

# Scott Ritter: Trump's Iran Attack Is a TRAP That Leads to HUGE Humiliation

Follow me: Substack: [https://substack.com/@dialogueworks?](https://substack.com/@dialogueworks?utm_campaign=profile&utm_medium=profile-page)

utm\_campaign=profile&utm\_medium=profile-page X (Twitter): [https://x.com/Dialogue\\_NRA](https://x.com/Dialogue_NRA)

Patreon: [https://patreon.com/Dialogueworks?](https://patreon.com/Dialogueworks?utm_medium=unknown&utm_source=join_link&utm_campaign=creatorshare_creator&utm_content=)

utm\_medium=unknown&utm\_source=join\_link&utm\_campaign=creatorshare\_creator&utm\_content=

## #Nima

Hi everybody, today's Wednesday, May 20th, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Scott Ritter, is here with us. Welcome back, Scott.

## #Guest

Thanks for having me.

## #Nima

Let me start, Scott, with what the head of the Iranian parliament, Qalibaf, said. He said that people can be assured that our military forces have made the best use of the ceasefire opportunity to rebuild their capabilities. The enemy's covert and overt movements indicate that they are seeking a new round of war. What is your assessment of what's going on? Because Iran, it seems that they're preparing, they're prepared to, you know, for a new round of war. And what is your understanding of the forces in the region, the way that Donald Trump is talking about it? I don't know if we can get anything from Donald Trump, but it seems that the Iranians are somehow feeling that the war is coming, and that's why he's talking this way. Your understanding.

## #Guest

I mean, I don't know the information they're looking at, so it's hard to, you know, be able to say, oh, I agree or I disagree. You know, they've made a conclusion. Look, Iran has every right to believe that they're vulnerable to attack because they've been betrayed so many times in the past, and they aren't likely to put much credence. But if I were able to talk to this individual and he was willing to talk to me, you know, I would ask the following questions. In 37 days, how many targets did American and Israeli bombs strike in Iran? And he'll give me a number—25,000. Okay. Now, let's just break it down from a defense industrial capacity standpoint.

How much damage was done to the Iranian ballistic missile production capabilities? You know, was Bradley Cooper saying that he destroyed 87% of your ballistic missile production capability? Is this an accurate assessment? No, it's not. We're doing this and the other thing. So what you're saying is that the bombing campaign did not succeed in retarding Iran's capabilities. That's what I'm saying. Okay. You know, and then we can just go on and on and on. You know, what real damage has been done? What percentage of the buildings struck by the United States were empty buildings or politically motivated buildings that had no impact?

And the point I'm trying to get at is, when we look at the real impact of what America did to Iran, in terms of, I mean, you know, we sunk ships. Iran wasn't a blue-water navy to begin with. So we sank ships that, you know, doesn't change the fact that Iran still controls the Strait of Hormuz and will continue, and always will, control the Strait of Hormuz. So the point I would make to him is that in 37 days, we didn't do anything to you. We killed some people, a lot of people. We killed some important people. But we didn't change your regime. We didn't interrupt your ballistic missile production capability. We didn't have any meaningful impact on your nuclear program.

We didn't secure the Strait of Hormuz. We didn't accomplish anything. And so now, Mr. Speaker, I would just ask, what makes you think we can accomplish something this time around? I mean, what are you afraid of? Are you afraid that we're going to repeat what we did before? Why? You won. I mean, it's a pain in the neck. Things go boom, people die. Why would America repeat that? What's your assessment of America? You know, we depleted our long-range strike weapons. You apparently have some intelligence. Have we replenished our long-range strike weapons to the degree that you've replenished your missiles? No, not even close.

So how many days do you assess America to be able to sustain a campaign similar to the one that they did for 37 days? Less than a week, right? Yeah. What about their ability to intercept your missiles? When does that run out? Three to four days, right? And how long can you cycle through? I just read something where people are claiming that you can salvo hundreds of missiles a day, every hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for a sustained period of time, striking all the targets. Is this an accurate statement, or are you just pulling a Donald Trump here and saying things that aren't real? Oh, it's an accurate statement. So again, I ask, why do you think they would go to war with you?

You've publicly stated that if you're attacked, especially your energy infrastructure, you're going to immediately, in this 24/7 campaign, target the energy production facilities of the Gulf Arab nations, including desalination plants, that the United Arab Emirates will return to the bedouin age, I think somebody said. Is this an accurate statement? And what's your assessment of their ability to defend against this? None, right? So again, why do you think they're going to attack? I mean, this is my question. I understand what they're saying. They have every right to be prepared for an attack. But why do they think they're going to attack?

Because to attack, to what end? What objectives are being sought? And what's the risk-gain calculation that's being done on the part of those who would want to attack? And I would make the counterargument that Donald Trump can't attack because the Gulf Arab states won't let him attack. One exception might be the United Arab Emirates, but according to Donald Trump, they were on the phone too. Because maybe the light bulb's gone off over their pro-Israeli head that the Israelis can't protect them from the Iranians, and that Iran will terminate their existence as a modern nation-state. These calls didn't happen an hour before Donald Trump was going to give.

Donald Trump was never going to give that order. Never going to give that order. And anybody who knows anything about modern air war and the sequence of events that go in place to carry out an air campaign, you know, this isn't something you stop one hour before bombs go down. This is something that gets stopped early on in the implementation cycle. The decision not to bomb Iran was made days ago, not an hour before the attack. And so you have to ask yourself, why did Donald Trump do this? Because he's manipulating the markets. I mean, literally, he's in there. He called the American economy a casino. He's out there playing the game. And so are people around him.

His Truth Social media postings are designed to generate market impact—market impact that positively favors those who make the appropriate bets, knowing this social media post was coming out when it was coming out and what it was going to say. So my counter is that everything that's going on has nothing to do with positioning the United States or Israel to gain some sort of political or military advantage over Iran by continuing the conflict. It's all a giant act of theater. It's a charade designed to ostensibly put pressure on Iran, but I don't think Iran's feeling any pressure. And the secondary benefit is to have Trump Incorporated rake in the money from manipulating markets.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, the assessment of the battlefield, I think you're right about the reasons you just mentioned. But the problem is that we don't have logical thinking in Washington. And many people are arguing that Netanyahu falters domestically right now. One of the main reasons the United States may decide to attack Iran again is because Netanyahu is just, he's not in a good position right now in Israel. And everybody knows what's going on there. And he needs something.

## **#Guest**

There's no doubt about that, but how long can you play that card? You know, the first card, the first hand was played back on February 11th when Netanyahu and the head of Mossad met with Trump one-on-one in the White House and sold him a bill of goods. That has since been exposed as a bill of goods. They lied. They lied about their abilities. They lied about the weakness of Iran. They lied about what would happen if they killed Ali Khamenei. They lied about everything. Donald Trump today knows that it was all a lie. And he also—I mean, Donald Trump knows that... I mean, when he

approved this war plan, was it briefed to him as, "Mr. President, we're going in light. These 37 days, we're only going to bring in, you know, 12%, 15% of our capacity, but we're holding back the big punch because we really don't want to do harm"?

I think the opposite was, "Mr. President, we're going in hard. We're coming in hard. We're hitting hard. We're pounding hard. And this job is to break them down, to destroy them, to nullify them." I think that's what he was briefed: we're going in hard. And we didn't beat the Iranians. How much harder can we go? And the answer is, we can't. So I agree that there's not too much rationality out of Washington, D.C., but there has to be a little bit of sanity left, where people are able to look at hard facts and say, "No, that's not going to fly." I think Israel—you know, the polls don't lie—sixty percent of Americans have become, you know, disenchanted with the U.S.-Israeli relationship.

And there's growing anti-Israeli sentiment there, which is why Benjamin Netanyahu, in yet another act of desperation, talked about cutting off financial ties with the United States. He understands the direction the wind's blowing, that the Zionist enterprise isn't going to be survivable or sustainable for much longer among the American people, because Israel's not our friend, never has been our friend, always has been our enemy, and that's been exposed as such. And so Israel is making a new friend, the United Arab Emirates. And, you know, gosh, those UAE guys are so kind because they pulled out of OPEC Plus so they could divert all of their energy resources to the market so that they could become the bankroller of Israel. See the symbiotic relationship there?

Now we know why Iran said if this starts up again, the UAE disappears. We're just not going to let this happen. But, you know, I don't see Israel having the same control over the United States. I mean, we saw what happens when they go after a congressman. I mean, there's still that aspect of it. Thomas Massie was defeated by the state of Israel. You know, it proves that American democracy can be bought, that there is a price. And apparently it's a lot of money, but they still bought a seat. You know, so the Israeli influence is real. It's here, but it's weakening. And, you know, like anything that's held on too long, you know, beyond its expiration date, it begins to, you know, to be too gross, like a bottle of milk used by Israel.

## **#Guest**

I put my cereal in there and I put the milk in and I eat it. I'm like, mmm, delicious. Good milk. On May 20th, I'm like, put it in there, not bad. May 21st, I can still eat this.

## **#Nima**

May 25th, a little sour, but not bad.

## **#Guest**

I put some sugar in there, you know. May 27th, boom, it goes bad. That quick. And Israel is like a bottle of milk. It's been in the refrigerator about a week beyond its expiration date. We could handle the sour taste a little bit, but it's gone full-scale bad. And it stinks. It rots. We can't drink it. It makes us ill. We got to pour it out. And I think that's what's happening here, is it? Israel doesn't have the control over America that it thought it had. Its expiration date is long past due.

## **#Nima**

I think they were so happy that they defeated Thomas Massie in the primary, but it wasn't a defeat in my opinion. When you look at what has happened, they had to spend something like more than \$30 million against him in the primary. This is a primary. This is not something—and they have to go that big against Thomas Massie. Not only the Israeli lobby, Donald Trump himself, Pete Hegseth, J. D. Vance, everybody. We had Stephen Miller, all of them together attacking Thomas Massie with huge money going against him. That's a defeat for the Israeli lobby. I don't think that they will win.

## **#Guest**

I agree with you. Look, here's the reality. 60% of Americans are disenfranchised—disenchanted, I think is the proper word—with Israel. 60%, it's going to get bigger. MAGA, which is the base of Donald Trump, doesn't want to become MEGA, and they are rejecting it. Thomas Massie, you know, it's one thing to say, you know, oh, you're not voting for the president, you're not doing this and the other thing.

## **#Nima**

All right.

## **#Guest**

But he was voting the will of his constituency, which is why he kept getting reelected. This election wasn't a victory for Trump; it was a defeat for American democracy. And MAGA recognizes now that we are MEGA, full-scale MEGA. I think this comes back to haunt the Republican Party in the midterm elections. I mean, you might sneak in a candidate here—there's a candidate in Louisiana that's winning here—but at the end of the day, on the national level, these Israeli victories are defeats of American democracy. And the American people are starting to recognize this. I think this is what they would call a Pyrrhic victory.

Um, you know, derived from, you know, the Greeks winning a battle where they lose too many guys, or the Romans, I guess, were fighting, and they lost too many guys. Yeah, Romans, you know, they fought a battle, they won, but too many legionnaires were killed, so ultimately they lost the war. It could be the Greeks. I've got to go read up on my Peloponnesian Wars and History of Rome now

that Xi Jinping's made it vogue again to, you know, quote Thucydides' Trap, things of this nature. But Pyrrhic victory. People can Google it. I think I'm right. I got it. See, the Greeks and Romans.

It's one of those ancient civilizations. But I think this is a Pyrrhic victory for the pro-Israeli crowd because in pouring all this money in, what they did is they proved that American democracy can be bought, and Americans don't want their democracy to be for sale. Not this way. Not by a foreign power. We're more than happy to let, you know, Big Pharma do it. Lockheed Martin can do it. You know, the gun lobby can do it. That's okay. That's among family. But when the Israelis come in and buy it out—no, especially when they got us involved in a war that we lost, and we're losing, and we're not going to win.

## **#Nima**

I think the problem that Donald Trump is facing right now is not about the United States. He can declare victory and get out of the Middle East and go. It has nothing to do, as he did before with the Houthis, with the Yemenis in the Red Sea. But the problem is that there is no way for him to wrap the situation up in the Middle East as though Israel is winning. That's the problem. And Israel—there is no way to change that reality for Donald Trump. Donald Trump can come out of the conflict. It's not influencing. Say, I'm going to open up the Strait of Hormuz, I'm going to get told that's not going to influence our economy, and everybody's going to get passed through the Strait of Hormuz. But the problem is the Israeli sort of position has been diminished so much that Donald Trump cannot save them, cannot change the reality for Israel.

## **#Guest**

No, we see that again. The reality is, you know, in the statement of Benjamin—remember, in September of 2023, there was the G20 meeting in India, and Donald Trump went there. We talked about this—the India-Middle East European Economic Corridor. And Joe Biden gave a big speech about how it was going to change the world. Because of October 7th, people have forgotten about this, but Benjamin Netanyahu came out the same day. He gave a speech where he said, this is the greatest moment in modern Israeli history. The greatest moment in modern—why? Why? Why would this be the greatest? Because Israel knows that it's in an economic, demographic trap, that its people are pouring into Israel from around—Zionists.

The Zionist enterprise is succeeding, but this costs more money. And the more they pour in, the more they alienate Palestinians and regional neighbors, the more they create the potential for the friction that leads to conflict. The more you have to invest in defense, which is very expensive. Where is this money coming from? Your economy is underperforming, increasing isolation around the world, especially after Gaza. So you need to change the paradigm. And that's what the Abraham Accords were supposed to accomplish by creating sort of normalcy between Israel and the Gulf Arab states, predicated on economic cooperation that would be dominated by Israeli technology and Israeli financial capabilities.

But you still, okay, you got that potential, but now you need the injection of wealth, you know, real economic activity. And that's what the India-Middle East Economic Corridor was supposed to provide—the ability of a container ship to get put on a port in Mumbai, go to Abu Dhabi, get off, put on a train that transits the UAE, Saudi Arabia, through Jordan into Israel, and then onto a ship in Haifa and goes up to Greece and offloads and onto Europe. And this activity would combine with what Israel was doing with its offshore gas, where it was trying to have an energy hub with Turkey and suddenly be able to send its gas into Europe and the economic power that accrues thereof. Those two things were going to make Israel a self-sustaining economic miracle, which it wasn't.

Everybody could talk about Israel this, Israel that. Israel was an economic basket case, unsustainable without outside intervention. Here, this would allow Israel to become that. This is what made Netanyahu so happy. But today, the Abraham Accords are dead. No Gulf Arab state except the Arab Emirates apparently is willing to do that. The economic corridor is dead in the water. But, I mean, they're breathing life into it now because of the UAE. But the fact is, Saudi Arabia isn't going to do business with Israel as long as Israel is doing what it did with Palestine.

And the other thing is, Israel is no longer the economic miracle that everybody thought it was. It's been subjected to blockades by the Houthis. It's been subjected to massive infrastructure attacks by Iran. And it's been subjected to increased diplomatic and economic isolation as the world wakes up to what a horrific entity the state of Israel is—this genocidal, murderous, baby-killing, prisoner-raping society. And people are rejecting it. And so Netanyahu is desperate right now. He's in trouble. Israel is collapsing. And the United States isn't going to sustain Israel forever. We're losing it, losing support.

Um, and the United Arab Emirates, it's a joke. I mean, I feel sorry for the people that live there, but this is just an absolute tragic joke. The direction they're taking, the decisions they're making are purely suicidal. And you'd think that these people would be smart enough to understand that, that's it, but they've cast their die. They're in all the way with Israel. At least that's the way things stand now. Maybe a phone call to Trump to stop the war might have been a dose of reality. But, you know, there we are.

## **#Nima**

How do you find the non-aggression pact and what Russia and China are trying to do together with Iran? It seems to me, because Saudi Arabia was asking for a non-aggression pact. I haven't heard anything from the Iranian side, but it seems something is going on with the negotiations between, as I've mentioned, Russia, China, and Iran, and the whole concept of the Middle East, which is so important, by the way, for two projects: the North-South Corridor and the Belt and Road Initiative, which are of paramount importance for China and Russia.

## **#Guest**

First of all, a non-aggression pact won't work if the United States isn't out of the Middle East. Why not? Can't you sign a non-aggression pact with the United States? Really? Really? You want Iran to go to bed with that piece of paper on their table? The United States is agreement-incapable. What needs to happen, though, is that Iran needs to have non-aggression pacts with the totality of the region, Saudi Arabia included. And the Saudis—remember, don't think it's surprising that the Saudis are making this call. The Saudis worked with China and Iran to come together and create rapprochement a few years back. And the Saudis know, you know, they have a better understanding than most about the geopolitical realities of energy security and where Iran is today. And so they're looking.

But there has to be every nation involved in this non-aggression. It has to be a regional non-aggression treaty signed by all powers. And the guarantor can't be the United States. I mean, the United States, of course, might play a peripheral role and say it's part of it, supports it. But the guarantor has to be primarily China in the economic sense. If you want to do business with China, you have to sign this non-aggression pact, something of that nature. It won't be that blunt because it doesn't work that way. But I think having the Chinese and the Russians work is a good deal. And it's both, as you said, in the interest of Russia and China—the North-South Economic Corridor linking St. Petersburg to Chabahar and the new Silk Road that links Tehran with western China and then on into the depth of China.

These are essential corridors of wealth for Iran and for the region. So that's the new reality. The security architecture is going to have to move away from a U.S.-centric architecture to a multipolar architecture. Again, the importance of what just happened in Beijing between Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping can't be understated. This is two of the world's most powerful, influential nations coming together, and they're not seeking a bipolar world. They're not seeking a return to the Cold War. They're seeking a true multipolar world that empowers many nations, not just a handful. And this is the new reality that the United States is going to have to adjust to one way or the other.

## **#Nima**

We used to have OPEC and OPEC Plus to decide about the price of oil. Do you think we have a new alternative in the market, which is the Strait of Hormuz? Because the flow of tankers through the Strait of Hormuz can no longer change the price of oil, in my opinion.

## **#Guest**

Yeah, but that's... I mean, from a practical standpoint, I mean, in terms of outcomes, sure. I mean, look, we used to have Aramco, you know, the American-Arab Oil Company, the Arab-American Oil Company. And they basically overbuilt Saudi oil production infrastructure. I forget the numbers—at 12.5 million at one point in time was maximum production, but they were only producing at 9 million. Why? Because it's very expensive to have all this infrastructure that you're not using. And the answer is because when the United States needs more oil on the market, the Saudis can

increase. You don't have to wait. They've got it right there—just turn it on, out it comes, go. And then when we need to tighten it up a little bit, the Saudis do.

And we had that relationship that said, we will guarantee your security in exchange you help be our market control mechanism. In theory, Iran could do the same thing through the Strait of Hormuz—constrict, release, constrict. The difference is they're constricting shipments that aren't their own. In Saudi Arabia, with Iran, you're turning on Saudi oil pipes, which are connected to Saudi oil fields and all that. Here, it would be Iran constricting the global economy, and that could be effective in war, but in peace, that's a non-starter. Iran could never be seen as actively squeezing the energy production potential of Kuwait or Bahrain or Iraq or even Saudi Arabia by saying we're only going to let a certain amount of ships through there.

So this is why we need a ceasefire effect. But what's important is that the Iranians can shut it down anytime they want to. It's also important to Iran to keep it open and allow for the free flow of energy. As long as you pay your little toll tax, you know, \$2 million a ship, I think is what they're charging depending on the cargo, but let that happen and you're good to go. But I don't think Iran is going to be controlling that, because that's not Iran, first of all. Iran's never said that they're going to become the arbiter of who makes money, who doesn't make money. Iran believes that all nations that produce energy are sovereign nations, and that's their sovereign decision.

And I believe Iran would support that as long as nations aren't positioning themselves. So I think part of the regional security framework has to include an energy security component. You know, where, you know, if you have non-aggression pacts, it means Iran doesn't fear overnight the Strait of Hormuz being shut down, which means Iran then must commit to the free flow of energy. You know, and there have to be some very well-defined exceptions to that so that everybody understands that if this happens, this happens, this happens, then Iran has the right to do this. But so long as expectations are met, Iran has to let the traffic go through.

## **#Nima**

I think that's why I would say Israel is losing Saudi Arabia and Qatar, because the situation, the calculation on the part of these governments in these countries, has totally changed. And do you think there is any way for Israel to, you know, do something about it or to reverse what's going on with the case of Iran? Because Saudi Arabia and Qatar are, I would say, so much dependent on Iran right now. It doesn't matter if they're going to rebuild or they're going to build new pipelines, but they're not going to get everything out of their countries by these pipelines. They're going to be dependent on the Strait of Hormuz. Not only when it comes to the Strait, we have the internet cables that many people are talking about in Iran right now.

## **#Guest**

I remember in the 1990s, I had a conversation with the Israelis about the growing threat of Hamas. When I was traveling to Israel from 1994 through 1998, every time I went to Israel, there was a terrorist attack—terrorist attacks that killed people, blowing up a bus on Dizengoff, blowing up a restaurant, blowing up this, blowing up that, blowing up everything. So it would happen right next door to me. I could hear the explosions. One blew up a restaurant I had lunch at the day before. There but for the grace of God, I mean, it was a... and, you know, this was day-to-day reality there.

And, um, I had a conversation with an Israeli because I was working with the Israeli intelligence services, security services. So when we'd have lunch, we'd talk about a variety of things. And one of the interesting things they said is that one guy said the best way to make peace with Hamas is to actually negotiate directly with them. Invite them to the table and make them part of the solution, not just the problem. It's very easy to be a terrorist when everybody expects you to do nothing more than just be a terrorist. Low bar. But if you have to become a problem solver, if you now have a vested interest in the solution, different.

You know, it's politically impossible for this to happen because of the domestic dynamics. But, you know, one by one, I could, if I were in charge of Israel, I could do things. For instance, Gaza needs to be rebuilt totally. Totally. I would create a mechanism to rebuild Gaza for the benefit of the Palestinian people. But to give you an example, right down here, they're developing. I had a relative once, a very smart lady, made a lot of money. And I remember a visitor once, and on her table, she had a map of Bozeman, Montana. She lived in Beverly Hills in a million-dollar house. I said, what the hell? You got a map of Bozeman, Montana?

She said, well, I'm buying land. I said, oh, well, how do you buy land? So she had mapped it out. She sat there and she predicted where all the critical crossroads would be. She said, this is where they build banks, this is where they build gas stations, this is where they build infrastructure. So I'm going to buy the land that they need to build the infrastructure. And then when they come to me, I don't sell them the land, I lease them the land. So I keep it continuously. I keep control over the situation. So if they ever piss me off, I can sell the land and their bank is gone. It has to go. And I went, well, that's sort of evil genius. And it was.

I would do the same thing with Gaza. Um, I wouldn't say it out front, but I would rebuild Gaza, but I'd buy every piece of property on the important cornerstones, and I would own Gaza that way. And I'd make sure that Gaza people prospered, but they also understood, at the end of the day, who controlled what. Um, or maybe if they don't understand—for instance, right now, it's the same thing, development taking place down here. I don't know who owns the crossroads, but I do know that, you know, that's going to become very essential for the local economic development of this area. So whoever owns it sort of has more control than an elected official in many ways. So I could solve the Gaza problem without any military force and actually rebuild it and make it look good.

But at the end of the day, I have direct control over what happens in Gaza. I could do the same thing in Lebanon. I could withdraw completely from Lebanon. The first thing I'd do, therefore, though, is rebuild Beirut. And I'm not going to let the Saudis come in. I'm going to use my cutouts, and I'm going to own Beirut. I'm going to buy there, tear down the buildings, buy the important crossroads there, build the infrastructure, and therefore politically empower certain people. Rather than seeking the isolation of Hezbollah, I would seek the co-option of Hezbollah. I would tell Hezbollah, I want to work with you. I want you to be part of the future of Lebanon. I want to redirect Hezbollah's activities from fighting me to building Lebanon. But they're building a Lebanon that I control because I control the crossroads.

And you see, I could do this game all day long. I could do the same thing with Iran. I'd be building economic reach into Iran. That's how Israel wins this war. But the Israelis can't think that way. They don't understand that because they have to dominate. They don't have the patience, the strategic patience. They've become such a warlike society and a racist society. But Israel, there's so much vulnerability in Iran right now. There's so much vulnerability because it's been subjected to sanctions for so long, aging infrastructure. A lot of damage has been done. There's the necessity of reconstruction—has to be something that it will define. You saw how powerful Rafsanjani became after the end of the Iran-Iraq war. How did Rafsanjani become so?

Because he got involved in the reconstruction of Iran. And he empowered the Revolutionary Guard to get involved in that too. And the Revolutionary Guard went from being a bunch of 20-year-old fanatics who did their banzai charges at the Iraqis to being businessmen. The Revolutionary Guard today is a far more sophisticated entity because they were involved in the economic rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iran. There's a lot of political potential in reconstruction. And if I were the Israelis, I would stop bombing stuff and begin talking about how I can own the crossroads and think long term and make things happen. That's what I would do. That's the only way Israel is out of this. Israel thinks they're going to get out of this by bombing. It'll be the end of Israel.

## **#Nima**

What do we know about the Iron Dome batteries? Who's producing these batteries? Because Hezbollah is hitting them right and left, not only in the southern part of Lebanon. In the last 24 hours, they hit three of them. Today, we've learned that two of them were hit in the northern part of Israel. And I don't know how sustainable that is for Israel with this sort of new attitude of Hezbollah, attacking using FPV drones to attack Iron Dome batteries. Well, it's not just Iron Dome batteries.

## **#Guest**

They're attacking the depth, the logistical depth of the Israeli presence. You know, Israel has never had to deal with Hezbollah having the kind of potential to dominate the operational depth of the battlefield. Hezbollah has always done a very good job at the point of contact. And Hezbollah has

shown in the past the ability to send Katyusha rockets in to upset the political and economic balance of northern Israel. But the Israelis always sort of had a free hand to maneuver and to concentrate troops and to build logistics and all this, and then to flow resources into the battlefield and flow resources out. Now, at the tip of the spear, Israel's getting the snot handed to them. I mean, they're just—Hezbollah's just beating them raw, straight up. I'm not saying Hezbollah's not suffering casualties.

Of course they are. This is war. But Israel has a lot of technological advantages. But the Israeli soldiers aren't that good. They're not that brave. They don't want to die. I'm not saying anybody wants to die. But if you go into combat believing that your life is valuable, you're going to die sooner. If you go into combat believing that you are an expendable resource and therefore you will be professional in the use of this resource to ensure that you get the maximum benefit out of it, but understanding that war is designed to kill and there's a likely probability of you dying, you might live. Because now you're doing all the right things. You're not hesitating at the moment because you think you're going to live, because you think your life's valuable.

You do what the training tells you. And I think Hezbollah operates that way. I'm not saying the Hezbollah people don't get scared. I'm not saying there isn't fear. But I'm saying overall, Hezbollah is a much more professional, efficient fighting machine than the Israelis are because Hezbollah people understand and are prepared for the potential of death. And the Israelis don't want to die. They avoid death. Therefore, they make mistakes, they're hesitant, and they die. Hezbollah is exploiting this on the battlefield and now throughout the depth of Israel. They're going 20, 30 kilometers in with these FPV drones, and it's just absolutely devastating for Israel. Israel doesn't have an answer to this problem.

## **#Nima**

But is that going to force Netanyahu to change his policy, or do you see the same sort of attitude? And how long does the United States want to support Netanyahu? Israeli—and what are the capabilities of the United States right now in producing these sorts of missile interceptors for Israel? And you—you didn't mention the Iron Dome batteries. Whose batteries, you know? I mean, first of all, you have to be careful. You know, Israel expends a lot of Iron Dome missiles. I mean, so they—oh, you froze, so I don't know if you can hear me or not. Um...

## **#Guest**

I'll keep talking just in case the audience can hear me and you can't. But, you know, Israel expends Iron Dome missiles at a prodigious level. So, you know, taking out one or two batteries here doesn't change the strategic balance. But it is a problem because every battery you take out, that's an area that's supposed to be defended that's no longer being defended. And now other weapons and other resources can be brought in. Could you hear me the whole time, or was I just babbling into thin air?

## **#Nima**

Yeah, I can hear you right now. Okay, because I've got three—I've got two of you on screen.

## **#Guest**

I've got Nima... Oh, there, now I've only got one of you. Okay.

## **#Nima**

I don't know if your audience heard me, and I don't want to repeat it.

## **#Guest**

Look, the Iron Dome—no, it's a thing, just like anything else. But the Israelis produce a lot of Iron Dome, and we produce—I mean, we build it for them. We build the missiles, we build everything. Are you alive? Move so I know you're alive. Yeah, we're alive.

## **#Nima**

Go ahead.

## **#Guest**

It looks like he froze. I was like, oh no, he did it again.

## **#Nima**

But no, this is a problem. When you take out Iron Dome,

## **#Guest**

I'm not so worried about the impact that has on production. What it represents, though, is that Hezbollah can now dictate operational realities in depth. The Iron Dome is supposed to protect. You don't just put Iron Dome haphazardly. One of the things the Israelis taught me—I mean, it was actually brilliant—you know, we were trying to look for installations of value in Iraq. Iraq's a big country. So what the Israelis did is they sat there and they plotted every air defense installation in Iraq, spotted it out, and then you have the Rolands and other things that are only used to protect high-value things. So you look where the Rolands are, you assess it, you assess it based upon the threat dynamic that's coming in, you start drawing arrows where the air defense is laid out to defend against a threat coming here, here, and you get the intersection of the threat arrows, and you go, there's something valuable right here.

And then you start looking around and going, ah, look at that. Look what's going on. Over time, they built a new road here. They brought in power here. There's something happening in this spot. Okay, now we're on to something. So when Israel puts Iron Dome down or something, they're protecting something. Because the Israelis, when we projected onto Iraq doing this—what I thought was brilliant, you know, air defense pattern analysis—the Israelis are projecting on it because they understand that they deploy air defense in a similar fashion. This is a big hint to the Iranians right now. If you want to know where some value is in Israel, plot out all the air defense and do what I just told you, because that's how the Israelis think.

Things of value. But that's—I'm going to get in trouble for saying that. I'm not here giving advice to the Iranians. Anybody who's fighting a war, do air defense. You Ukrainians, you can do that against the Russians. And you Russians, you can do that against the Ukrainians. I'm an equal opportunity air defense pattern analysis guy. When Hezbollah blows these things up, they're blowing up something that's there to protect something. So now you've created vulnerability at something. I believe Hezbollah has done this kind of analysis. They know what that's trying to protect. And by destroying these, they're creating vulnerability windows that can be exploited so even higher-value targets can be struck.

## **#Nima**

Scott, how do you compare Donald Trump's visit to China to what we've seen with Vladimir Putin and his visit to China? And where are we headed with the war in Ukraine? Because it seems that something is escalating between Russia and the Europeans. I don't know how devastating that could be. Do you think that Donald Trump was talking about it during his visit to China? Because it was all about Iran, as I remember. He didn't mention anything about Ukraine, but it seems that Ukraine is getting serious as time goes by.

## **#Guest**

Well, first of all, your audience has to take every word I'm about to say with a grain of salt because I said that Xi Jinping would meet Vladimir Putin at the airport, and I was wrong. The foreign minister met him. Now, the foreign minister is a member of the Politburo, and the vice president who met Donald Trump isn't a member of the Politburo, so there was an upgrade. But my sinology skills are off a little bit, you know. So it is what it is. But look, these are two totally different meetings. The outcomes are totally different. China was seeking to manage the United States, and the United States was seeking to manage China. So there are two sides trying to manage each other.

One side managed better than the other—China. But these weren't meetings of friends. Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping are friends. This is a meeting of friendly leaders and nations who are not just in a friendly relationship, but a strategic relationship of extraordinary depth and longevity. This isn't a short-term alliance of convenience; this is a long-term strategic association of necessity, of survival. And that's what happened. This is game-changing, and it creates a solid foundation for what's next.

You know, one of the important things about the Trump-China meeting is that Trump was put on notice about the existential value attached to Taiwan by the Chinese.

They actually said, "Conflict—that we will have a direct conflict with you if you interfere with this." That statement now is directly applied because the Chinese have likened Russia's interest in Ukraine to China's interest in Taiwan. So even though Xi Jinping doesn't come out and straight up say, "We support what Russia is doing in Ukraine," the indirect relationship is clear that they do. And now what they've done is they've created strategic depth, energy associations, economic relationships that will survive any potential escalation. And I believe there will be an escalation. I think war between Russia and at least one Baltic state is inevitable as a war of warning.

I believe that—I think it's Latvia—will be taken off the map. Russia's already identified numerous military and leadership targets that will be taken out. They'll be taken out decisively. And I think that Ukraine is going to be eliminated from the playing board as a viable political entity. I think that Kiev will be annihilated by a massive aggression attack, destroying the decision-making centers of the Ukrainian government. If they relocate to Lvov, Lvov will be taken out. Russia's done playing games. It's over. They pushed Russia too far, and they got Russia into a zone that, if it continues, Russia suffers existential consequences.

Russia's not playing that game. And so Russia's now going to win, and win decisively. I think the United States is aware of this, and that the United States isn't going to do anything in response to a reasonable Russian reaction. A reasonable Russian reaction would be the physical destruction of Kiev and a very meaningful, sharp, decisive attack on a Baltic state as an example. But the danger is, if Europe doesn't take the lesson and seeks to continue, the next strike will be against decision-making centers outside of the Baltics, into Europe proper. And I believe that they will target Germany in particular.