qaeda, former al-Qaeda-led regime we have today in Syria. Then it degraded—actually, Hamas wasn't degraded too much.

They actually gained a lot more militiamen since Israel started that war. It was a major defeat for Israel and pretty much one-to-one casualties. Hamas went from, I think, 25,000 or 32,000 to 40,000. So they've actually been strengthened by that war. But Hezbollah has been partially degraded, so there's been limited successes in Lebanon. Of course, that war was raging until like a week ago, and it could restart at any moment. But I do think that Iran—or rather Israel—calculates that the Iran war has been able, you know, U.S. intelligence reports that 50 percent of Iran's missile launchers have been taken out, one-third of its air force, and 40 percent of its navy.

Specifically, I think the IRGC Navy has been destroyed or disabled. So there has been some success militarily. Certainly, the Iranian economy has been massively damaged. Their financial system, the worth of their currency, has gone down a lot. I think that could recover within not too much time after the war ended and the blockade ended. But there has been substantial weakening from that end. But in terms of the strategic level, Iran has been greatly strengthened because they are now the regional hegemon of the Gulf, and people have to recognize that. The U.S. has to recognize that, essentially. The U.S. Navy has proven powerless to dispute Iranian control of the Strait of Hormuz. So that is kind of a revolution in regional power dynamics.

#Nima

You mentioned the domestic, and we know that the Trump administration came a long, long way when it comes to the war with Iran. We had Charlie Kirk before the war, the first round of war

happening. He did everything. We remember what he was trying to do. He said, no, this war is going to be devastating. We don't need this war. The United States doesn't need this war. We know what has happened to Charlie Kirk. Then we had Tucker Carlson, Candace Owens, all the people—Megyn Kelly, the people who were supporting unconditionally Donald Trump.

They didn't receive anything from Donald Trump, I would say. They did everything to help him get elected. But finally, who's the best friend of the president of the United States? It's Lindsey Graham. It's just unbelievable. It doesn't matter if you have Joe Biden in office or Donald Trump. The best friend continues to be Lindsey Graham. What is that? How is that going to influence the Republican Party and the future of the party, considering the way that Donald Trump has somehow destroyed his base?

#David

Yeah, great question. So, you know, Trump's election-winning MAGA coalition was wide-ranging and included, you know, working-class, educated white people, even Blacks and Hispanics, and pretty much independents and everyone—youth. He almost won young adults during the November 2024 election. And that coalition is pretty much gone. And he's, as Piers Morgan has stated, he absolutely seems to be going after everyone.

He's going after Christians, he's going after Catholics, he's insulted the Pope, pretends he's Jesus, he wants us to worship him as some kind of minor deity. I mean, he's just gone completely, completely nuts, and now he is threatening nuclear genocide against 92 million Iranian civilians and claiming that he has Iran's, you know, the people's best interests at heart. I mean, it's ludicrous, and this is not the leader we elected. We elected a leader who gave his inaugural address and said he was going to be a transformational peace president that ended America's forever wars and didn't start any new ones and save us from World War III. And with the exception of World War III, he's pretty much gone 180 degrees in the opposite direction.

So I think this is going to severely imperil the Republican Party's electoral prospects for not just the next two elections, but maybe the next three or four. We could lose power for a generation. I'm a lifelong Republican. Again, I've been a Trump supporter for many years. He totally lost me on this one. He can get me back if he makes peace with Iran, drops the blockade, signs a deal acceptable to Iran, pulls U.S. troops out of the Middle East, cuts off security assistance to Israel, and ends the war in Ukraine. It's just really the Middle East part that I'm concerned about. So I would support him again if he did all those things I just mentioned.

But then, as an added bonus, I'd like to see him pull out of NATO, or at least the NATO military command structure, and sign a bilateral peace deal with Russia, and then pressure Zelensky to sign it. But, you know, that's a long road. I don't think he's going to do it. He's surrounded himself with neocons. He's reportedly planning on forcing Tulsi Gabbard out as Director of National Intelligence by mid, you know, by November. You know, President or Vice President J.D. Vance has reportedly

been sidelined in policy discussions. He wasn't allowed to be with Trump during both the Venezuela and Iran airstrikes because he opposed both. So he's put his principles first. I think he's in a good position to win the nomination, but Trump has destroyed his chances to win the general election in 2028.

#Nima

He sent him as the main negotiator to Islamabad because the Iranian side was asking that if someone was going to negotiate with them, it was going to be J.D. Vance. They said, "We're not going to negotiate with Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner." That's why Donald Trump sent him. But during the talks, I spoke with Professor Miranda, who was with the Iranian delegation in Islamabad. He said that J.D. Vance, more than 12 times, called Trump—Donald Trump or someone in Washington—and he even called Benjamin Netanyahu too. Why is that? Because when Donald Trump sends the Vice President of the United States to these high-level negotiations, you have to give him some sort of authority, some sort of framework. It didn't seem that he had that sort of agenda being delivered to J.D. Vance.

#David

Yeah, I had posted, you know, before Vance went to represent us in the peace talks, that if Trump simply gave J.D. Vance plenipotentiary powers to act with full authority, he could, you know, wrap up a deal in 24 hours. I'm convinced of that. I think he could have. I mean, we got fairly close. I think we got pretty close before Trump ordered him to pull out over his maximalist demands on no enrichment for Iran in terms of uranium enrichment and also to surrender all of their 60% highly enriched uranium stockpile, which is about 1,000 pounds worth, to the U.S. Other than that, I think we were pretty close to a deal, and Iran was willing to stay.

You know, and here we have the next day, you know, he imposed the blockade, and the blockade is the reason why the peace talks haven't continued. But in terms of, yeah, in terms of Vance, I think I've seen reports that he had to call Trump 21 times in 21 hours for authority to, you know, make certain concessions or, you know, and then, of course, Netanyahu as well. So Netanyahu boasted that, you know, he's called by high-level Trump officials every day. So it's made clear who runs U.S. Middle Eastern foreign policy. It's not President Trump. It's Prime Minister Netanyahu. And Netanyahu, of course, is a war criminal. So it's a disgrace that any foreign leader would control our regional foreign policy in the Middle East, let alone a war criminal like Netanyahu.

#Nima

What's so amazing, David, is that Benjamin Netanyahu is not in a good position in Israel. Donald Trump is helping him drastically. He's helping him in Israel and outside of Israel. And many people are asking, how can he manage that sort of leverage on Donald Trump? Because we've seen nobody being capable of gaining that much from Donald Trump.

#David

Well, I mean, this is all speculation, of course, but President Trump, you know, he was America First the first three to three and a half months of his second term in office. And then, you know, since about May—it was mid-May—when he started covering up, it wasn't like, it seemed very personal to him. He got very angry. He turned against Marjorie Taylor Greene, Thomas Massie, every Republican that tried to force him to release the files, of which only, I think, 10% of the actual content has been released. Ninety percent is being concealed or redacted.

It just shows that he—it suggests very strongly that he has committed sexual criminal misconduct with minor girls. You know, it took me a long time to really accept that, and I didn't want to believe that of our president. But there have been credible allegations of him having criminal sexual abuse of two minor girls, young women, teenagers. And so I think that we know that the Epstein sex ring scandal was an Israeli Mossad operation, that Jeffrey Epstein was a Mossad agent. And so we also know that Netanyahu, you know, bugs the phones. He's gotten Trump and the whole White House to use an Israeli signal app so he can read every text message that is sent on a supposedly secure messaging system in the White House.

So he knows what to say, how to push Trump's buttons. I mean, he had Mike Waltz, his national security advisor, come to talk to Netanyahu and basically tell him what he needed to say. I think Lindsey Graham did the same thing. This is what you need to say to get President Trump to do your bidding and go to war with Iran. And Waltz got fired. He just got demoted to a lower-ranking cabinet position. And, you know, it seemed that everything was going swimmingly well, you know, in April of last year when that happened. You know, I cheered on Trump for doing that. I think it was actually early May. But then it's been all downhill since, with the 12-day war and, of course, the 38-day war, which is morphing into a two-month war with indefinite duration, with this never-ending U.S. naval blockade.

#Nima

Considering the war that is happening, we are hearing from Israeli officials that the next enemy—they're talking this way, basically—that Gaza and Palestine and the West Bank were yesterday. Today it's Iran and Lebanon. Tomorrow it's Turkey. And on the other hand, the U.S. envoy to Turkey, Tom Barak, said that whoever in Israel thinks they can fight this way is just delusional. But even with Tom Barak, they attacked him after his stance, his comment on Israel. And they don't even believe that these people can have a little bit of disagreement with the Israelis—they attack. But considering what has happened in the Middle East, David, I think the United States—I don't know if there is such a grand strategy.

We have the National Security Strategy, by the way. The latest version of the National Security Strategy says Iran and Russia are not existential threats to the United States. This was written in the

latest version of the National Security Strategy. But we have this war happening, and you've mentioned the role of Israel in this war. What would happen to the grand strategy of the United States, in your opinion? I'm not talking about the Trump administration. The way that you see the grand strategy of the United States, is it going to get involved in these endless wars of Israel in the Middle East? Is it going to be something bigger than that—to see the whole region, not only the situation in West Asia, but also the case of Ukraine, to see a big picture of the region of Eurasia?

#David

Well, I think that this is probably as bad as it's going to get, I think, with Iran. Certainly, this war could be restarted on a dime. You know, President Trump is famously a flip-flopper, you know, has a bipolar foreign policy, so he can flip from one day to the next or within the same day his positions. He could say, you know, Iran has a deadline of Sunday, and then he can enforce it and start bombing them. He could invade Kharg Island, but I don't think he's going to do it. I think he's really tired of this war. I think he's going to end it. I don't, you know, if Israel were to bomb Turkey—I mean, Turkey is a NATO member state. You know, NATO supposedly applies to the North Atlantic region, but Turkey is within Europe.

You know, they have part of Europe. They have, obviously, Istanbul is located in Europe. So they're really a European continental power, not just in West Asia, in the Middle East. So, you know, it's hard for me to see how that would go down. Obviously, Israel could prevail because they have nuclear weapons, but, I mean, if Turkey wasn't afraid, they could simply occupy Syria and Lebanon and fight it out conventionally. I think that's certainly a possibility, and maybe NATO countries would stay neutral, and probably Trump would tell Israel to knock it off. But, you know, Netanyahu probably has the goods on Trump, so that might not work so well.

But I don't think Trump would support that. Obviously, I don't think Trump's going to bomb Turkey. And I think Trump has made it clear that he wants to refocus on the Western Hemisphere once his Iran so-called excursion is over, and he wants it to be over. His next target is Cuba. He wants to blockade Cuba. He wants to arrest their president, you know, say Maduro-style, and then try to, you know, work with whoever the vice president is to try to open up Cuba to U.S. business interests. I don't see how that really helps. That would help Cuba, obviously, helping the Cuban people get out of the oil embargo.

They're really suffering. They're one of the poorest countries in the world because of U.S. sanctions. But it hasn't ejected their communist regime. I mean, they've been communist since, you know, obviously since long before I was born, around 1958 or '59, I guess, is when Castro took power. So I think that's the refocus that Trump's planning on. And I think he really has no interest in fighting a war with China over Taiwan as well. In fact, he's given some degree of assurances to Xi Jinping that he wants to make a deal over Taiwan.

#Nima

He's going to go to China on May 15. And do you think by then he's going to have some sort of leverage in the Middle East before going to China? And how is that going to be seen by the Chinese government?

#David

Well, that's the interesting thing, you know. Reportedly, Trump's grand strategy is to try to pressure China. You know, he wants to make a deal with China over Taiwan and everything else, but he wants it to be more on U.S. terms. So he's trying to increase the pressure points. He cut off Venezuelan oil supplies, which I think were 6.67% of total Chinese imports. And he's trying to do the same with Iran. He's just starting to with the blockade. Before that, you know, for the first six weeks of the war, the shipment of Iranian oil to China had actually increased by a good margin. But Chinese officials have stated—well, it was Dr. Robert Pate who stated he went to dinner with Chinese leaders and asked them about the blockade, whether they were concerned about it.

And they said, well, we could lose 1% of our GDP, but we think it's bad. You know, the advantages of the U.S. getting bogged down in a Middle Eastern war far outweigh any economic costs we have to bear. So, you know, Iran's oil, I think, is about 13.5% of their total imports. I don't think this is going to be a long-term thing. I think Trump's going to be forced to lift the blockade very soon, or else, you know, the U.S. is going to go into a recession right before the midterm elections. But, you know, I think the mentality of Trump is he's trying to isolate China economically with regards to oil and then thinking that he'll have the advantage, or so-called, you know, quote-unquote, leverage in any negotiations with China moving forward.

#Nima

I think when it comes to the blockade, the Iranian blockade, it's a huge military operation, looking at what is going on, because they're in the Arabian Sea and the area is just big. And the operations so far, I think, if I'm not mistaken, they have seized or taken under their control three tankers, if I'm not mistaken. Iran had the same number on their side. Is that helping? Because the whole concept of the blockade is just because Donald Trump was so concerned about the global economy, the cost, how the price of oil and gas is rising. And then you see he's coming with some sort of genius idea that, "Let's blockade the blockade." And what is your understanding of that?

#David

Well, that's the funny thing, isn't it? Because President Trump spent the first six weeks of the war, eight weeks of the war, threatening Iran if they didn't lift their blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and open up the Strait of Hormuz. He was going to nuke them, or he was going to destroy all their

power plants and most of their oil refineries. And now he's boasting on Truth Social that he's been able to close and blockade the Strait of Hormuz tight, so none of those ships can get out. So he's really completely flip-flopped on that.

You know, I posted, I think, this morning that he's either bipolar or mentally unstable. But that's, you know, he's turned U.S. strategy on its head because, you know, we have a vested interest in keeping the Strait open. Because if we don't, you know, gas prices will surge to six dollars a gallon within the next couple of months, and there'll be a global and U.S. recession. So the only way around that is he needs to lift the blockade, he needs to get Iran to open up the Strait. You know, the grim reality is that it's going to be open under IRGC control.

Iran stated today that they're going to have these transit fees or tolls on all ships going through the strait. They banned Israeli ships. They said U.S. ships will be able to come—commercial vessels only—will be able to enter the Persian Gulf provided they pay a toll fee that's much in excess of the fee being charged to everyone else. All the countries sanctioning Iran are going to get higher fees. And, of course, Trump can easily avoid that by simply lifting all sanctions on Iran, and then he'll get to pay the same \$1-a-barrel fee that everyone else pays.

#Nima

Today we've learned from the Israeli Defense Minister, Israel Katz. He said that they're prepared, they're totally prepared to restart the war, and they're waiting for the green light from the Trump administration. So, you know, before the ceasefire happened, we know that basically the Israelis were not that much involved in the war. It was the United States and Iran. Israel was much more involved in Lebanon because Hezbollah—they said that Hezbollah is destroyed, Hezbollah doesn't have anything.

And we saw that Hezbollah is hitting not only the central part of Israel, they're hitting the southern part of Israel, which they never did before. And when Israel is saying that they're prepared to continue the war, and considering what was reported in the Wall Street Journal and on CNN, how they're short of interceptors—the air defense system is not working properly because of the radars being destroyed in the region and in Israel as well—and so there are no communications. They're short of interceptors, they're short of cruise missiles, as was reported by CNN. What is the situation with the continuation of the war?

#David

Well, I think Netanyahu wouldn't dare restart the war unless he had assurances that the U.S. would conduct the majority of the strikes. You know, I think he wants to get the U.S. bogged down in a forever war in Iran. He's pushing for the U.S. to take Karg Island, to, you know, take control of a lot of their oil. Of course, a lot of their oil production could be transferred. But somehow the mentality is if we capture Karg Island, which is way in the western Persian Gulf on the edge, even though it's far

away from the Strait of Hormuz, somehow that would give us control of the Strait, and that math just doesn't add up.

Obviously, we could land a U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division brigade on the island, assuming their planes aren't shot out of the sky. We can occupy that territory. Our troops are going to get mauled because they'd be out in the open with no natural defenses or fortifications. Obviously, they could dig in and stuff, but, you know, essentially they would just be hostages because, you know, the straits are mined. You know, Trump joked about, well, I think Iran's laid about one to thirteen mines, and, you know, we could pick those up and clear the strait in a single day.

In fact, it could be hundreds or thousands. And, you know, there's an article that came out today or yesterday that said the U.S. Navy would take six months to clear the mines, even if, you know, Iran let us do it. So, you know, we just don't have minesweepers anymore. I think we had three in the region. We withdrew them all because we had two weeks' notice before the U.S. went to war, in terms of the military getting notice that we needed to, you know, do some troop withdrawals and readjustments so we didn't get a lot of our ships sunk and troops killed. So, yeah, I think it's not going too well.

#Nima

We've seen some sort of different behavior from Europeans since the war started. When the war started, they tried to help Israel, to defend Israel. When it comes to Cyprus, they sent some of their, you know, aircraft carriers or drones, military ships to defend Israel, and they used the radar bases to communicate with air defense systems. But after all, when it came to the Strait of Hormuz, they said, no, we're not going to be part of that operation. And Donald Trump did everything. He put pressure, saying, I'm going to leave NATO and NATO doesn't matter anymore. He even yesterday divided NATO into good and bad countries. And what has happened? What is your understanding of the way that the European countries who are part of NATO have behaved so far? The other point is the report on CNN. They said it doesn't matter if Europe is willing to join the war because they don't have much to offer to the conflict. Your understanding of that?

#David

Well, I think President Trump, we need to understand that he views himself as kind of a Roman emperor. Every country in the world, aside from Russia and China, he views as some kind of vassal state, except for North Korea. So he wants tribute. He talks about how Iran sent eight tankers full of fuel, 16 million gallons of oil, or I think it was 20. He said 20 tankers full that they sent as a gift of tribute to express their gratitude for killing the first family and their supreme leader. I mean, how ridiculous can he be? I mean, he just makes up the deep fake news. There was a story about the eight—I know I'm veering off a little bit from your question about Europe—but there was a story about the eight women that were supposedly prisoners of Iran.

That turned out to be bogus. The women were real, but in fact, four had been released and none of them were on death row. The other four were maybe facing a year in prison for protesting. So, you know, Trump just made up that story. But the European leaders, you know, they behaved as U.S. vassals right up until Trump took office, and then when he veered from the pro-war, you know, Ukraine war, anti-Russian line, they finally showed independence. You know, it was interesting — Biden set the policy, they were skittish about fighting a proxy war with Russia, but then they converted to, you know, to Biden's line of thinking.

And it's become a kind of religious dogma for them that they have to, you know, fight World War III with Russia or, you know, fight them in Ukraine indefinitely. And, you know, since then, they've become a lot more independent-thinking and oppositional to Donald Trump. They've tried to manipulate him, as Zelensky has and as Netanyahu has, doing their bidding, and they've pretty much succeeded. But this was, you know, this Iran war, as it was for me, was kind of a bridge too far for them to accept because it's an illegal war. It's a war that's, you know, it was a sneak attack. It was an unprovoked war of aggression.

Iran had not attacked the U.S. There was no imminent threat of attack against the U.S. or U.S. military bases, according to our U.S. intelligence and Department of Defense or Department of War. So, yeah, they weren't going to support it. We didn't even tell them ahead of time that it was going to happen. And as you alluded to, France, Spain, Italy, and other countries have denied us naval basing rights and rights to their airspace for any warplanes traveling to and from, or even refueling tankers traveling to and from, the Iranian theater, the Middle East theater of war. So I think, yeah, Trump is, you know, he's mad at them and views them as, you know, he wants tribute from them. He wants them to kiss the ring, bend the knee, you know, just like kind of Game of Thrones style.

#Nima

Yeah. David, before wrapping up this session, how do you see the petrodollar? How do you see, because Donald Trump, I remember every time before being elected and after being elected, he was talking about how we can bring the jobs back to the United States, how we can make the dollar stronger and mightier. And how do you see the situation with the dollar?

#David

I think it's, you know, it's just going to worsen. I mean, it started when we cut off Russia from the SWIFT system, the banking system that was U.S. dollar-based. I think we lost about 11 percent of the share of our, you know, the dollarization of the world's currency and trade. And, you know, Iran just stated this morning that all of these transit fees will have to be paid in Iranian currency, not U.S. currency. So that's going to further erode it. And obviously, they control, you know, 20 percent of the world's oil reserves in terms of traffic going in and out of the Persian Gulf area.

So, you know, once again, President Trump has sacrificed his entire policy agenda. I mean, really, politically, economically, you know, the whole message that the Republican Party had decided on — they had these big powwows, I think in January — you know, they met with Republican leaders at the White House and said, okay, we're going to run on this economic agenda. We're going to tout all the lower fuel costs, lower cost of living, all this stuff, tariffs, how that's helped us out. And now all that is out the window. The de-dollarization of the world is going to increase the cost of living here in the United States, and it's going to hurt the working class.

I mean, the working class is now opposing Trump for the first time. That was really his core constituency. He ran on, you know, representing the forgotten man and woman. And, you know, now he's doing the exact opposite. All this just for Israel. Iran didn't, you know, pose us any imminent threat whatsoever. There was no reason to attack them. Yes, they likely do have a modest nuclear arsenal. They haven't threatened to use it. They haven't used it. You know, so basically, this is a war of lies, is what I'm trying to say. Just like David Sachs talked about the Ukraine war, Biden's war in Ukraine being a war of lies, Trump's war in Iran is a war of lies as well.

#Nima

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

#David

Thanks, Nima. Always a pleasure for me as well.