

Col. Jacques Baud: Israel COLLAPSES After Trump's Final Card

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Monday, May 18th, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Colonel Jacques Baud, is here with us. Welcome back, Colonel.

#Jacques

Thank you very much for inviting me again. Happy to be back on your show. Thank you.

#Nima

I want to start, Colonel, with Donald Trump's visit to China, because he went there, he wanted something from China, basically related to the war in the Middle East. He thought that China could help the United States. What is your understanding of the relationship, the kind of relationship China has with the United States, considering that somehow Donald Trump felt they could use Chinese leverage on the Iranian government to help them with the case of the Strait of Hormuz? Because looking at what's going on right now, we had an Iranian proposal to the United States, then the response from the United States — two totally different proposals.

The opposite, totally the opposite, you know. And Iran, just before coming up, we've learned that Iran responded with, again, a 14-point plan. I don't see anything changing on the part of the Iranians. And Donald Trump — the situation is getting somehow desperate for Donald Trump. That's why last night he tweeted that the clock is ticking, and it seems that they're preparing for some new sort of attacks on Iran. How do you see the situation totally? Because on one side, he didn't get that much help from China with the case of the Strait of Hormuz, and he has to do something about it. We know the price of energy, the price of food — everything is going up. Your take on that?

#Jacques

Well, coming back to the visit of Donald Trump to China, we have to understand that this visit was initially planned for late March this year. And probably at this stage, what Donald Trump wanted was

not to talk about Iran. He thought that Iran could have been past history at this point, because he expected to subdue Iran within days. And the Strait of Hormuz event came as a surprise to him because he didn't expect that, meaning that the whole approach to the trip to China was first to talk about trade issues between the US and China. And by the way, if you look at the composition of the delegation, you had not mostly, but a large part of businessmen and people from the financial world in the US, and high tech also.

So the idea was definitely to talk about trade issues. Since he didn't achieve victory, or a decisive victory, or however you may call it, in March, he had to postpone this visit because obviously he was not ready to do that. The consequence of this was that, as it appeared to me, this visit was very poorly prepared on the American side, and to some extent on the Chinese side as well. I mean, the Chinese tried to squeeze the visit of Donald Trump between other heads of state visits, and that didn't give Trump's visit the importance it should have had normally, just last week. So that's, I think, a very important point. And the issue of the Strait of Hormuz and leveraging China to solve Iran — this is something that came, obviously, after the end of March.

I mean, that was because that was not the initial and primary goal of this visit. And that also shows the lack of something we have said many times about Trump — the lack of strategic thinking. He's not a strategist, he's a tactician. And he tries to put tactical issues together in order to have the appearance of a strategic issue, but it remains tactical in essence. And that's exactly what we have. That's the first thing. The second thing is that when we assess the visit, we have to look at the readouts of the visit, or the communiqué, as I said — the communiqué, both communiqués. And if you look at the Chinese one, it has basically three main issues.

Obviously, this idea of strategic stability is a very important point in the communiqué — the issue of Taiwan and the issue of balanced relationships between the two countries. The stability cooperation is a very central aspect in that because it also comprises the issue of Taiwan. It also includes the, I don't know in English, the trap. You know, this is a trap that was first identified or derived from the wars in ancient Greece, when you had a power, namely Sparta, that was so keen to keep its position as the primary power in the Mediterranean that it had to wage war on everybody who tried to challenge its primacy.

And this is a little bit the thing we have with the US. You may remember, and that's not just Donald Trump, by the way. You may remember what Joe Biden said when he was inaugurated, I think, or it was the first State of the Union. In any case, that was in 2021, when he said the rest of the world is getting closer to us and we cannot allow that. You know, that's exactly the trap — that you are so keen to keep your hegemonic position that you will do everything to destroy everybody who wants to challenge this position. And obviously, in 2021, it was probably directed at China, but also at Russia — both countries — Russia on the military side, and China on the economic and trade side, and probably also the high technology side.

So you have this idea in the US that the US must be dominant regarding technology, regarding military power, regarding influence, and, and, and. And this is part of this idea of stability — the Strategic Stability Cooperation, I think that's the real word, the exact word — the Strategic Stability Cooperation between the US and China. And that's, in essence, what was in the Chinese communiqué. And when you read the US communiqué, you have nothing of that. Absolutely no word about this. There is no word about Taiwan. There is no word about Hormuz. They mentioned Hormuz, but they didn't mention these fundamental issues that were raised by China. And China doesn't mention, or only very quickly, it didn't mention Hormuz as such, if I remember well, but it just mentioned that the US and China talked about the Middle East issues, period.

So obviously, on the Chinese side, the Iranian issue was not the centerpiece of this meeting, while for the U.S. it was the centerpiece because that's the current concern of U.S. foreign policy. Very interesting also to see, if you read the communiqué of the White House, that everything that is mentioned in the communiqué regards what the U.S. could win during this visit, like a better trade agreement on this and that. So it was only oriented on the wins for U.S. trade, basically, while the Chinese focused on the strategic balance and strategic and fundamental issues. So you see here a totally different approach, which is not surprising, because China is obviously a more strategic country than the U.S., at least at this stage.

That was probably different 50 or 60 years ago. But today, the U.S. has become tactical — this is only tactical thinking in America, in foreign policy, even in national security issues. And that's reflected very much in those two communiqués. Interesting also is that when you have such an important event that may affect the relationship between the two largest economies in the world, with obviously regional implications both in Asia and in the Western Hemisphere, and possibly in the West at large, usually you have a joint communiqué. And that's where the preparation of this meeting comes into play.

I myself have been involved in some international conferences, and in most international conferences, you prepare the final communiqué even before the conference starts, in reality, because you know what you want to achieve. You know that there will be some slight modifications, but when you start the conference, the real conference, there is already a draft existing that you can adjust at the last minute with some probable declarations, things like this. But in essence, you have the document, and you have teams of experts from both sides working together months in advance in order to prepare the joint communiqué. When you read the two communiqués that were published afterward, you can see that, in fact, these were two communiqués worked out by two different teams.

They didn't talk to each other. You have a U.S. team preparing its own communiqué and a Chinese team preparing its own. And that's exactly why you see very little overlap between the two communiqués. And that also reflects the focus of both parties. And that also, in my view, reflects, let's say, not the failure of the summit, but the absence of success of the summit. I'm not sure it's a

successful summit because, again, I mean, both parties can see that. I mean, the Chinese probably had a more successful summit because they could make their point and emphasize their own red lines and their own priorities, while the Americans have come up with priorities such as trade, about agricultural products and things like that, which are not very strategic.

So I think reading the communiqués, you can see that nothing has been achieved in common, but the Chinese have an edge in the sense that they were able to say, what are our priorities now? We have a difficult situation, and our priority remains Taiwan stability and balanced trade. It's not a balance for the US or in favor of the US. It must be mutually beneficial. And I think that also comes very often in the comments on the Chinese side. And on that point, I think the Chinese have made their point. And in that sense, I think this summit is probably more in favor of China than in favor of Donald Trump.

#Nima

Sorry for interrupting you. We are dealing with two different situations on the part of the United States and China. On the part of China, the main issue and the most important issue is the case of Taiwan. I don't see any sort of urgency on the part of China when it comes to Taiwan. They want to talk about it. They want to put an end to that sort of misunderstanding that exists between China and the United States. But they don't have that much of, you know,

#Jacques

Yes and no. Remember that Congress approved 11 billion—wrong credit, I don't know how to call that—11 billion for weapons sales to Taiwan.

#Nima

Exactly, yes.

#Jacques

And that, I think, is a source of concern for Iran. Now, the amount has been approved by Congress, but the sales themselves have not occurred yet. And that's probably why there is a sense of emergency for China. So yes, I agree with you that it's not the same level of urgency between what is happening in Iran and what's happening in Taiwan. But remember that I'm not sure Iran is such an important matter for China, to be honest. China understands that the Israeli-US aggression was illegal. They understand the consequences of that. They understand that the consequence of this aggression has implications for the global world, and they have said so much.

By the way, it's true that the Chinese have declared that the circulation of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz should be free, and there must not be any blockade on that. I think they target more the

U.S. than Iran in this matter, because Iran has in fact not closed the Strait of Hormuz. The U.S. did. So that's also important to remember. The U.S. has blocked the traffic, not Iran. Iran has imposed some restrictions and has kind of managed—within quotation marks—managed traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, but it doesn't stop this traffic. So China understands, and by the way, China has also got some privileges for having its tankers through the Strait of Hormuz.

So for China, it's a problem at large, but not a major source of concern for itself. Remember also that China depends on the Strait of Hormuz only for a fraction of its energy, because roughly 85% of the energy that China uses is produced in China itself. So there's only 15% of their energy needs that need to be covered through imports. And a large source of imported energy comes from Russia, which is a very close ally. Yes, it's a concern at large, it's a strategic concern, but it's not a matter of urgency for China. I think it's very important.

And that appears in the discussion, by the way, because what China has said—in fact, China has said to the U.S. to stop the blockade. That's what China said, because they consider that the U.S. is the problem in the region, not Iran. And that appears very clearly in the different declarations that have been made. The problem is that Trump doesn't want to understand that. But in reality, China doesn't see Iran as a problem. And remember that before—I mean, we have said that many times—but before the 28th of February, traffic in the Strait of Hormuz was free. So definitely the U.S. and Israel were the problem. They are part of the problem and not of the solution.

#Nima

Yeah. Colonel, looking at the situation in the Middle East, they're talking about the attack coming. The Iranians are prepared, and we've seen many, you know, dozens of U.S. military cargo planes loaded with ammunition. They have landed in Tel Aviv, in Israel. And... the war—if they start a new round of war—what would be the main objective of that? Because we've seen that before, with two rounds in June 2025 and in February 2026. So the question is, what else can they do? And how is that going to help Israel? Because in my opinion, this Trump's final call, which was the attack on Iran, this is the maximum that the United States can do for Israel. You cannot go beyond that. You attack Iran, you know, the final goal of Benjamin Netanyahu for such a long time: let's attack Iran, and they're going to collapse, we're going to have a new regime in Iran that's going to be big and beautiful.

And we're going to have the Abraham Accords, and the whole region is going to change with the concept—based on the concept of Israel having, you know, a better influence in the whole region—because we know GCC countries are not that powerful when it comes to military power, when it comes to the military sort of aspects and how they can fight back. That's why you have to do something with the case of Iran. And it doesn't seem that's going well. Looking at the situation in Israel, militarily, economically, and looking at the situation with the war, I don't know what else the

Trump administration can do for Israel, but it seems to me that everything is headed towards some sort of collapse in Israel—the way that Benjamin Netanyahu tried to sell to the Israeli people, to the whole region, that he's going to get something big before leaving his position in Israel.

#Jacques

Well, the problem is, I share your opinion. The problem is that we think with kind of a rational mind. That's the issue. When we talk about what the US and Israel have started against Iran, but not only against Lebanon and even Palestine and all that, you see that it's not rational. There is no rationality in this kind of decision-making. That's why it's very difficult to predict exactly what they want to achieve and what they are ready to do in order to achieve that. They probably want to achieve the total destruction of Iran or things like that. But what for? This is, you know, the question you could have asked, by the way, for Iraq and for Syria as well.

Because by destroying the state structure of those countries, and assuming they want to do the same in Iran, what comes next? This is the question. And having chaos is not a factor of security. The old issues we had since 2003 in Iraq and later in Syria—this is not security. This is chaos. And assuming they want to do the same in Iran, which, by the way, I think will be more difficult to achieve, but assuming they want to do the same thing in Iran, what exactly will be achieved there? Will the security of Israel be improved? Will the security of the Persian Gulf be improved? Will the security of the GCC countries be improved?

You know, we are in an area, a completely uncharted area of irrationality. Definitely, although you seem to say it's impossible to go beyond what they have done, I think Israel is still contemplating that—this full involvement of the U.S. against Iran. I think they still have that in mind. And there are probably some people within the United States who are ready to do so. If you listen to the recent declaration of Lindsey Graham, for instance, I mean, he doesn't seem impressed whatsoever by what happened so far with Iran. He's claiming that the U.S. should go and make a land invasion.

#Nima

We have to understand, Carl, I think your point about the case of Lindsey Graham is valid, but Lindsey Graham is merely a political guy. He doesn't know about the military. He doesn't know about what's going on.

#Jacques

I understand, but he is one of those guys who can shape the decision-making. You see, and in fact, as surprising as it may be, because he's only a senator—so basically he's a lawmaker—but when it comes to foreign policy, and especially regarding Iran, you hear only him. I mean, Rubio seems totally absent from the whole discussion when it comes to Iran. I mean, he makes here and there a few declarations, but I think that Lindsey Graham and others are more vocal than him. So yes, I

understand your point of view. But again, you have a rational point of view. Foreign policy shouldn't be shaped by people like Lindsey Graham, not just because of what he thinks, but because of what he is—because he's not the guy in charge of foreign policy, period.

But he appears in the media as if he were shaping foreign policy. And when you listen to Donald Trump, we have the impression that Donald Trump listens more to these kinds of guys than to more rational points of view, because apparently there are people within the U.S. establishment, probably in the Pentagon, but probably also in the CIA, by the way, who think that the U.S. should be more cautious in this conflict. But apparently, Lindsey Graham is listened to more than the CIA in this matter. That's why it matters. Even if institutionally you are completely right, these guys should not be heard at all.

But that also reflects this irrational dimension that such conflicts have. And we have a very similar situation with Russia. We have a very similar situation with China and Taiwan. You know, if you think about it, what would be the benefit for the US to promote a war with China? What would be the benefit? None, essentially none. Weakening China, probably, so the US can emerge as the sole worldwide power, maybe. But you see, it seems that you could achieve that through different ways, but not necessarily by promoting war. And this is the whole issue here. All these wars—and we can talk about Libya, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan—all these wars were driven by irrationality.

That's the reason why they achieved nothing, because we thought we could dominate those countries very easily in a couple of days, that it would be done and all that. And it didn't. So we are in exactly the same scheme, the same intellectual scheme. And don't expect the Israelis to be more rational than this. They are even worse. And if you listen to Netanyahu and his fellow ministers in the government, it sometimes challenges the intelligence of individuals. It defies human common sense. But they are convinced of that. And when you see what's happening in Lebanon, for instance, despite the ceasefire or so-called ceasefire, nothing has changed. The Israelis continue to bomb civilians as they did in Gaza.

They are even trying to apply the so-called Rafah doctrine in South Lebanon. Rafah was a small part of the Gaza Strip, in the southern part of the Gaza Strip, where the Israeli forces destroyed every single building. I mean, they just flattened everything. And now they are applying the same doctrine in South Lebanon. And there is absolutely no reaction from any country, with the exception of countries such as Spain—courageous countries. But if you expect to have a reaction from the Germans, from the French, forget it. They will probably make a few declarations just to show off a little bit, but this will not be followed by action. While the Spaniards have definitely also taken some action in order to limit the relationship between Europe and Israel.

So they take action. It's not just rhetoric. It's also about taking action. But these are only a few countries in the world who reacted to that. Most countries let them do that. So, yes, there is a strong irrational dimension in all that. But there doesn't seem to be a break or something that can slow down the Western mentality or the Western intentions regarding Iran. So that's the problem.

So we are shared between two extremes. On the one hand, you and me and others obviously have this rational approach, saying, well, the best thing that Trump would do at this stage would be to declare some kind of victory because they stopped ten tankers from going into the Hormuz Strait. And they say, well, that's our victory.

And based on that victory, they withdraw and say, well, we won and that's it. And we forget about that. That would be the rational management of such a situation. But it's not how it will happen, because you have those voices that are very strong that say you have to defeat Iran completely, regardless of the price. And when you listen to Donald Trump, again, you never know exactly, because he changes his mind every second day. But when you read what he writes and you listen to what he says, we come to this conclusion that, in the end, he would like to flatten Iran. I think personally that it will be an extremely hard job. But again, we are in an area where rationality has no word anymore.

This is the problem. And that's why it was probably important for the Chinese to talk about this question of strategic stability cooperation, because that includes the management of such crises. And what the Chinese said is that we should manage those crises responsibly, not just by triggering new conflict. I mean, Iraq already was a catastrophe, a regional catastrophe, and more than regional because it, in fact, created terrorism. So the whole of the terrorism we had in the last 20 years was caused by the U.S. I mean, the origin of this terrorism is the U.S. because they failed to understand the enemy. And that's a fact. That's simply a fact, whether we want it or not.

The problem is that we should learn from that experience today and say, well, OK, do we want to do the same with Iran? You see, you have now, you mentioned the GCC countries, and now you have Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and I think Kuwait, who proposed to have a non-aggression pact with Iran. And that was reported by the Financial Times, if I'm not wrong. And that shows that in the region, you have people who try to think a little bit further than the Americans and try to promote a regional solution that would avoid the whole region falling into chaos. Because even if you, let's say, let's assume the U.S. wants to restart a new operation against Iran with the aim of flattening Iran. Let's assume that.

You know, the problem we have in the Hormuz Strait today will be multiplied by 10 or 100 if it's such a situation, because that will mean that you will have no energy available from this region within 10 years, because the energy infrastructure will be attacked by both sides, meaning that all these refineries, the oil extraction areas, and all that will be destroyed for the whole region. So that means that the West at large, but the U.S. in particular, will also suffer a huge energy crisis for the years to come. And the U.S. will not be able to address this energy crisis. And that will, by the way, such a crisis will give a decisive advantage to countries such as Russia and China.

So meaning that if the U.S. wants to proceed with some kind of new operation against Iran, it will even worsen its own strategic misposture. It will improve the relationship between China and Russia, and therefore create what the West has created since 2022 — this kind of strengthened cooperation

between China and Russia. This cooperation will be multiplied by a factor, I don't know, five or ten, if the Middle East is neutralized. And that's exactly, you know, this absence of long-term or even mid-term vision by the U.S. leadership is what concerns me, because they don't pay attention to the consequences of what they do. That's exactly what we have seen with Iraq.

They never realized that attacking Iraq would have regional consequences. They never measured that. And you had exactly the same voices in 2003 as you have today about Iran. So this is a major source of concern to me. You have people who don't think further than their nose, and that's extremely concerning. You know, being a superpower, being a worldwide superpower, implies that you have the ability to see further than the normal horizon. You have to think further into the horizon, the depth of time — not just in two years, not just in a presidential mandate — but you can go 5, 10, 20, even 30 years. And that's the difference between Russia, China, and even Iran.

By the way, three countries where the power was in place for a very long time, meaning that you have people who have a very distant horizon, meaning that when they take a decision, they can take it not just for next year or the next six months, not just for the next election or things like that, but they can take a decision for the 10 or 15 years that follow. And that gives you a strategic depth, not just militarily, but it gives you a strategic depth in planning. Also, that's also by contrast. So this is one of the weaknesses of our democracies, where you change government every four years or something like that, meaning that when you plan something, it's very hard to have long-term planning because you never know if your successor will continue what you started.

If you look at France, for instance, each time you change a government, the next one just discards everything that was previously done. So you restart, reinventing the wheel at each president, more or less. So it means that it's very hard to have long-term planning, and in that sense, strategic planning. While in countries where you have this long-term vision, you can afford to do that. And that's exactly what you have in China. And that's the weakness of the U.S., especially with Trump, because he doesn't even have a vision of two years or four years. He has the vision of tomorrow. I mean, tomorrow he changes his mind, and the day after he comes back, and back and forth, and things like this. So how can you have a consistent strategy if you are not able to adjust your tactics every hour?

#Nima

Colonel, do you feel, considering what has happened so far, and when it comes to the Israeli sort of position in the region, is that weakening? Is that getting stronger? Because we've learned from the Israeli media that the Israeli army is in deep burnout. They have shortages when it comes to manpower. And we know the air defense system, we know the missiles — they get all of them from the United States. They're basically good when it comes to spying and this sort of electronic warfare and surveillance, these sorts of issues, these sorts of aspects. But when it comes to military power, when it comes to the military, cruise missiles, interceptors — they're not independent.

They're totally dependent on the United States. And today, from what we've seen from Israel, this is a country of 8 million people. I don't know how many people, because we've learned since the war started that, I don't know, 500,000 or a million people left Israel because of the situation there. They have to live in their basements or they have to leave the country. This is the problem. And on the part of the conflict between Israel and Lebanon, many people are arguing that Israel is bombing, as we've just mentioned, bombing the cities — the RAFA doctrine — but in reality, you know, destroying villages or towns doesn't mean that you can capture them or annex them.

It means that you have the air power to destroy the cities and the villages, but after all, you need sustainability. You don't have it. You don't have the power to stay there because the enemy is fighting back. Hezbollah, as they call it, their enemy, is fighting back, and they're hitting Israel. Not only that, you know, they're hitting every Merkava tank, air defense system, battery, and all of that — you know, the communication, the Wi-Fi communication they have. So what is the situation of the Israeli army today compared to what it was before the war started?

#Jacques

Well, this is a multilayered question and a multilayered answer, because first of all, when you talk about Israel in the region, and we can even talk about Israel at large in the world, the credibility of Israel has fallen down to zero, I think. Nobody has much trust in Israel today. Even if the governments of our European countries mostly, and in the U.S. obviously, still have this facade of trusting Israel, Israel doesn't enjoy the trust. That's why, by the way, they spend a lot of money on public relations, because they have lost all the credit they used to have after, let's say, after World War II. Obviously, because there was a lot of compassion everywhere in the world for these people. But today, this compassion has totally disappeared. People understand that the Holocaust is *tempi passati* — that's old history.

And the current history shows a totally different face of Israel. So that's the first point. The second point is that in the region, I think the idea of the Abraham Accords — of course, you had countries like the UAE and Morocco, they signed this. But you see that even today, some countries are questioning why did we sign this? Especially in Morocco, for instance, you have people questioning that. Why did we sign this? Why did we ally with such a country that disrespects international law? You may remember that Saudi Arabia was pressed by different U.S. governments to sign those Abraham Accords, and today they are probably more reluctant to do so because they realize that stability in the region is not related to good relations with Israel, it is related to good relations within the Arab countries and with Iran.

And it's also related to a simple fact that the Arab states must be independent on defense and security matters. You cannot just have your security depending on an ally of Israel. And that's, I think, one of the big lessons of this epic fury operation against Iran — that as long as you are depending on the U.S. for your security, you are not in security. And that may enhance this idea of a non-aggression pact and probably a reshaping of the regional security architecture. Because again,

as I've said many times, the best way to ensure security is to have good relations with your enemy, if I can put it that way. And by and large, this is what the Chinese promoted when they promoted this reconciliation, if I can put it that way, between Saudi Arabia and Iran three years ago.

So we see that those who promote stability are not the U.S., but those who promote not just agreements, but also can then provide some substance to the agreements by providing support for development, for technology, and things like this. And only China can do that. So the influence of Israel — I mean, Israel, I think, is increasingly considered a toxic partner. And that will affect, I think, foreign policy. If the Israelis don't realize that by themselves, they will be more isolated, and their security will be more threatened if they don't act on this. That's their choice. The thing is that polls also indicate in Europe that Israel is today the most despised country in the world.

And that reflects also, and that's sad, but that's a sad reality that translates into antisemitic, or the growing antisemitic actions against Jews all over the world, in particular in Europe. So we see that the situation in which Israel has put itself since October 2023, and I would say even before that, because October 2023 was just a consequence of the misbehavior of Israel beforehand. So I would say this inability of Israel to have a peaceful, humane, and diplomatic, and intelligent approach to their security has pushed Israel into a situation where it's a despised country. Now, if we look at the capabilities, where you mentioned intelligence, we have to be very careful here. Israel has been, I mean, it has been kind of almost a myth that Israeli intelligence is fantastic and all that.

It's not exactly true. Israel is very strong because they can get the support of the diaspora. That means all these Jews that are scattered around the world and who might be willing to provide information to Israeli intelligence. And that's very good to locate individuals, terrorists, something like that. That may also equally be good or useful to kill those people, and hence this reputation that Israeli intelligence got. But when it comes to the real work of intelligence — because killing people has nothing to do with intelligence. Killing people is killing people, period. Intelligence, as the Latin word meant originally, *intelligere*, means to understand. And intelligence is about understanding your world. It's about understanding your enemy.

It's about understanding the situation. And in that respect, Israel has historically been extremely weak. It never understood the environment in which it is. And that led to several commissions to improve the intelligence work. I mean, Mossad is mostly an institution that provides special operations outside — killing operations, let's put it that way. It's not just what they do, but let's say, let's put it all, information gathering and things like this. So Mossad was not really affected by this, but those who are in charge of really understanding the situation and translating this situation into military power — this is the Aman. And the Aman is the military intelligence. These are those who are supposed to assess the strategic and military situation in Israel.

Now, a chronic weakness of Aman has been precisely its inability to understand its environment. The problem is that you have in Israel, as you have in countries that are extremely ideologically or culturally biased — you have exactly the same thing, by the way, in the Baltic states, for instance, in

Poland, we have that. I know that because I've seen some of their reports. So I can say they are so biased that they only understand the situation through their biases. And that's where it becomes totally wrong. That's why an intelligence agency has to be as independent as it can and not influenced by the politicians, because then that becomes very bad. But when the cultural, political, or religious biases are so strong, then that makes all decision-making fail.

And that's exactly what happens in Israel. They are so keen to recruit their intelligence agents through people who are very strong Zionists that they see the world through their Zionist eyes. And that gives a very biased picture. And that's the reason why they failed in so many instances. And you may remember the failure of 1973, when the Egyptians were able to plan this Operation Badr. This is the operation that led to the crossing of the Suez Canal and going into the Sinai to recover the Sinai, by the way, because it had been taken by the Israelis in 1967. And for those who go to Cairo, I recommend the museum of this Badr operation. This is the Museum of Victory — the real victory for the Egyptians.

#Jacques

This, the Aman, had been totally unable to identify all the preparations for the crossing of the Suez Canal, which was a huge operation. You can almost compare that to—well, probably not one-to-one—but the importance for the Egyptians was similar to the landing in Normandy in June 1944. And the preparedness was absolutely fantastic in every detail. That's a fantastic example of planning and a fantastic example of deception, military deception. But anyway, Aman was not able to detect that. The same thing in 2006, as Israel went into Lebanon, they had not been able to assess the capabilities of Hezbollah.

And again, because they consider Hezbollah a terrorist organization. Well, Hezbollah is a resistance organization, an organization that defends a territory, that has the physical networks — I mean, trenches and tunnels and strong points and things like that in the mountains — that allowed them to defend against the Israelis. And Aman had not been able to assess that. So this is a chronic problem with Israel. And we see that, by the way, also with Iran. They never assessed properly the Iranian capabilities. They always underestimated these capabilities. And I say always because we saw that in 2024, 2025, and obviously this year.

So obviously they are the Israelis, because in the past they were confronted with Palestinian groups or things like that who did not have sophisticated equipment, not very powerful equipment. I mean, it's Kalashnikovs and grenade launchers and things like this, but not much more. So in such a situation, Israel, regardless of the quality of your intelligence, you don't mind. You just launch a two-ton bomb and that's it. You destroy everything, period. So you don't have to make a very sophisticated intelligence assessment. When it comes to Iran, the situation changed because they are fighting more or less a peer, and that gives the assessment a totally different importance. And that's a weakness of Israel.

And in fact, Israel started to lose its credibility in October 2023. First of all, it was not able to detect Operation Al-Aqsa Flood launched by the Palestinians. And secondly, it systematically underestimated the strength of the Palestinians. So what we see today is, in fact, the continuation of the same mistakes done again and again by the Israeli leadership. And again, it's cultural. It will be very hard for the Israelis to correct that because it's cultural. They think, and when you think you're superior, that means you don't mind about your strategy because you just crush the enemy, because you have very strong firepower, and you compensate the lack of assessment with firepower.

And that's how it works. Or at least it's how you think it can work. But to fight against the will of a population is something very different. I mean, you could be very effective in counter-terrorist, counter-insurgency, and resistance operations without making as many casualties as the Israelis do. But that requires a lot of thinking. That requires a lot of intellectual work. And I think the Israelis are not capable of that. They are too biased to have the idea that they should think their operations more thoroughly. Let's put it that way.

#Nima

I think they did something to the United States as well with this war against Iran that no one has done before.

#Jacques

Well, the United States suffers from the same. It was the same issue. I mean, I think the intelligence of the United States was much better in the Vietnam War or in World War II than it was in Iraq or in Afghanistan. Because the problem is that in Vietnam, we can talk, but especially in World War II, they were fighting peers. I mean, the German army was very strong and powerful. The Allies also had very strong armies. And from that point, when you want to have the advantage, you have to study your enemy very carefully. When the disparity is bigger, when you have a very weak army, an apparently weak enemy, and you are very strong, especially when it comes to firepower, then you tend to disregard the importance of intelligence.

And that's exactly what happened in Vietnam, in Iraq, and in Afghanistan. And that's the fact that you misunderstand the enemy. Of course, the enemy suffers — like the Afghans or the Iraqis have lost thousands of individuals. But they won. In the end, they won. And the Americans lost. And they lost in the sense that they never reached their strategic objectives. They never got full control over Iraq, and they spent a lot of money for nothing. And that's also something that we need to take into consideration. When you want to subjugate an enemy and you spend so much money and energy and firepower and even lives just to subjugate someone, that means that you are not... you're not making wars.

You're just massacring people. And this is not war. You should have a balanced approach. I mean, the idea is to minimize your costs. And that's where the good general approach is the one that can

minimize its costs. But here we are maximizing the costs on all sides and for nothing, because at the end of the day, nobody knows exactly why the Americans went to Iraq. Still today, some will say it's because of oil. Some will say because the idea of weapons of mass destruction is gone. But, you know, you don't know exactly why the U.S. was in Iraq.

Why would the U.S. destroy Iran? You know, if you look at it, that's also something quite surprising, because if you look at the why, you could think that this conflict should be very easily resolved. I mean, the nuclear bomb, which, by the way, was not even mentioned in the China communique. Iran has said they don't want any. So why do you have to start a war for this, since the Iranians have already said, and since the U.S. intelligence has said, they have none and no intention to have it? You see, so why are we waging war?

#Nima

Colonel, it's all about Israel. Just look at what Donald Trump is doing to Thomas Massie in the United States.

#Jacques

Exactly. Correct. Yes. And we are back to this. But even, let's go that way and say, OK, this is for Israel. What is the rationale of Israel? You see, there is no rationale either, because you have exactly the same rhetoric. Basically, Trump takes over the rhetoric of Netanyahu — nuclear bomb and the thing. But, you know, again, we are back to the same argument. So this argument is absolutely invalid. And we are back to what I said before. The whole problem with this kind of conflict is that it's based on irrationality. That makes it extremely difficult to anticipate, because you don't know whether the U.S. is still under the influence of Israel, or to what extent it is under the influence of Israel.

The Israelis themselves, what do they want to achieve? Nobody knows that. I mean, we know about Palestinians — they want to exterminate them. They said it so much, so that's not an invention. They want to do the same in Lebanon. But they cannot exterminate the whole Middle East. So there is a point where it must stop. And legally speaking, there also must be a point where the international community says, well, stop. Remember that so far, if you look at the resolutions of the UN, there's not a single square meter of Israel that has been, let's say, legally taken by Israel. Not a single square meter. Think about this. So, up to which point will the international community deny this reality?

There must be a point where the international community says stop. And if Israel doesn't stop, we have to take measures. And of course, the problem is that the United States is too strong to be stopped itself. That's the reason why Israel operates under the umbrella of the US. And that's the whole problem. That's why I said, if I were a Chinese strategist, I would have already brought the US to its knees economically, because it's very easy to asphyxiate the US. We see today, by the way,

the problem with rare earths, strategic minerals, energy. There are a lot of sensitive points in the US today, and including the debt and finance is a weak point. So it would be very easy to bring it down. And that would be the key to more stability, I think.

Because the problem is that if you had very sensible leaders in the US, people who realize that the US can provide more than just war and destruction in the world, then everything would be okay. But when you have lunatics starting to make decisions, it makes the US very unpredictable and the world situation very unpredictable as well. And that's... probably China doesn't want to do that. I mean, obviously it doesn't want to do that because it would have severe consequences for the worldwide economy. But if you want to reclaim this stability or a situation where you don't have a superpower that is so strong that it can dominate every other, it would be to bring the US to its knees, and then to restart everything from zero — kind of a reset, a geopolitical reset, if you want.

And that would be a possibility that the Chinese might do. This is the only power that has the capacity to do that. But again, they are too wise to do that, and for that reason, that will not happen. But this is the only way to bring sensibility. Because without the U.S., Israel would be more cautious and would be forced to have good relations with its neighbors. The problem is that, again, the U.S. is behind them, and the Europeans don't have the courage to promote a good relationship between Israel and its neighbors. Israel is a problem for the whole Middle East. It's a central problem, definitely, because, again, they have an ideology of expansionism.

But again, I don't want to address the whole question of Greater Israel and all that. By the way, it's a more complex discussion than some may think. The fact of the matter is that regardless of whether or not it's applicable and under which conditions, we can discuss that. But in any case, that means that Israel has an expansionist ideology. This is a reality. It's a reality. Whether big or small, with big ambitions or smaller ambitions, we can argue about that. But it's an expansionist ideology. We have seen that in Palestine. We have seen that in Lebanon. We have seen that in Syria. And there have been threats against Jordan. And we have seen that also against Egypt.

And for that reason, Egypt now is also preparing itself against possible Israeli intervention. This Israeli intervention may have as an objective to expel the Palestinians into Egyptian territory. But again, this is another topic. This is a planning issue that the Egyptians are cautious about again. But anyway, the whole thing is that we have the only country in the Middle East that has an expansionist ideology and whose expansionist ambitions are supported by the U.S. So this is an extremely dangerous thing. Had we been more intelligent, more sensible, more cautious, more, let's say, strategic in the United States, I think we would not have the mess we have now. This is what it is.

#Nima

Yeah, I think the issue is in the United States. Let's see what would happen. We're headed toward huge sort of changes in the United States, in my opinion, in 10 years. Let's assume that. It's not going to be any time soon.

#Jacques

I don't know. I think we have to be cautious with that because we see that the whole issue of Israel, the issue of Iran, the issue of Russia, you know, all these issues—remember, they are bipartisan issues. They are not, it's not just simply Donald Trump. This is the continuation of what has been before. This is a continuation with another format, another appearance, if you want. But in essence, there is no real change. It is probably a little bit more violent because now in Israel itself, the political constellation is such that it promotes more violent solutions, if you want. But in reality, the issue of Israel at large, even if you have changes in the society, this is very... We have to be very careful, yes, because people have seen what's happening in Gaza, and people are outraged about what's happening in Gaza.

They were outraged at launching a war against Iran out of the blue, all that. But once this has been forgotten, I'm not sure the global image of Iran has changed in mentality. People don't understand Iran in the United States, as in many European countries, by the way. They don't like Donald Trump. But had Obama launched exactly the same operation, he would have had much more support than Donald Trump. So this is also something that factors in. In Europe, people don't like Donald Trump for some reasons. Whether it's right or not, I'm not discussing that. The fact of the matter is that in Europe, Donald Trump is not popular. As a result, everything he does is unpopular. But had Obama done exactly the same thing, you may remember the Syrian crisis and all that.

Nobody questioned. I mean, people deplored that Obama didn't intervene in Syria in 2013, for example. So, you know, all these questions are bipartisan. And the fact that Donald Trump is not popular in Europe and in the world at large accentuates the fact that people reject the aggression against Iran. But had this aggression occurred under Joe Biden, for instance, people would not have reacted the same way. And probably Iran would enjoy less support than it does today. So that's why I'm very cautious. I mean, you may be right. You may be right. I don't know. But my advice is to be very cautious because all the narrative that goes around Iraq, Iran, and the Palestinians, and the Arab world, and the Muslims, all that has not changed.

All that has not really changed. So it will require more time, more bad experiences, in order to change our mind. This is a real problem, I think. Not just in the United States—we see exactly the same thing in Europe. A lot of people, you see, the mood is especially after, because terrorism, as an example in Europe, is considered as something against democracy. That's something that falls out of the sky. So this is not provoked. There is no reason. This is just Muslims hating Christians. While the reality of terrorism is very different. But we don't want to accept that. Nobody wants to accept that terrorism is the result of our interventions. Hadn't we intervened in those countries, had we had good relations with those countries, our countries would not be affected by terrorism in any way.

But nobody wants to accept that, because you also have to understand there are other factors coming in. For instance, immigration. Countries like France are the biggest Muslim countries in

Europe, in fact, because there are so many Muslims in France. But for a reason that you may understand or may not understand, the fact of the matter is that for the French, this Muslim presence is too much. As a result, they tend to have kind of racist behavior against Muslims at large. Regardless of whether it's a good Muslim or a bad Muslim, in the end, they are all Islamists. And that's exactly what some parties like the National Rally in France say: well, Islamic equals Islamist, which is semantically wrong, but that's the mood.

So meaning that we are in those kinds of intellectual schemes that allow for more wars also in the future. So that's why things will not change overnight, not even by changing the president or things like that. And that applies to the United States as it applies in other countries. Our hate against the southern world will probably increase because we have more and more people. We have destroyed these countries, and the war goes along the same pattern. We just destabilize these countries. We make life impossible in those countries. So people come to Europe in order to live normally. And then we complain because there are too many foreigners. There are too many Muslims. There are too many Syrians. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

Look at what's happening in Sweden. They were very keen to welcome all those Syrian refugees in 2015 and 2016. Well, it happens that all those who went away from Syria were Islamists. So they came to Sweden, and now they create problems in Sweden, and now Sweden tries to expel them. So we are in this kind of thing. Hadn't we supported those Islamists in Syria at that time? Had we a stable Syria today? Well, the problem would not be, you know, we would not have this problem of immigration. And so again, the problem is that we haven't learned in the West to think about the consequences of what we do. We think it's good to bomb people because they are Islamists, so we have to bomb them. But the reality is that, again, by bombing them, we create more hate or hatred against us also. So you have a lot of people coming here but despising us anyway.

Look in the United States, you have so many of those Afghans that are repatriated or who benefited from some program to go back to the United States, but they hate the United States equally. Of course, they were not happy in their country, in Afghanistan, because the country was destroyed. They couldn't live there anymore, so they had to go back to the United States. And for many reasons, the United States provided them with some visa or whatever to come into the United States, and now they create problems in the United States because they don't like this country. Regardless of the fact that they are living in this country, this is still the country that destroyed their own country originally. So you see, all these wars that we are waging across the world...

And you can see that everything is the consequence of another. The war in Iraq created the problem in Syria, created the problem in Libya, created the problem once after Libya, you had the whole Sahel region that was affected. What you have today in Mali, in Niger, is exactly a consequence of what happened in Libya, and so on and so forth. So it's like a snowball effect that we have not been able to anticipate, first of all, and we have not been able to get under control at one point. And so this is the mind, I mean, the Western mind that is anchored in the short term, that is not able to manage those complex issues.

And that's exactly the reason why we will suffer. This is exactly the reason why today, in the rest of the world, people start to understand that, and start to understand that if they want to have a future, they should prevent the Westerners from coming. Because the West equals problems. Because we don't understand. The French have been for almost two centuries in North Africa. They still don't understand them. And that's exactly why they created all these problems in Syria, Mali, Niger, still today. They haven't understood that. So that's why I'm not so optimistic for the future, in that sense. Anyway.

#Nima

Thank you so much, Col. Jacques Baud, for being with us today.

#Jacques

Great pleasure, as always. My pleasure. Thank you very much for inviting me. Thank you.