

# Scott Ritter: Iran Fires Missiles at UAE, 'Project Freedom'

Former UN weapons inspector and US Marine Corps Intelligence Officer Scott Ritter joins to discuss Iran's missile strikes in the Strait of Hormuz targeting the UAE and US warships, as well as the US response. Is War back on? This stream covers the latest escalation with one of the most important voices in geopolitics. <https://scottritter.com/> [PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG](https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong) Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: [chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com](https://www.substack.com/p/chroniclesofhaiphong) Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #iranwar #trump

## #Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. As you can see, I am joined by Scott Ritter, former U.N. weapons inspector and U.S. Marine Corps intelligence officer, current geopolitical analyst, author, journalist. Scott, good to be back with you.

## #Scott Ritter

Thanks for having me.

## #Danny

Yes, everyone, hit the like button as you come on. It helps boost the show. And we're just going to get started. Scott, on the fog of war, I wanted to ask you about the events in the last 24 hours, because they are quite chaotic and hectic, and even within the last few hours, we are getting reports that the UAE's air defenses are active. This is coming from the Ministry of Defense over there, for whatever that is worth. They are saying they are dealing with a new round of missile and drone attacks from Iran. And this comes, Scott, in the last 24 hours, we heard about the Fujairah port being hit. Iran is saying they didn't hit it, that the U.S. military actually hit it in what was a chaotic scene that led to what Iran is also claiming is the death of a handful of civilians from a boat that was struck, that the U.S. CENTCOM claims were small, fast attack boats. But, Scott, maybe you can help us understand what's happened in the last 24 hours. Pete Hegseth was up there today saying the Strait of Hormuz is open, the U.S. has reopened it, Project Freedom is working quite well, while Iran is saying that they still have the clamps on the Strait of Hormuz and that the U.S. is violating the ceasefire with each and every attempt to sail their warships through it. So what's your assessment of what's going on right now?

## #Scott Ritter

Well, first of all, we have to point out the reality that you and I and your audience are held hostage to information sources we don't control and we can't directly vet. So in circumstances like that, I think it's important that we fall back on—we evaluate past precedent information. You know, that was an analytical technique that could be used. You know, does the source have a history of accurately reporting, or does the source have a history of, you know, making stuff up?

And when we do that, we recognize the absolute necessity of taking everything the United States says with a big grain of salt, because the United States has repeatedly lied, exaggerated, fabricated data to sustain a narrative that isn't necessarily fact-based, but more likely than not designed to sustain the fantasy that exists in Donald Trump's world. Iran, on the other hand, has a history of being fairly accurate in what they report. And so, as things stand, I would just put more weight on the narrative coming out of Iran than I would on the narrative coming out of the United States.

## **#Danny**

Yeah. And if, with the narrative coming out of Iran, we're hearing that the United States is the one that is essentially maybe causing all of this calamity. Iran has said that they—the United States itself—was the one responsible for the Fujairah port. How is all of this—the port exploding, getting hit? But now we're hearing from the UAE itself, which I don't know if that's a reliable source, that they are right now incurring missile strikes. But what do you think is actually happening right now in the Strait of Hormuz? Because this is now the site of the entire war, it feels like, and the United States is very hard set on this waterway. Well...

## **#Scott Ritter**

You know, we have to be careful when we hear Pete Hegseth speak, because sometimes you need to focus on—the lower down you get off of the podium where propaganda is spewed, and the lower you get down to communications that address the reality of the situation on the ground—the closer you are to the truth. You're not going to get the truth from the podium. You'll get the truth closer to the ground. We have statements from Central Command saying that the U.S. Navy ships will not seek to force the Strait of Hormuz. I think that's probably the truth.

We also have statements from the U.S. Navy talking to the vessels seeking to come out of the bottleneck through the Strait of Hormuz, that they should seek the southern passage, but that they need to be very careful. Remember, this is supposed to be Operation whatever the heck they call it, Freedom Journey or whatever, where the United States is putting the weight of America behind their right to transit. And at the bottom of that, I think it says that the ship's captains need to coordinate with their insurance companies and their owners to make sure that they understand the risks, that there are mines that haven't been cleared, and that you could be attacked by the Iranians.

That doesn't sound like too much of a guarantee of free transit. So we don't know exactly what's going on, but what I will say is this: people who track shipping through the Strait of Hormuz are not noticing any surge of shipping that would, you know, seem to be manifest if, indeed, the straits were open. You know, Pete can speak of a red, white, and blue dome over the Strait of Hormuz, but that's just a straight-up lie. The Iranians control the strait and will continue to interdict shipping to the point that no insurance company will underwrite any ship that goes through the straits, regardless of what the United States claims to be doing.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and I can just pull up some of the imagery coming out of the Strait of Hormuz that seems to contradict this idea that the United States is moving ships through and everything is reopening. It appears that the only ship as of this morning that was in the Strait of Hormuz right now was an Iranian ship, according to mapping data. But, Scott, I wanted to ask you something about what was said here by Danny Haiphong. He said something very curious during this briefing that was given this morning about the ceasefire and about what Iran has done. Of course, very little about what the U.S. has done that might have violated the ceasefire itself. But I want your comments on this.

## **#Speaker 1**

The map shows the examples and samples of Iranian attacks against commercial vessels in the Strait, as well as the Gulf of Oman and up in the Arabian Gulf. Since the ceasefire was announced, Iran has fired at commercial vessels nine times and seized two container ships, and they've attacked U.S. forces more than 10 times, all below the threshold of restarting major combat operations at this point. You can also see the group of tankers and cargo vessels in the U.S. blockade line, as I mentioned. As a result of Iran's indiscriminate attacks across the region, there are currently 22,500 mariners embarked on more than 1,550 commercial vessels trapped in the Arabian Gulf, unable

## **#Danny**

So, Scott, what is this threshold for restarting military operations? Because Iran has been saying since the beginning of the ceasefire that the U.S. is actually the one violating the ceasefire, possibly leading to these tensions that we're talking about now in the Strait of Hormuz.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, I mean, it's curious when he speaks of a threshold, but he hasn't defined what the threshold is. So we don't know. It could mean anything. You know, it could be, you know, ineffective fire. You know, there are rules of engagement that say that you cannot return fire unless you receive effective fire, which means fire that's impacting either your troops or the area immediately in the vicinity of the troops. You know, then you get to respond. So if the Iranians painted, you know,

again, we don't know what the threshold is, but... let's put it this way. If you paint me, you acquire me with a target acquisition radar and you lock on.

That is an act of war. I have the right to treat that as an attack and take out your radar. And so American ships could have been painted by Iranian radar, and that could be, you know, an action that falls below the threshold. Weapons could have been released but failed to, you know, fall into the, you know, the circle around the target deemed to be effective fire. But we don't know what the threshold is. I mean, maybe the Pentagon has published this elsewhere. I'm not aware of it. You know, so you have to understand that the job of General Kane and these others isn't to give you accurate information.

The job is to give you data that allows the United States to manipulate it to mean what we want it to mean. And so I think they deliberately withheld what constitutes the threshold in order to create a more threatening environment than actually existed. What the Iranians are portraying is far from a situation where they're attacking Americans. It's where the United States comes into a situation and, you know, we've viewed things as threats that aren't. Anybody who's been to the region, if you've been to Dubai, for instance, you go down to the port. You'll notice as you walk along the piers, you know, just an endless row of dhows, small commercial vessels that are used both in terms of intra-shipping amongst the Gulf Arab states, but in this situation, more importantly, to transit into Iran.

There's a thriving shipping industry using these dhows, these smaller vessels, that connects especially to, I think, Qeshm Island. It's a duty-free zone that allows connectivity with the Gulf Arab states to come in and do trade in a duty-free environment. And so you have these vessels making this transit back and forth. And what appears to have happened is that the United States, when they were making whatever maneuver they were making, misconstrued some of these ships as hostile Iranian ships and began firing on these ships using a variety of methods of engagement. And it may have been one of these weapons systems that was released that found its way to the UAE oil facility, striking and causing a fire, because the Iranians are adamant that they weren't responsible for this.

They didn't do this. And, um, you know, in this day and age, radar tracking—understand this—if the Iranians had launched this attack, there would be radar evidence. And the fact that the United States isn't putting out the radar evidence to back this up only underscores that something's going on. We haven't, in fact, put out any data. In the Caribbean, when we sink these so-called narcotic ships, we publish those videos instantaneously. Here we've published nothing, because I think they recognize that when subjected to scrutiny, it will show something other than the narrative that has been published by the United States. This is almost like a Gulf of Tonkin-type situation.

## **#Danny**

Yeah. Yeah. Maybe elaborate on that, especially in the context of the UAE here, because the UAE seems to be thick in the middle of what the U.S. narrative is around what's been going on in the Strait of Hormuz, in the Persian Gulf—or the Arabian Gulf, as they call it. And I'm curious what your

thoughts are about the UAE's position here. I mean, they're the ones who did get hit, and they're the ones saying that their air defenses are activated. They just left OPEC. It seems like they're playing a very special role in this latest escalation.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, the UAE is a very aggressive member of the implementation group seeking to make the Abraham Accords a reality. The Abraham Accords, of course, are the policy put together by Donald Trump and his administration in his first term that's designed to promote peace between the Gulf Arab states and Israel—to create at least peace, a greater Israel from an economic standpoint, to create the economic foundation upon which a greater Israel would be based. So it's very much part of the Zionist enterprise, and the UAE is an extension of that. You know, we speak of the United States and Israel carrying out the surprise attack on February 28th, but the silent partner was the United Arab Emirates.

They were heavily involved in facilitating this from an intelligence collection standpoint, to an operational sustainment standpoint, to a political sustainment standpoint. So they are a party to the conflict. They try to paint themselves as the victim, but they're not the victim. They are the aggressor. And they are promoting, again, this concept of a greater Israel. And so Iran has rightfully viewed them as the enemy and has struck them accordingly. So now we go into phase two. Notice that the other Gulf Arab states are very reticent. In fact, many of them have articulated a desire to distance themselves from the United States because of this—the fact that we are in an existential war of survival with Iran. And the closer you get to reaching a culminating moment, the more risk the Gulf Arab states are.

Iran has said that if the United States begins large-scale attacks against Iranian targets, especially Iranian energy targets, they are going to take out the totality of energy production for Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, and perhaps even Saudi Arabia. Iran has demonstrated the capacity to do this. So, you know, it's a very dangerous situation, one that the United Arab Emirates has decided they're going to— they don't want to be part of the team that says it's time for America to leave. In fact, they're doubling down on keeping America in the game. A piece of information that came out late last week that wasn't known previously is that Israel had dispatched its Iron Dome system to the United Arab Emirates, complete with troops. So it's not just the systems, but Israeli troops were on the ground defending the United Arab Emirates against Iranian attack.

They did this with no other Gulf Arab nation, only the United Arab Emirates, which again solidifies the notion that the United Arab Emirates is part of this greater Israeli enterprise. And the other thing is that they have made the strategic decision to decouple from OPEC+. That means they are no longer part of a cartel that collaborates on controlling energy supplies in a way to maintain market stability over the long term. But they want to go their own way, and you have to ask yourself why. One, of course, is the linkage between the idea of remembrance and this Greater Israeli Project, and

they realize they have to de-link from the rest of the Gulf Arab states politically in order to be able to stay on board.

But this also means it becomes more difficult for the United Arab Emirates to participate in a collaboration designed to, you know, influence global energy markets in a way that may not be in favor of the United States or Israel now that they're on Team Zion. So they did that. And the other thing is, I think that the United Arab Emirates is in extraordinarily difficult straits right now. They haven't been able to export energy to the degree they want. They've been struck by the Iranians, who are hitting them at will and have shown the ability to hit them at will. And, you know, they're desperate, a financially desperate situation. They, you know, went back to Pakistan and withdrew money they had provided the Pakistanis as part of a program to stabilize Pakistan's foreign cash reserves so they can buy energy.

They said, "We want that money back," several billion dollars. And they followed up by, I guess, evicting 15,000 Pakistani civilians who were working in the UAE and seizing their bank accounts. So all the money that they had earned, the UAE seized. Why? Because I think the UAE is in an emergency situation. I think they're in a lot of trouble right now. And, you know, things are only going to get worse. If Iran makes the decision to take out the totality of the UAE's energy production, then that's the end of the United Arab Emirates. If Iran decides to take out water desalination plants, that's the end of fresh water. That's the end of Abu Dhabi and Dubai as modern cities. So this is a war of existential survival now for Abu Dhabi, for Dubai, for the United Arab Emirates.

## **#Danny**

Speaking of trouble, how much trouble is the United States in if it restarts strikes on Iran? There have been multiple reports. I mean, for several days we've heard, "Next 24 hours, next 24 hours." CNN is reporting again that Israel and the United States are coordinating another round of strikes to occur tomorrow, sometime imminently. But speaking of economic woes, there's a big overheating right now in the U.S. economy, especially around gas prices, that it seems the United States, Donald Trump himself, and the administration are doing their best to manipulate and finagle around and try to cool down at any moment that they can. So how much trouble is the United States in if they begin striking Iran again?

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, even without striking Iran, we're in a tremendous amount of trouble. When one looks at the global energy markets, understand that these markets—it's always dangerous to rely upon television programs, especially those that are fictional in nature, to create, you know, illustrations of reality. But a good program that's out there for this purpose is \*Landman\*. I think Billy Bob Thornton plays a role in this show. But early on in season one, he's explaining the reality of the oil business to a lawyer, and he's talking about the price of oil. He said, look, we're in the oil business and we like to

make money, but you got to understand that if the price of oil goes up too much, you get a pinch at the pump and it creates a political problem for the consumer. We can't have that. He said, and if it goes too low, of course, we can't afford it.

The sweet spot for the price of oil is around \$78 a barrel, and that's about where it is today. Maybe it could go up to \$80-something. But that allows you to make money, but it also allows consumers to continue to consume and not cut back, because the moment consumers start cutting back, then you've got an overproduction problem and you're not making as much money as you thought you were going to make. And so the reason why I brought this up is that the world doesn't exist with massive supplies of oil that can just flood the market. The way energy production works is that they produce enough energy in a given window to meet expected demand. They have a little bit of buffer built in, but you can't have too much buffer because there's a finite amount of storage out there, and you don't want to keep money floating like that.

You want to keep it going. And so money, energy is flowing out of the Middle East. Twenty, twenty-two percent of the world's energy supplies come from the Middle East. Not just that, but I think there's a more significant amount of fertilizer that comes out. We are in planting season, and the world doesn't have enough fertilizer. Helium, which is an ingredient that's used in major technical production—Qatar produces a bunch of it. None of it's coming out. There's the market. All this stuff was in a pipeline that was designed with sustainability in mind, meaning no major disruptions. On February 28th, that pipeline got pinched. Now, we in the West—you know, how long has the Strait of Hormuz been closed? For many, many weeks now.

And yet, you know, we're seeing a hit at the pump, but, you know, it's just more money. We've paid more money for gas in the past. So, you know, it truly hasn't impacted us yet because we're living off the energy that had been put into the supply chain, in the pipeline, so to speak, on February 28th. And that's made its way across the Pacific. The last of that energy landed in California yesterday. It's going to go to refineries, be refined into product, and then go out. And when that's done, there's nothing behind it. That's the way the world is right now. There's no energy coming out of the Middle East, out of the Persian Gulf region. Kuwait, a major energy producer, zero oil shipped last month.

Saudi Arabia has seen a significant drop. The United Arab Emirates, a significant drop. And we're seeing this resonate around the world. We're seeing shortages in Australia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Iran. And soon there's going to be shortages in the United States because, as I said, there's nothing coming behind. So when that happens, we've got a major crisis, a major crisis, because our economy runs on oil. You take oil away, our economy doesn't function. And it's not just about fuel for gas, although that's important. Everything we do in life, oil plays a role. Oil is involved in everything, every aspect of our life, from, you know, making plastics and things of that nature.

So, when we run out of oil, people will shout, we're energy self-sufficient. But understand that our energy market is plugged into the global energy market, so we feel the shortages of the world in

terms of how it impacts pricing. And we can call ourselves energy independent, but when the price of Brent goes up to \$150, \$200 a barrel, yeah, the oil companies are making money. They're not going to turn that off. They don't run a charity. They're not going to say, well, you know, I know it's selling at \$200 a barrel, but we're going to continue selling it to you at \$78 because that's the fair price. That's not how it works. Unless the government can subsidize this, flood the market with strategic reserves, you're not going to manage this price.

We have been managing it politically by creating crises over the weekend and then on Monday having a miracle happen, and you see the fluctuation. And there's a lot of data that shows there's been some serious insider trading by people close to the White House who are making hundreds of millions of dollars off shorting oil or going long on oil, depending on what tweet the president's going to put out. But it's a known known that when the president puts out a social media posting, there will be market implications. And so people who have advanced notice of a presidential tweet or presidential posting are making the appropriate investments and just raking in the money.

So there's that taking place, but they're the only ones making money. Everybody else is going to lose money. And very soon we're going to be looking at a very real energy crisis, one that could be catastrophic in nature, not only for the United States, but especially for Europe. For our European allies, they're going to suffer egregiously. In Asia, our Asian allies, the same thing. And there is no cavalry coming to the rescue because the world doesn't have instantly available excess energy production to tap into. If they're going to start producing more oil out of Saudi Arabia, they've got to begin to do things.

Even then, once the oil enters the pipeline, there's a six- to eight-week gap where nothing enters. So no matter what, this summer we're going to be riding out a major economic crisis. And if it lasts long enough, businesses won't survive. Already in Europe, Lufthansa, a major European airline, had to lay off or cancel 20,000 flights. They're going to cancel more. Croatia Airlines and other airlines have stopped training crew because they say we're actually looking at probably having to put people on furlough or shut down the crew. Europe's going to lose civil aviation. In the United States, Delta's already going through a crisis right now because of high fuel prices.

And so, there's going to be a huge impact when diesel goes through the roof. Those truckers are going to stop driving because it costs too much for them to drive across the country. And if they can't drive across the country, the goods are going to stay in the port. How do we get our food to New York? How do we get our Chinese electronics to New York? How do we get anything anywhere? The answer is we don't. And this is what our summer is going to look like. On the 250th anniversary of the United States, we're probably going to be neck-deep in a major economic crisis brought on by the president's decision to go to war when no war was necessary.

**#Danny**

Yeah, great points, Scott. And we're seeing the beginnings of this too. I mean, we had Spirit Airlines close. We're also hearing that JetBlue is weeks to perhaps a month away from total bankruptcy itself. Many are up in arms about Delta now cutting back on snacks and water bottles. I mean, there is definitely a looming here. And that begs the question, Scott, is this whole Project Freedom that the Trump administration has declared and is engaging in, is it a direct response to this reality? And I just want to pull up what CENTCOM posted about it. Is this sustainable in the even short term, medium term? With CENTCOM kind of boasting about all of its capabilities, the F-16s, there's 100 land- and sea-based aircraft that are supporting this. Is this a sustainable operation? And is this all a response to kind of the panic that is being, I think, reverberated because of the fallout that you just mentioned?

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, I think we have to start again with just a statement of fact. The United States had spent a tremendous amount of time together with Israel preparing for the surprise attack that took place on February 28th. This was a major military campaign that bombed Iran in a sustained, incessant fashion for nearly 40 days. The best intelligence we had, which wasn't that good to begin with, but the best intelligence we had was used to select the targets. And we bombed everything worth bombing, and we made zero impact on the Iranians. Again, I just... during the Gulf War, one of my jobs was battle damage assessment, so I was down in the basement with the targeting cell.

So I was familiar with the targets. I was familiar with the totality of the strategic air campaign, and I had specific areas that I was responsible for monitoring, like Scud missile production and other weapons of mass destruction production, chemical industries, etc. And so I know when we bombed them, why we bombed them, and what we bombed them with. And I tracked it. I tracked the destruction and wrote reports reflective of what the assessment was. And we gave ourselves very high grades in the strategic air campaign. The one area where we failed egregiously was, of course, mobile missile launchers. But everything else, you know, we blew up the factories, or so we thought.

When the war ended, I got brought into the United Nations Special Commission responsible for overseeing the disarmament of Iraq and, um, was able to go to Iraq within months of the war ending, seeing the very locations that we had bombed, locations that I deemed to have been destroyed. Um, and that translates into diminished industrial capacity. What we found out, though, is that we blew up a bunch of empty buildings, that the production equipment we were hoping to destroy that was inside these buildings had been evacuated. In 1996, General Al-Abbidi, he was the Minister of Oil at the time. He used to be the deputy for the Ministry of Defense Industry.

Um, the guy that was responsible for, really, weapons of mass destruction prior to the Gulf War breaking out in January of 1991, he ordered, uh, he had ordered shortly after the war, a, uh, a top-to-bottom review of battle damage, meaning they go to every place, find out every bomb the United States dropped, every missile the United States dropped, and what was done. And in 1996, he had

the report. And while he didn't give me a copy of it, he did allow me to sit at his desk and go through it, just to make the point that we didn't accomplish anything in Desert Storm. The only people that did accomplish anything were the inspectors. We're the ones that went in and found the material that had been hidden by the Iraqis that was supposed to be in the buildings that we had blown up.

The reason why I bring this up is that today we have everybody patting themselves on the back. Pete had said to the president about what a great job we did. I'm here to tell you right now that it is more likely than not that we didn't destroy anything of value in the nearly 40 days of bombing, that we bombed empty buildings or we bombed buildings that had been misidentified. But the sensitive production equipment that was inside there no longer is there. And we now know, in ballistic missile production for instance, that a lot of the production facilities that were at Parchin, a major missile production facility, have been moved underground to include the ability to produce solid rocket motors.

You know, it's all underground. We didn't destroy it. We blew up empty buildings. That's it. And so now we've, you know, we're the ones who begged for a ceasefire. I need to remind people of that. It wasn't the Iranians that said, "We want a ceasefire." The Iranians said the exact opposite. It took Pakistan and China to come in and tell the Iranians, "You are going to go along with this," because China needed these Strait of Hormuz opened up so they could get their oil. But it was the United States that begged for the ceasefire. And there's a reason, because we hadn't accomplished what we wanted to accomplish, and we were about to feel tremendous economic pain. Nothing has changed.

It's going to change that outcome. If we decide to resume so-called kinetic actions against the Iranians, ask yourself right off the bat, what's the target? If we started this war with the best targets plugged in and we bombed all these targets, what's the target deck now? I know we're collecting intelligence, so we've found hide sites, we found sites where the Iranians moved things to, we've refined the target deck. If that's the case, again, the Iranians have been watching us fight for over two decades now in Afghanistan and Iraq. They know everything about how we operate. And so if you think for a second the Iranians have just gone static—there's a ceasefire, cease moving.

Everybody dig in. Calm down. Stay in one place so the Americans can photograph you and target you. No, the Iranians are moving nonstop because they know how we work. They understand the reality of intelligence collection — that once a piece of information is collected, it takes time for the data to go back, be assessed, looked at, a target folder put up, transmitted into targetable coordinates that are plugged into the system, and the missile is launched. This doesn't happen instantaneously. Right. And so the Iranians understand that cycle. And so as we collect and we're processing, the Iranians are reshuffling the deck. So by the time we have data in a weapon system able to strike a target, the target's no longer there.

This is the reality. And so I don't know what we think we're going to accomplish by going back to where, you know, Einstein is attributed with the statement, you know, the definition of insanity is

doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different outcome. It would be insane for us to resume bombing, thinking that somehow this time we're going to win. We're not. It's just going to continue the failures of the past. The Iranians, on the other hand, have not only shown an ability to survive the best we could bring to bear, but to thrive. Today, they're producing more ballistic missiles underground than they produced above ground before the war.

I'll say that one more time just so the audience understands. Today, the Iranians are producing more ballistic missiles below ground than they produced above ground. There's a historical precedent. You know, during World War II, we targeted German fighter production. We wanted to bomb their fighter production so they couldn't build fighters to challenge us in the air. And as the war progressed, you know, most German fighters were built, I think, in the second half of 1944, right? You know, after we'd been bombing the hell out of them because they went underground. That's what's happened here. So our bombing campaign has accomplished absolutely nothing. We have not achieved any of our objectives. Okay.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and just to get a bit of perspective on this too, in light of the next question I wanted to ask you, Iran has not been — not only have they not been sitting on their hands militarily — but they've also been rebuilding quite rapidly, almost taking a note from the Chinese at how fast things are going up. According to Iran's Housing Foundation, Al Jazeera reported that about 37,000 houses and commercial buildings that were damaged in the war have been rebuilt and repaired. So that, I mean, that's a massive thing. I've even seen things that, you know, I can't verify the veracity of on social media necessarily, but I've seen Iranians post all over X, and they're posting about how their society is very, very hunkered down for war and actually doing everything they can to provide what people need in times of war, which only makes it more difficult for war to break the backs of people.

But now I wanted to ask you, though, Scott, about the diplomatic kind of flurry we've seen in the alternative mode of development in the world — the multipolar world. We saw Araqchi and Putin meet recently, and then Putin talked to Donald Trump. Now we have Abbas Araqchi going to Beijing, where he's going to meet with his counterpart, Wang Yi. And then we're going to have, perhaps, supposedly in the next week or so — about eight days, nine days — Trump meet with Xi Jinping. This, at least, is reportedly the case as of right now. So what do you make of these developments? Iran has definitely been making a lot of diplomatic activity of late, especially when it comes to Russia and now China and Pakistan and regionally. It's been quite a flurry. Is there anything significant about this?

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, let's start again. We always have to start at some place. And let's start with the following factual statement: the United States is agreement-incapable, which is important to understand when we speak of Iran going to Russia and Iran going to China. Why? Some people say it's to create the

conditions for a successful negotiation with the United States. Wrong. The United States is incapable of making an agreement. We can't be trusted. This speaks volumes about how this war is going to end, because people think this is going to end with some sort of concession-based agreement between Iran and the United States, where Iran gives away on certain points and the United States now has an agreement.

The United States cannot make an agreement with Iran. We're incapable of it. We can't sustain it. We're liars. We're cheaters. We're thieves. We're scoundrels. You know, we were negotiating with the Iranians in June when the Israelis attacked with our permission, our support. And on February 28th, when we surprise-attacked them together with Israel. So, you know, the Iranians have now understood that there is no deal, no agreement with the United States because the United States can't be trusted at all. Zero trust. And so what they're doing is they're going to other parties to see what kind of framework can be built in this non-negotiation environment.

You know, how do you deal with the United States when there can be no agreement? Because the United States will never adhere to an agreement, we can't be trusted. And so they've reached out to the Russians. And, of course, Vladimir Putin made the phone call to Donald Trump. But the Russians are the ones who came up with the term "agreement-incapable." It's a Russian belief that Donald Trump is incapable, the United States is incapable of an agreement. You know, and for the Russians, this redefines their entire diplomatic approach to the United States.

If you go back to December of 2021, when they submitted draft treaties to both the United States and NATO, both of those treaties said right up front that the way this crisis ends in Ukraine is with treaties in writing, ratified, that have consequences for failure to comply. This is the Russian approach. This is what an agreement-capable nation does. But Russia now has come to the reality that the United States is agreement-incapable. There will never be a successful negotiation with the United States so long as Donald Trump is in power. So how do you live with an America like this? And that's the issue that Iran and Russia are struggling with. Iran and China are struggling.

The Chinese, too, are coming to the understanding that you simply can't negotiate with the United States because the United States is incapable of negotiating in good faith. If you take a look at some major things that have happened with China and the United States recently, you have the United States putting pressure on Panama to close down a Chinese-operated port in the Canal Zone. The Chinese responded by basically saying any company that does business in this port facility will never be allowed access to China. So nobody's doing business because everybody needs access to China. And that's their retaliation. And now the United States, of course, has sought to put sanctions on Chinese oil refineries that buy Iranian oil.

And the Chinese government has come in and said, no. If anybody puts secondary sanctions on Chinese companies for doing their business, then China will retaliate. China's not putting up with this anymore. So I don't know what the president thinks he's going to accomplish by going to meet with the Chinese at this juncture. But the Chinese are not in the business of trying to facilitate a

negotiated settlement to a conflict, knowing that the United States is agreement-incapable. And so we're looking at the rest of the world seeking to build a framework that allows for the sustainment of economic discourse between these parties and keeps the United States out of it, blocks the United States from being able to interfere.

And it also means that the way this is resolved isn't, you know, through a compromise, but through the absolute defeat of the United States. That it's not about giving Donald Trump the opportunity to walk away — that would be an agreement, which Iran knows the United States will violate — but to crawl away. That is, look, the ball's in their court, and the Iranians are driving this thing. There was a cute little meme where Donald Trump said, "I have all the cards," and he's holding cards in his hands. But if you look, it's an UNO deck, and you know how you lose UNO — you lose UNO by having all the cards. And then you show the Iranians, and they've got fewer cards, and they're the right cards that they can throw away.

And so Iran's winning. Iran's going, that's right, you've got all the cards. This is where we're at right now. The United States is probably not going to be given a face-saving mechanism. The Russians are working on that. But again, the United States is agreement-incapable. We're not capable of having a moment of integrity where we can sit down and negotiate in good faith. It's got to be a very frustrating experience for the Russians and for the Chinese, both of whom believe in international law, contract law, treaty law, and both of whom are continuously frustrated by America's inability to stick to a deal.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and we've seen China make a pretty big step in publicly authorizing, through the central government, that companies essentially ignore all U.S. sanctions, particularly on Iran, which they've done anyway. But to make this a matter of policy is really definitely a step up in it. I mean, some have surmised that this meeting won't happen at all. But even if it does, Scott, you know, maybe you can help us understand. We have the two major wars in the world right now — of course, the U. S. war on Iran and the proxy war on Russia by U.S.-NATO. Both these conflicts seem to be heading in a similar direction, where the United States is showing no interest in negotiating what are actually fair terms based on the realities on the ground. So are they both headed toward essentially the only solution being the United States losing and having to pull back and pull out? And that seems like a very long venture indeed, with a lot of pain and consequences for the world if that's the case.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, let me again just make the following point, because you just asked a very pertinent question. And if you have other analysts on here — geopolitical analysts, military analysts — they'll go through a similar thought process that I would go through to treat that question with the accuracy that it deserves. But see, we'd be doing standard geopolitical analysis, we'd be doing standard military analysis, standard political analysis. That's not how this works anymore. Yeah. The United States no

longer functions as the nation-state that it used to be — a state, a constitutional republic where the powers of the presidency are held in check by the notion of checks and balances, separate but equal branches of government, a judiciary that was independent, and a legislative branch that controlled the power of the purse and could say no to a sitting executive.

You know, we have forgotten the warnings issued by James Madison when he wrote Federalist 10 and Federalist 51 — the warnings of factionalism, to avoid it at all costs. And just in case factionalism does take hold and seek to empower an executive with near-tyrannical motives, that we have checks and balances, and that we have to maintain these checks and balances to preserve the constitutional republic. Well, that's all been thrown away. We don't function as a constitutional republic today. We function as a cult of personality, where Donald Trump has transformed himself from, you know, the chief executive of a constitutional republic to a dictator — a self-anointed dictator.

He called himself a dictator at the World Economic Forum, where he also acknowledged that he doesn't believe in the Constitution. He believes only in his personal sense of morals, what's right and wrong. No, I'm sorry, you're the American president. The Constitution defines what you believe in and what you don't believe in. But he doesn't believe in the Constitution. And if you take a look at his pattern of behavior — I mean, his social media postings alone the other day, where he posted 11 within a very short period of time, often which were violent, contradictory, and always promoting himself — we can clearly say that Donald Trump suffers from narcissistic personality disorder of the most malignant kind.

This means that he is antisocial, and he is psychotic in his antisocial behavior. Now, in the state of New York, that diagnosis can get you involuntarily committed, meaning that the state has a right to come in and put you into an insane asylum until they can get treatment that makes you compatible with society. We have a president who is literally insane, literally insane. Now, I know the MAGA mouth-breathers out there won't like when I say that, but I don't care because it's an accurate reflection — prove me wrong. If anybody's going to try and say what this president does is normal, then you're not normal. This president behaves in a manner that is totally incompatible with how government is supposed to function.

And so that's my way of saying, Danny, that if you're trying to look at this from a standard geopolitical standpoint, you're not solving the problem. The problem isn't a geopolitical problem. The problem is a domestic political problem linked to the fact that we have a cult of personality that has hijacked the American presidency, and that we have a Congress that has subordinated itself to this cult of personality. And we have a Supreme Court, a judiciary that either is working in open alliance with this president or is just being ignored — the Supreme Court being ignored, warnings ignored.

So this is where we're at. You can't solve a problem unless you accurately define the problem to begin with. And if you're defining this problem as a geopolitical problem, there will be no solution because the solution doesn't lie in the reality on the ground. The solution relies on the fantasy in the

mind of Donald Trump, what he deems to be relevant. And so we need to understand that if we're going to be talking about how do we solve this problem, the question is how do we, you know, manufacture a narrative that will allow this president to walk away from this war? The narrative doesn't have to be fact-based.

We know it won't be fact-based, but it has to be a narrative that the president feels comfortable enough, you know, committing to so that he is politically viable. This is about Donald Trump's political legacy. This is about the world that exists between Donald Trump's left earlobe and right earlobe. And that's the only thing that we should be talking about if we're looking for a solution to this problem. And that's why I think Iran has gone to Russia and China, because we know now that Russia understands that this U.S. government is agreement-incapable, which, you know, it's interesting. Yeah. I don't know. Do you talk to Gilbert, Doctor? I do not. I never have. But I know he does and all that. You know, and I, you know, I read what he writes just because he puts us down.

We're apparently some sort of, you know, Putin-apologist cabal, the alternative media darlings, he calls us, who are unrealistic in everything we say about Russia. But he was very critical of Vladimir Putin's phone call to Donald Trump because he said it was demeaning for Vladimir Putin to be talking about Donald Trump surviving another assassination attempt and demeaning to be talking about, you know, Melania Trump and all this stuff. How dare Vladimir Putin talk like that? And what I would say to Gilbert Doctorow is Vladimir Putin is a genius and you're not, because Vladimir Putin understands that the problems that are faced today are not geopolitical in nature, but psychological in nature.

And Vladimir Putin is playing the psychological manipulation game because that's the only game out there when you're dealing with a malignant narcissist who's sitting at the helm of the United States government, a man who's created a cult of personality. And if you're going to make any inroads into influencing the thought process of this psychotic person, antisocial narcissist, you have to stroke his ego. And that's what Vladimir Putin did. It wasn't demeaning for him to do that. It was necessary. And I think you're going to see the Chinese work in a similar game, although the Chinese aren't as good at it as Russia is. But if there's going to be a meeting, it's going to be a meeting where the Chinese are going to have to manipulate Donald Trump, you know, psychologically.

It's not going to be a meeting that's going to be, you know, focused on reality per se, because we already know that the Chinese have drawn a red line, a line in the sand. So have the Russians. I always love it when Gilbert Doctorow talks about the weakness of Russia. I don't know. Hey, Gil, what'd you think of that last post from the Russian Ministry of Defense about Victory Day? Well, if the Ukrainians do attack Russia on Victory Day, what did they say they were going to do? Oh, yeah. They ordered all civilians and diplomats to evacuate the center of Kiev because they are going to rain down fire and hell with ballistic missiles, eradicating the entire center of that city.

That's weak, you know. Maybe you don't understand what Russia's been doing over the course of the past several years. They've been doing something that goes far beyond simply trying to win a

non-war, because it is a non-war. They've been, you know, dealing with sanctions. They've been dealing with the economic problems that accrue. There's a reason why there's a healthy economy, and that's because Russia hasn't gone into full war mode. I'm just bringing this up because Gilbert Doctorow and others out there, Seymour Hersh just published another piece in his Substack, which just, again, manifestly underscores the level of ignorance that exists within Seymour Hersh's brain about Russian reality.

But the thing is, it's thoughts like this that, you know, people pick up on to create, you know, a counter-narrative that gets fed to the president of the United States. You know, a lot of the thinking right now about Iran is driven by the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, FDD, which is a Washington, D.C. think tank that was literally an adjunct of the Israeli foreign ministry back when it was first created. They had a, it was with a Hebrew word. So at least they were honest that they worked for the foreign ministry. Today, they pretend to be this independent, nonpartisan think tank, but it's an Israeli operation.

And they're the ones who are making up narratives that are fed to Scott Bessent, fed to Marco Rubio, and then fed to the president and fed to Pete Hegseth. So they can create this fictional narrative around which the president, you know, creates this fake world that he operates in. You know, there's no reality here. There's no reality about Russia. There's no reality about Iran. There's no reality about anything. And you've got to understand that. When we talk about Washington, D.C. today and problem-solving, we have to bring in the human dimension, the fact that we have this narcissistic president who's mentally ill. And how do you have a logic-based conversation with a mentally ill individual? The answer is you don't. Mm-hmm.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and I've seen arguments too floating around about, you know, Iran, China, Russia, that these countries need to fight the U.S. head-on, very directly, if they're ever going to succeed in, you know, moving forward and developing in the way that they should. And, you know, we've been talking a lot, Scott, over the years, and despite, I think, the massive, I guess, volume of critics, at least in terms of the noise decibel on everything that you just said, we hear—I mean, the reality speaks for itself. Iran right now is stronger than it was before February 28th. Russia is stronger than it was prior to February 2022. China—why the hell would China need to fight the United States head-on when it keeps growing at this breakneck pace?

And it seems like actually things like the Iran war can help very key industries, like its own renewable energy industry. Why would it need to fight the U.S. head-on? I mean, I feel like there's a lot of bluster and kind of chest-thumping that goes into analyzing the current world situation when it seems that the world is moving in a different direction from the United States. And this isn't to say that the United States can't cause damage, that it can't certainly make things very difficult, and that

it doesn't have any power projection at all. Certainly, that would be a complete lie. But at the same time, I don't see where a lot of the arguments we've been making over the years have been burst asunder.

We have Hezbollah fighting not only for its life, but fighting in a very valiant manner—one that shows that Hezbollah was not dead after the 2024 ceasefire. So we can go on and on and on, but the examples are there, and the world seems to be shifting in the direction that we've been talking about. It's shifting contrary to this whole, well, Russia's weak for not doing this, and China's weak for not doing that, and Iran is weak for not amassing a million troops and marching thousands of kilometers to confront the Israelis. You know, like these fantastical notions. But your final reaction to this, Anas—we have about four or five minutes left. I don't know. I see the reality. I think these are just facts. I'm not even speaking ideologically here.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Yeah. Again, I just want to start off that, you know, if you and I are going to be held accountable—and I think anybody who speaks publicly should be held accountable for their words—then people need to be fair. Because you and I are trying, or were trying, to connect the dots in the fact-based world. And it's frustrating when you say, okay, logic, because I just want to remind people that I did this professionally for a number of years. The dots I connected impacted national-level decision-making in the United States. It impacted the decisions made by General Schwarzkopf during the Gulf War. It impacted major arms control decisions that impacted decisions about war and peace. You know, my dot connecting advised presidents of the United States and advised secretary generals, advised prime ministers of a number of foreign nations.

And every time I presented a connect-the-dots type assessment, it turned out to be right. So I have a pretty good track record of doing this. I'm one of the better connect-the-dots people out there. But to do connect-the-dots analysis, it has to be fact-based. You have to deal with a world that has rules and regulations. There has to be, you know, an environment where when you connect dots, you can predict outcomes. You can predict behavior patterns. With Donald Trump, we're literally talking about an insane man, and there are no dots to be connected because they don't exist. He's a man who can change the playing field literally one minute after he defines it with a certain social media post.

So it becomes almost impossible to do connect-the-dots analysis because there is no stability. There is no foundation of reality here. We're dealing with a fantasy world in the mind of a sick, demented individual. And he's surrounded by people who are incapable of telling him no. And so, you know, people keep saying, well, what's going to happen in the future? I don't know. Can you predict the future actions of an insane individual? And the answer is no, you can't. What we can predict is economic reality. And we know, for instance, now that the pipeline has run out—the last energy shipment that left the Middle East on February 28th arrived in California yesterday—and there's nothing in the pipeline following it, which means we are going to have an economic crash.

Oil is going to go through the roof, and there's no amount of manipulation that can be done to change that. The president might be able to do things with a tweet here and there in order to manipulate the market so he and his children and the people close to him make millions of dollars through insider trading by hedging or by going long or going short. It's criminal activity, and the fact that nobody's calling it out, or when they call it out, nobody's taking action. We literally have a criminal cartel in power today. Literally. I mean, the market manipulation—that's where you can connect the dots very easily on the posts the president puts out and the bets that are made or the investments that are made, and how the posts influence that and how people make a lot of money.

But that's a game you can only play for a certain period of time before reality kicks in. The reality is going to kick in soon. There's going to be an absolute collapse of the market and collapse of the American economy. Prices are going to go through the roof, and this is political suicide for this president who has a midterm election coming up. And how does the midterm election then, you know, the fact that there may not be a pathway to victory for this president, that he may have dug himself such a deep hole that conventional political behavior no longer applies, and therefore he'll say that he has no other option but to shoot the moon, you know, go all in, or whatever stupid phrase that Pete Hegseth will come up with to justify, you know, continued war crimes.

And so, I mean, it's impossible. It's impossible to come up with sound analysis to say, well, this is what's going to happen tomorrow. Logically speaking, we should have walked away from this war the moment—we should never have gotten involved in this war. But, you know, we did. And the moment we had the ceasefire, the president should have declared victory and gone home and found a way. I mean, there are ways to spin it. The Russians say that they're ready to help remove the 60 percent enriched uranium from Iran, bring it in and dilute it, make it no more. Sounds like a victory to me. Wouldn't you think so?

I mean, if we say that that's our biggest worry about nuclear weapons capability, get rid of it. But this president didn't, and now he can't. There are other things that we could have done. We could have negotiated with the Iranians some sort of mechanism that guaranteed shipping out of the Strait of Hormuz. That's a victory. We suddenly emptied all the tankers. We have the global economy. Victory, victory, victory, victory. Winning, winning, winning, winning. But that's logical connection of the dots, and we're not allowed to do that because Donald Trump is a psychotic, insane individual, incapable of consistent performance over time.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, it's certainly a hole that's getting bigger and bigger the longer that goes on. I mean, even just in the last couple of hours, there were reports by Reuters about the latest intelligence assessment on Iran's nuclear capabilities. It's a so-called nuclear program, and it's unchanged, and that didn't have to be the case because Iran was more than willing to negotiate throughout this—well, before the hostilities and then, of course, during the ceasefire—has been more than willing to negotiate

terms on a phased negotiation process that would lead to, perhaps, you know, outcomes that both sides, all sides could like and could agree to. Iran certainly isn't going into things maximalist like the U.S., but here we are.

Trump seems to not be able to pull back from maximalist kinds of demands, and therefore Iran has no reason to make any kind of, uh, even reasonable concessions that would just end the war—not even concessions that would hurt Iran, just things that could end this. But here we are. Now we'll have to keep talking about this guy because it seems like we're in for more of a bumpy ride ahead in the weeks and months as we enter the hot summer around the world. But I want to make sure everyone knows that your website and your Substack are in the video description, [scottritter.com](https://scottritter.com), so definitely go there and support. Yeah, um, I'm—I'm...

## **#Scott Ritter**

We brought up Gilbert Doctorow, and he has an alternative viewpoint. But it's important to understand that the world isn't static. The world changes. The world moves. Russia is entering the fifth year of this conflict, a conflict that I and others didn't believe would last more than a couple of weeks early on. I thought the Russians were going to win, were committed to a war. It turns out they were committed to a negotiation, but the United States is negotiation-incapable. And so it's turned into this prolonged war that went from getting Ukraine to the negotiating table to a proxy conflict against the collective West, a completely different conflict.

The Russian economy today is completely different from the economy that existed at the beginning of this conflict, or even the economy that existed two years ago. Everything about Russia—the internal domestic realities of Russia—has also altered over time as Putin consolidates power in a time of war. And, you know, these are things that you don't get best long distance. It's better to go there. And so I will be traveling to Russia again for an extended period of time, the purpose of which is to, you know, get up to speed on as much of the present Russian reality.

I've always said when I go to Russia, my job is to collect the Russian reality and bring it back to the United States to help overcome Russophobia. But if I'm operating on two-year-old information, what I do is I actually reinforce the Russophobes, because I might be saying things that were accurate two years ago but may not be accurate today, and that allows them to denigrate and weaken the argument. So it's important that you stay constantly up to speed. So if you could go to my website, [ScottRitter.com](https://ScottRitter.com), it'll take you to my Substack. Just so you know up front, all the information on the Substack is free of charge.

So if you want to go on and read it and do a free subscription, so be it. I mean, that's what it's there for. The subscription to Substack pays my bills. That means that's how I pay my mortgage. That's how I pay the power. That's how I feed the dogs. For those who don't like when Maverick barks, here's your chance. But don't subscribe. But my trips are done through donations. I'm an independent journalist like Danny, like everybody else. And it's done off the donation page. And I

would also say this, you know, I'm reading comments and I guess I shouldn't. But, you know, there are people out there promoting Brian Berletic. Please. He's an independent journalist.

Support him. Support Gilbert Doctorow. If that's your cup of tea, support it. Support Danny Haiphong. You're here. Don't just come here and watch. Come here and contribute. Keep Danny in business. This is independent media. This discussion that we're having, you will not find on mainstream media at all. And if you rely upon mainstream media, which is corporate-controlled, by the way—other people are paying all those bills—then you just fall into the brain-dead stupefaction of America. If you want intellectual discourse, if you want truly alternative points of view, which are more mainstream, by the way, than the mainstream points of view, you have to support independent journalism.

Independent journalism means that they are independent because you help them be independent. You are supporting the quality of their work. Danny Haiphong puts out extraordinarily high-quality work. Everywhere I go, people talk about Danny Haiphong's show. I was just doing an interview. He said, I see you're going on to Danny. He started the program, I see you on Danny's program. Well, Danny has a whole bunch of people on his program. It doesn't happen free of charge. So support Danny Haiphong. Support Brian Berletic. Support Gilbert Doctorow. And support me if you see it. But the bottom line is, independent media only exists with your support. And I would ask that you continue to support me, Danny, and everybody else who's in this business. We all can't think alike.

We all can't think alike. And there are people out there who disagree with me, and I disagree with them. I would never advocate for them being shut down. I would only advocate for their continuing to be supported, because the more we challenge each other, the more we have to double-check our facts and figures, the more you create the impetus for me to go back to Russia, to learn more, to bring that back. And so that can only happen, though, with your support. It doesn't happen in a vacuum. So again, thanks for having me on, Danny, and I thank your audience for supporting you, for supporting me, for supporting everybody, but most of all for not watching mainstream media and getting your information from these and other programs.

## **#Danny**

I couldn't have said it better myself, everyone. So you heard Scott. You know, you can hit the like button so more people can hear just what Scott said here. Go to the video description. You can find ScottRitter.com. You can support his work. Definitely do that. I want to thank those who became a member today. There was this question, Scott, if you wanted to hit at this for 30 seconds: where are they getting the jet fuel to maintain this? That's a good question. Thirty seconds, yeah.

## **#Scott Ritter**

The military, of course, has its own closed loop, and it will acquire jet fuel. We can get it regionally and all that stuff. But the military has capabilities to acquire fuel that the civilian market doesn't

have. The other thing is we're willing—the military can pay more. That's why we spend \$1.2 trillion on—

## **#Danny**

Yeah, yeah. I mean, the military is one of the biggest polluters on the planet. It uses a lot of energy, a lot of energy, needs a lot of energy. So with all that said, though, Scott, great to be with you. We're going to head out together. Hit the like button as you go on. The video description is where you can find how to support Scott and this show. I'll be back tomorrow. I'll let you know what is happening then. I think it will be 12 p.m. Eastern time tomorrow, and I'll announce that later on. All right, everyone. Bye-bye.