

# Matthew Hoh: The Pentagon's Biggest Lie About Iran

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## #Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Wednesday, May 20th, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother, Matthew Hoh, is here with us. Welcome back, Matt.

## #Matthew

Hi, Nima. Good to see you.

## #Nima

Matt, let me start with what Admiral Brad Cooper was asked about — you know, the attack on the primary school in Iran on the first day of the war. And here's what he said could be one of the main reasons on their part, in their understanding. Here's what he said about it.

## #Speaker 03

Does not deliberately target us. Got that part. Period. Full stop. Nor are the Iranian people our enemy. The IRGC is the adversary in this case. I heard that in your opening statement, Admiral.

## #Speaker 04

I asked you a very specific question, and I'm curious about what the answer is.

## #Speaker 03

So the investigation is ongoing. As soon as it is complete, I'm happy to be as transparent as possible.

## #Speaker 04

We will not take responsibility for something we very obviously did.

### **#Speaker 03**

So it's a complex investigation. The school itself is located on an active IRGC cruise missile base. It's more complex than the average strike. As soon as we're complete, I'm fully committed to transparency, given your important oversight role and the other members here.

### **#Speaker 04**

Just so you know, I have an enormous amount of respect for you and an enormous amount of respect for the Pentagon. I do not trust that answer. What we've seen from the Secretary of Defense and his callous disregard for any sort of rules of engagement or protecting civilian life makes us suspicious. And that's the only second question I have for you: do you think it's ever appropriate for anybody in a leadership position to use the words "no quarter" when describing how we are conducting our operations in Iran?

### **#Speaker 03**

Sir, I think it's appropriate that as military leaders, we follow the law of armed conflict and our constitutional responsibilities, and that's what we've done.

### **#Speaker 04**

And you would agree that "no quarter" is not following the law?

### **#Speaker 03**

I would agree it's our constitutional responsibility to follow the law.

### **#Nima**

Yeah. He mentioned, Matt, that there was a missile base under this school. And here's what the Sky News reporter asked him.

### **#Speaker 05**

Stone from Sky News. Can you explain why you cannot reveal what happened in Manab? For how long can you hide behind "an investigation is ongoing," sir? We have a team in Manab right now. They have seen what happened. They have seen no evidence of an Iranian missile base there. For how long can you hide behind "an investigation is happening," sir? When will the investigation conclude, Admiral?

### **#Nima**

Yeah.

## **#Matthew**

No, I mean, this is, I'm not sure if you want to, you're going to show more of Admiral Cooper's testimony, Nima, but, you know, watching some of it, this is the type of thing that inspires confidence in the Iranians, right? It inspires confidence in the Chinese, in the Russians, in America's adversaries. It puts great doubt into America's allies, puts hesitation into any countries that are neutral, if you will. You understand Pete Hegseth as being a front man. And you understand Pete Hegseth as being a politician. And you can allow for his limitations, his excesses, his stupidity.

But the commander of American forces in Central Command, the most important American warfighting command, a warfighting command that should go, you would think, to the most competent, capable American commander available, and this is what you get. Throughout his testimony, he was unable to answer questions. He hesitated. He looked weak. He also simply didn't know things. He didn't seem to understand what his commander's intent was. I mean, what does his boss want him to do? He just didn't seem to have that understanding. And so here you are now, three months almost after this war started, you have the head of Central Command basically unable to explain why the United States is doing this war. What is it hoping to achieve?

How is it going to achieve that? And so, yeah, if you're America's allies, this gives you doubt. If you're hedging or trying to figure out what you want to do with the United States, it gives you great caution. And then, of course, if you're an adversary or an enemy of the United States, this gives you confidence. I will say, too, just a quick story. Adam Smith, who I used to go to his office and talk to years ago—I mean, we're talking 15, 16, 17 years ago—I remember him at that point being very blunt. And he'd probably deny this story if he heard it, but being very blunt with myself and my colleagues and saying, look, I know the generals and admirals come in here and lie to me all the time, which I found refreshing at the time.

He was so honest. And it was good to see him, in this sense as well, say out so clearly, I don't trust you. You know, there should be more American members of Congress who say that all the time to the admirals and generals, because they shouldn't be trusted. But unfortunately, most of the time, you watch a House Armed Services Committee hearing or a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, the members of Congress—the congressmen and women and the senators—all look like bobbleheaded dolls, you know, just nodding in agreement with what the generals and the admirals say. You know, it's not oversight.

But yeah, I mean, this type of thing just, just—and unfortunately, I think Cooper's performance there leads you to believe that war is more likely, right? There's no way it can be a prolonged war because the Americans don't have the wherewithal. They don't have the munition stocks. Their forces are exhausted. Their resources are—you know, the American military is superficial in so many ways. So it won't be a long war. It'll be a war again, four or five weeks, and another ceasefire. But,

you know, watching Cooper unable to answer questions, that makes me think it's more likely that the war is more likely to resume because these guys just don't know what to do otherwise.

## **#Nima**

So far, what we've heard from Pete Hegseth and his administration is they've been trying to inform the audience in the United States and outside of the United States about the reality of the battlefield. How much of what they've said so far is the reality, and how much of what they've said is some sort of fiction on their part? Because we have to understand, he's the head of the Pentagon. What he reports, many people would reference, would talk about, discuss, because every time we come together, we're talking about what Pete Hegseth said. But how have you found his administration so far?

## **#Matthew**

Pete Hegseth, I think, is doing a terrific job, at least in the sense of what he was hired to do. He was hired to be a mouthpiece. He was hired to be a cheerleader. He was hired to set, establish, and maintain a narrative. And he's doing that. Is he doing it well? No. But is he doing the job he was hired for? Absolutely. He wasn't hired to oversee the Pentagon and command the forces and to, you know, change the challenge and change the bureaucracy or whatever. He wasn't hired to do that. He was hired to do exactly as we have seen him do—loyalty to the president, as well as loyalty to this crazy white nationalist belief system that he, you know, resides on the top of. So, yeah, I don't trust anything that the Pentagon says. You never should. Look, I remember the Eisenhower Media Network.

My favorite Dwight D. Eisenhower quote is from a time when he was sitting in the Oval Office, and this was as told by his military aide. He's sitting in his Oval Office, and he says, you know, I dread the day that a man sits in this chair and doesn't understand the military as I do. And what he meant by that was that the President of the United States does not need to be a strategist. He doesn't need to have been a combat veteran. He doesn't need to understand logistics. What he needs to understand is that the admirals and the generals lie all the time. And so now you've got somebody whose career as a Fox News host was built around lying, essentially, you know, running it. So I think, you know, for the job description he was hired for, he's doing his job. Is he doing it well?

## **#Speaker 03**

No.

## **#Matthew**

But is he doing his job? Yes. And so we have seen leaks coming out of the Pentagon, out of the CIA, about what their professional estimates are in terms of Iran's military capacity—how many missiles

and drones they have left, how long their economy can survive as well, you know, during this economic warfare. And that's completely at odds with what the top is saying. But this is not new or unique. This might be more grotesque. This might be more crass. The lying may be done incompetently, but it's no different than what we saw in the Afghan war, no different than what we saw in the Iraq war, no different than what we saw in the Vietnam war, where the information that was available was ignored and information that was wrong, inaccurate lies, but politically useful or that helped maintain the narrative.

That's what was used. You know, Dan Ellsberg tells a story—God rest him—that he's traveling through Vietnam with Secretary McNamara, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. And, you know, Dan Ellsberg is briefing him and basically saying, look, the war is lost, or we can't win this war. And McNamara understands that. And there's actually, in that conversation, a debate between Ellsberg and somebody else—I can't remember who it is, maybe Walt Rostow or someone like that. But anyway, McNamara agrees with Ellsberg, yes, the war—we can't win this war, basically. And then when they get off the plane and all the press is there, the journalists are asking questions.

Mr. McNamara, Secretary McNamara, how is the war going? And McNamara says, we are winning the war. Right. I mean, so this idea of them lying, of wars and lies being intertwined, that's as old as time. You know, so we shouldn't be surprised by any of this. And what you see now is, you see, I think, both the Pentagon and CIA, through all those leaks we've seen over the last few weeks, trying to—one, I think some of those men and women there really do want to keep the United States out of war because they know it's a war that can't be won, a war the United States is losing, a war that is changing things for the worse for the American empire.

So even if you're a true blue imperialist, you look at this war, if you've got objective, open, halfway smart eyes, and you say, look, I believe in the American empire, but this war is going to hurt us if we continue. It's already hurting us, and it's going to hurt us even further. So even those who are committed to the empire will say this war is not in our favor. We got to get out of it. But you also, I think, have a lot of those leaks that have been released as a means of the Pentagon, the CIA, various institutions, and various individuals throughout D.C. trying to cover their asses, right? Trying to make it so that when blame comes around for this, they can say, look, I said this wasn't going to work, or I said it wasn't working, right?

Don't blame me. So I think there's a lot of that already, a lot of positioning to fend off blame for when this thing is finally said and done, you know, and people are being held accountable. It happens. Not that anyone's ever going to be held accountable. No one's held accountable for anything. Iraq, no one's held accountable for Afghanistan, no one's held accountable for Libya, or for, you know, Vietnam, or anything. Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, right? We could just, I could just sit here, right, rattle off for the rest of the hour all the things, you know, that there should be accountability for that there hasn't been. But, uh, yeah, I think that's what you're looking at. How do you compare Donald Trump's visit to China to Putin's visit to China?

## **#Nima**

What? Because at the end, at least we had this sort of difference that they had a joint statement, the two parties, Putin and Xi. But with Donald Trump, we didn't have that. We had the statement from the White House. There was some sort of Chinese-type statement they had in China. I don't know that much about their statement, but there wasn't a joint statement by the two parties. Right now, we have that with Russia and China. And Donald Trump said that he thinks that the way China welcomed him was much better than the way they welcomed Vladimir Putin. But I don't see that much of a difference. No.

## **#Matthew**

I watched—actually, I caught Putin's arrival last night on television, and I watched it and looked. Exactly the same as Donald Trump. The same Chinese folks were lined up in the same spots they were lined up last week, you know, and the Russians were standing where the Americans were. Same cannons were fired, the same kids holding the flowers. Yeah. But Donald Trump lies about everything. I mean, like, so of course he's going to say that. I think the fact that you didn't have a joint statement is everything you need to know. Nothing happened. It was a failed summit.

Whatever intentions the Americans had coming in. And I think this summit was set up with the idea that the United States would be coming in a position of strength. The United States would be coming in, you know, being the ones who established peace in Gaza. Right. The Board of Peace and how the Board of Peace is taking over from the United Nations. The United States would be coming in following the successful kidnapping of Nicolás Maduro and the turnkey regime change that happened there, right? The United States would most especially be coming in on the backs of this victory in Iran.

And China, according to all the experts in Washington, D.C.—you know, those on congressional committees, those in think tanks, pundits on television—you know, China would be incredibly weak right now. It would have lost allies around the world. It would be cut off from energy shipments coming out of the Gulf. Politically and economically, it would be showing signs of fracture. People would be doubting, within China, the Chinese leadership. China would be feeling isolated. You know, the economy would be hobbled by the cutoff of energy supplies, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Nations would have to reconsider.

Do we want to do business with the Americans or with the Chinese? The Chinese rising star seems to be fading. The Americans are an established power, right? The world's superpower. That, I think, was what the Americans were going to be coming in on, as well as this idea of, look what our military can do. You want to fight over Taiwan? Let's fight over Taiwan. And what do you get instead? What's the opposite? What happened there? You know, I mean, so Donald Trump shows up

with his billionaire buddies. I still don't really understand the purpose of all that, dragging those people halfway around the world for a day and a half. The Chinese seemed incredibly unimpressed. They have billionaires of their own. And the deals that were supposed to happen didn't really happen.

Or if they did happen, they were much less than what was expected. You know, it was supposed to have been 500 planes the Chinese were going to purchase from Boeing. I think it's 200. You know, and same thing, the NVIDIA deal was—I'm not sure of the full details of it—but it wasn't what was hoped for, right? I mean, so, you know, Vladimir Putin shows up and they carry out 40 trade deals as a commitment to this continuation and expansion of Russian energy supplies to China. The Power of Siberia 2 is full steam ahead, right? I mean, you just saw the difference between Russia—the Russian, not just relationship, but the actuality, the reality, what came out of it—compared to the Americans.

And the Americans, you know, get back on their plane, they fly home, they put out a press release because there's no joint statement with the Chinese—a press release which contains things that are untrue. And the Americans are saying the Chinese are saying the Iranians can't have a nuclear weapon and that the Iranians must open the Strait of Hormuz. The Chinese say nothing at all about that war, about Iran, or about the Strait of Hormuz. But rather than putting out some press release with just their own unrealistic views on what happened—untrue and unrealistic and fantastical views on what happened—the Chinese sail 30 ships through the Strait of Hormuz.

### **#Speaker 03**

I mean, so I think that's another—I think that's what the world sees.

### **#Matthew**

I think the world sees that when you're talking about Beijing, when you're talking about Moscow, when you're talking about even Delhi, right, or say even now, say Islamabad, certainly talking about Tehran, you're talking about countries that do what they say, that have meaning behind their words, that aren't just issuing press releases based upon what they want the world to think. They're just doing what they need the world to understand. Not even—they don't care about me. So I think there's a lot with that. The other thing I'll say about that overall was you had Arachi show up. Then you had Trump. Then you had Putin. I mean, the world's attention is on China. I'm here in North Carolina.

I'm stuck having to ingest mostly American media for the most part, but I imagine if I was around the world in English-speaking media—I should say, English-language media—if I was around the world, though, reading in languages other than English, listening and watching in languages other than English, I have a feeling that the way the world is viewing this is the question of, what are the Chinese going to do? And many Americans are saying that too. Many Europeans are saying that. But here you have, again, we've talked about this many times, this idea that this war is the break

between the 20th century and the 21st century, the break between the American imperial order and the multipolar world. And I think this summit was just one more example of, you know, the details, the colors, the trees in the forest, right, that explain that break.

## **#Nima**

Donald Trump says that I'm right now at 99% in Israel. I could run for Prime Minister.

## **#Matthew**

I do agree with that. I do. Honest to God, I agree with that. I've been there twice, in 2017 and then in 2024 after Donald Trump won the election. And the Israelis love Donald Trump. I swear to God, I was on a bus going through an Israeli checkpoint. An Israeli soldier gets on, he walks through, checks passports, does what he does, and before he gets off the bus, he says, "Make America great again." Right? I mean, that was our joke when we were in Palestine the whole time — that we should always have a Make America Great Again hat or a T-shirt handy. And if you came across, you know, settlers, put on the Make America Great Again hat and they would know that you're OK. Right? You're not wearing "Free Palestine," you're wearing "Make America Great Again." And the settlers would probably bring you in a house and feed you and everything. But yeah, I do believe that. I do think if Donald Trump ran in Israel, he would be prime minister.

## **#Nima**

But it doesn't help him in the United States. We know that. More than 65% of American people are against the support that the United States is giving to Israel. That's why they had to spend more than \$30 million in the primary in Kentucky to go against Thomas Massie. He lost it. But I think it doesn't mean that they're winning, because it shows how hard they have to work to win against someone like Massie. Because it wasn't just the money. It was the president of the United States, the vice president, Pete Hegseth, Stephen Miller, and all of them together — they attacked Thomas Massie to remove him, you know.

## **#Matthew**

Right. And the American media as well. You know, every other question to Massie was, you know, why are you an anti-Semite, you know, coming from the American media? So absolutely, it shows they are afraid. It also shows, too, the reality of American politics, the reality of our electoral system here, how it can be controlled through money. I mean, in American elections, 95% of the time, the person who spends more money wins the election. That's the way it works here. And then the reality of Donald Trump utilizing a personality cult — you can get the results he wants. And I think that's the lesson Democrats are going to take from this going forward.

I don't think the Democratic Party, even though almost their entire membership is on Thomas Massie's side on the issues of Israel and Palestine, their lesson is going to be, look how much money was spent, right? And that got Massie beat — Massie, who was very popular not just locally but nationally. I forget, I think he was in his seventh term, but you know, very popular back home. But with that amount of money and the endorsement of Donald Trump, and the way American primaries work, and the way the American media works, you can get somebody out of office in a way that maybe wasn't going to be possible before. Look, I worked a lot with the late Walter Jones, and Mr. Jones was one of the Republicans who was against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He started out very much in support of them. He represented Camp Lejeune, the largest Marine Corps base in the United States.

And he started going to a lot of funerals for Marines and sailors killed in Iraq. And he had a realization of, what is this for? And then the understanding that this war is a war built on lies. And so he opposed the wars for the remainder of his life. And the Republican Party hated him. John Boehner, the Speaker of the House, hated Walter Jones. And they tried to get him out of office every election. They primaried him. But they didn't have the money that the Israel lobby can bring.

And they didn't have a cult of personality that Donald Trump can bring. So, I mean, what you're witnessing here is those, I think, fundamentals of American politics — of identity and of money that wins elections. And unfortunately, I think that's what the Democrats are going to take away from this. They're going to take away that we need some type of a figure, some type of identity similar to Donald Trump. Not the same, not the same con man talk, you know, television show host, but someone who people identify with over television — you know, not over substance, but over, you know, whatever demographics or whatnot. But, you know, the other thing, too, is that like, OK, we can't go against the Israel lobby here.

And so the Democratic Party can say all they want, but as long as they keep electing Chuck Schumer and Hakeem Jeffries as their leaders in Congress, as the DNC, the Democratic National Committee, refuses to support candidates who have pro-Palestine views, I think you're going to see, for the next couple of election cycles, no real budge on issues of Palestine and Israel in the United States. Now, I think that will crack. And I think by the time you start getting to 2032, 2034, you'll see a shift in the Democratic Party, and the Democratic Party will break away from Israel because Hakeem Jeffries and Chuck Schumer and those types, and the DNC leadership like Ken Martin, will be no more. They'll be replaced.

Now, not be replaced by, you know, people of any integrity or any type of real purpose in supporting working families throughout the United States, committed to any type of progressive principles. But there'll be people who understand the politics of the Palestine-Israel issue and who move the Democratic Party finally in that direction in order to gain some electoral victories. But I think it's

going to take at least two or three more election cycles before you see that fully. I think you'll see a candidate like AOC run — like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez — who is supposedly pro-Palestine, who is not, not in the sense of anyone who appreciates what those words mean.

But you'll see her pull punches on that and try and, you know, but I think, again, by 2032, 2036, in the presidential elections, you'll see anti-Zionist Democratic presidential candidates and the majority of the Democratic caucus in Congress being anti-Zionist. But until it gets to that point where the electoral benefit is not in doubt, so basically the oldest Democrats die, you have a commitment by the Democratic Party to Israel, even though it's in gross, gross violation of what the party actually believes. But also, too, this is a party that believes in Medicare for All, that believes in, um,

## **#Speaker 04**

switching to clean renewable energy.

## **#Matthew**

And who does this party listen to? Its members? No, it listens to the health insurance companies and to the fossil fuel companies. So until the oldest Democrats die out, then you'll start to see a shift. And for the Republicans, I think it just shows that there is no good sense whatsoever to cross either Donald Trump or the Israel lobby. It wasn't just Massie who lost. It was also Bill Cassidy down in Louisiana. And also, I'm blanking on his name, the governor down in Georgia. But those weren't issues. Cassidy, Louisiana, and Georgia weren't along the lines of Israel-Palestine. They were just men who didn't go along 100% with Donald Trump. Now, what's interesting, I think, to wrap it up with this, is that you saw in the U.S. Senate yesterday the War Powers Resolution passed for the first time after the eighth attempt or whatever.

And it had four Republicans supporting it. And one of those was Bill Cassidy, the outgoing Louisiana senator who lost his primary on Tuesday. And, you know, interesting that seven rounds of voting on the War Powers Resolution before the election, he kept voting in support of this war, so in support of Israel. But now that he's out of power, now that he won't be able to run for re-election, now that he'll be back home next January unemployed, then he voted for the War Powers Resolution and against the Israel lobby's interests. So I thought that was a pretty stark example of the reality of how the American political system works.

## **#Nima**

There is a lot of confusion in the United States. Many people don't know if they're to the left or the right, don't know how to vote. Because let's assume that we have some sort of third party in the United States. Who's going to be the face of that? Is that going to be Tucker Carlson, Candace Owens, someone like that? Because many people are arguing, who is AOC? Who are these people? These people are not representing us. They're happy with some sort of social programs and all of

that. But when it comes to an issue like Palestine and what you've mentioned, it's so important for many people. They don't even represent these people. That's why they're talking about the people to the left, progressive people voting.

They want to vote for someone like, I don't know, Tucker Carlson or Candace Owens. This is a huge sort of thinking that is happening. Many people don't know what to do—to the right, to the left, to the center. They see Tucker Carlson and Candace Owens, and these people are not happy with Donald Trump and his administration. They're totally against what Donald Trump is doing in the Middle East, and they're criticizing Israel for what they're doing in Gaza, in Lebanon, and in the Middle East. And on the other hand, they don't see anything of that sort coming out of AOC and these people. Even Bernie Sanders, so much—he recently is getting better. But you remember when this was started, he didn't mention any of it. He didn't mention genocide. He didn't mention any of this.

## **#Matthew**

No, the Democratic Party is saddled with, is burdened with, the very real sense that it's disingenuous. And you'll hear this from Americans, like, yeah, the Republicans are terrible, but at least they don't lie about it. You know, and so I think that is going to be a big problem for the Democrats for the next couple of election cycles until they can produce someone who is not disingenuous, who comes across as authentic, you know. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has a story of being a bartender and a waitress and working her way up. You know, elements of that are true, elements are not true, and that she got into office by unseating Joe Crowley, who was the number three Democrat in the House.

She ran essentially an insurgent guerrilla campaign. You know, there are elements of that that are true, elements that are not true. She was also backed by Justice Democrats and had a lot of money behind her and a lot of help behind her. And, you know, she came into office with this idea that she was going to be a champion for working families, a champion for the middle class and the working class. If you live in the United States, you understand that 60, 65 percent of American families live paycheck to paycheck. So what's the difference now at this point between being working class and middle class? I know there is a difference. Don't get me wrong.

But the reality is that the things that Ocasio-Cortez said she was going to run on—I mean, this is a person who came into office and said that she would rather be a one-term congressperson than have a career in Congress if it forces her to shift her values, forces her to shift her priorities, right? And so she came in advocating for things that Americans need, things that would really help people, and things that are very popular in the U.S.—so Medicare for All, the idea of living wages, child care, things like that, as well as getting the United States out of foreign wars and putting that money here to work in our communities.

And you don't see that. You see essentially almost immediate abandonment of her views on Medicare for All, her pushing for Medicare for All. Certainly clean renewable energy is something that I don't think she's speaking about. You know, issues regarding living wages, raising the minimum wage. Joe Biden was strictly against that. I mean, all of these things that supposedly were her platform, that she came into office on in 2018, that resounded with the American people and that would make a real difference for Americans, particularly right now when the American economy is really, really teetering. She just hasn't followed up on it.

Now, she also has played it very well, and her name is on the list of likely 2028 presidential contenders for the Democratic Party. And if you look, you see her all over the country. I just actually saw on my Instagram yesterday or today an ad from her campaign pop up on my feed announcing that she was going to be in Missouri or someplace like that. Right. So, you know, but there's such a disingenuousness behind her. You know, I mean, she, you know, and then the others—and she's the best one they've got to offer. Who else do you have besides that? You know, who at least appears to have the capacity, have the ability to have national presidential campaigns at this point? You're talking about, like, Pete Buttigieg.

You're talking about Wes Moore. You're talking about Gavin Newsom, Gretchen Whitmer, J.B. Pritzker, Shapiro out of Pennsylvania. I mean, one after the next that either is a complete, no-nonsense corporate Democrat, or is a corporate Democrat trying to sell themselves as a progressive. Oh, Kamala Harris, how could I forget? She's going to run. Things are going to be great. They really are, you know? I mean, so if you're the average voter and you're not a "vote blue no matter who," if your identity isn't tied to the Democratic Party, if you just want this country to be better, and then you look at these charlatans, at these frauds, at these phonies that the Democratic Party puts forward, these people who are going to be throwing crumbs on the ground for you and telling you it's cake, then of course, well, at least the Republicans let me know what they're going to do.

At least the Republicans aren't lying about it. At least the Republicans, again, they may be horrendous. I don't agree with them. But they don't make me physically sick to have to sit and listen to their hypocrisy, right, to their nonsense, to their lies. Yeah, and so your question then of who's going to fill that gap, I think this is very, you know, points being made about Tucker Carlson. And I have no idea if he's interested in running or whatever, but I have seen on X this conversation about him. And, you know, the podcast host Brianna Joy Gray, who I think is the best political commentator in the United States.

But Brianna Joy Gray, you know, her commentary on Tucker Carlson is in line with what I believe, you know, that at least with Carlson, he may be grotesque when it comes to his views on immigration and, you know, or things in the past that he said, or things now that he said that you don't agree with. You know, I remember during the 2024 campaign he was calling Donald Trump "daddy," and it was incredibly creepy, right? Incredibly creepy. But, uh, and I don't agree with Carlson on those things, but you have this notion that, well, at least he says what he means, and at

least he goes out there and acts that way, you know? And he was just on Israeli television, and, you know, telling the Israeli television, "Your regime murders children," you know, very clear, very, you know, uh... So who fills that void on the left?

Who gives American working families a populist option? Who provides some opportunity to have American real concerns addressed in the 2028 election? I don't know. I mean, I don't know. I don't know of anyone out there who, you know, you're going to get people who are going to point to Ocasio-Cortez, but she's disingenuous. She will sell out whoever needs to be sold out. And we saw that with the way she sold out the Palestinians, the way at the 2024 National Convention she said Kamala Harris is working tirelessly for a ceasefire.

She lied when she had the spotlight. She had a primetime audience at that convention, and she lied. She had the opportunity to say something that may have saved thousands of lives, and she chose not to because of what was best for herself. So, I mean, if you trust her, you're a fool. You know, just as Adam Smith was basically saying to Admiral Cooper, if I trust you, I'm a fool. If you trust any of these Democratic politicians at this point, maybe some will come out that we don't know. But, you know, you're a fool. You're a fool.

## **#Nima**

Matt, we know that most of these interceptors for the THAAD system, for the Patriot system, are produced in the United States for Israel. But when it comes to Iron Dome, who's producing these batteries for Israel? Because yesterday we learned that three of them were hit by FPV drones. And today we learned those three were in the southern part of Lebanon. Today we learned two of them were hit in the northern part of Israel by FPV drones. And I was wondering how many of them they have and who's producing those batteries? Because the way that they're hitting with FPV drones, these batteries, you have to have some sort of, you know, production line or something of that sort to replace these batteries. And who's gonna do that? Is Israel the one producing them?

## **#Matthew**

Well, you also had that explosion at one of the Israeli—I'm blanking on the name—Tomer. Yes, Tomer. You had that explosion. And they don't make components, or they're not involved with Iron Dome. I think they're involved with the Arrow missile, but then also some other missile system. They make the motors for them, if I remember right. So then you have this issue of how big that damage was, you know, and they're trying to produce as many of these weapons as they can. And so with the Iron Dome, when you see that many taken out, the idea is that your air defense systems are supposed to be protected. Almost the idea being that nothing should be more protected than your air defense systems.

Uh, but the Lebanese Hezbollah use of drones has so upended things. This is very similar to the way the Iranians have upended things too, destroying billion-dollar American radars with \$10,000 or

\$20,000 Shahed drones. I mean, this is an even more extreme example. And I don't know what the production rates for the Iron Dome are. I believe they are locally manufactured in Israel, although there was assistance with the design and some of the production from the United States. It was a joint effort to some degree, but I don't know, in terms of the actual production, if they're all produced in Israel by itself. I know there's also some European involvement in it, but it's a problem. It's a problem.

I mean, these are very complex, very complicated, involved weapons and munitions to produce that rely heavily on critical minerals. That's why it'd be so easy for, you know, the Chinese especially, to shut this war down—it would just be to blockade critical mineral, critical metal, critical magnet shipments. But, you know, it brings up a real problem, a real issue for the Israelis, and by extension for the Americans. They are essentially fighting an enemy that has equaled the dominance of American warfare for the last decades. In the 1970s, you had this revolution in military affairs, and one of those things was basically about the creation of high-tech weaponry that gave the Americans an advantage over their adversaries, right?

And it's the whole idea that if the Americans or their allies or proxies can see something, they can kill it. And the Americans had this advantage for decades. And now we see that that advantage is gone. And that completely upends American warfighting, you know, Western warfighting—the manner in which the United States carries out its campaigns, its necessity or its need, I guess, for safe rear areas that they can launch campaigns from, that they can resupply from, where their logistics hubs can be, their command and control nodes can be, as well as for if they're actually involved in a physical campaign like Iraq or Afghanistan—the requirement to have safe bases, safe garrisons for troops—that's gone.

That is gone. And we're seeing that with the Israelis. A story out of—I don't know if it was Haaretz or Channel 12 or 14 or one of those in Israel—was saying that Israeli operations have been curtailed 80% by Hezbollah drones. You know, essentially, this was the Israelis saying the directive is, in Lebanon, you don't move during the day, you know? And so you've taken away this great advantage that the Americans, the Israelis, any other allies, their proxies had over adversaries—that the revolution in military affairs that began in the 1970s has become democratized. The entire world has that now.

And you have an American warfighting doctrine, culture, the way the forces are laid out, the way the forces are equipped, dependent upon that American dominance in surveillance and in precision targeting. And the idea now that they don't have that, that completely, again, upends American warfighting. You know, this notion that the United States had to evacuate all of its bases throughout the Middle East, with the exception, I guess, of the bases in Israel and up in Kurdistan, in Iraq. The reality that the American aircraft carriers couldn't get closer than 1,000 kilometers away from the Iranian coast.

An F-18 can go about 400 or 500 kilometers with a full combat load on it, right? I mean, all these things, and then just the reality of what the Israelis are going through in Lebanon, faced with these Hezbollah FPV drones, not just taking out frontline combat units. And clearly these drones make it so that there is no frontline. I mean, we thought we dealt with that in Vietnam or in Iraq or Afghanistan, but the reality was, you know, say in Iraq and Afghanistan on our bases, we were mostly safe. We took indirect fire, mortars, and rockets, but it was often inaccurate. It was limited in its volume, and it was very susceptible to our counter-battery fire. Uh, but you know, now, uh, no.

I mean, if the Iraqi resistance or the Afghan resistance had these types of drones, both for surveillance and attack, the American occupations, which I took part in, in both Iraq and Afghanistan, would have been untenable. We would not have been able to sustain those occupations if the Iraqi resistance and the Afghan Taliban had the weaponry, the munitions, the drones that Hezbollah is demonstrating in southern Lebanon. And so this idea of no safe spaces, no rear areas, the psychological toll on the Israeli forces who are already overextended, already exhausted, is going to be immense. And again, they come out of a culture, they come with a doctrine, and they're equipped with weaponry and formations and battle plans that don't allow for this.

You know, I mean, so what we're seeing here with these FPVs, and to your point about them taking out Iron Dome—wow, that is incredible. You know, in the sense of, like, what does that do? I mean, you're talking about using a—what do these FPV drones cost? Three hundred dollars, five hundred dollars—to take out a system that is integral to Israel's strategic plan, right? Because if the drones can take out the Iron Dome, that's not just an issue of losing air defense coverage. That's a psychological blow on the Israeli public—the idea that they may no longer be protected from Hezbollah or Iranian or Iraqi or Ansar Allah missile and drone strikes. Right.

And so now you see these drones, and this is what you want to get with any weapon system. And this is where you see a real change in terms of warfare. And again, we talk about this every time. This is 20th century versus 21st century. You have basically a cheap piece of kit, a very cheap weapon—\$300, \$500, whatever—that requires very little training, that does both surveillance and attack, and records it, so it gives you proof of what you did. Because I saw that—you read this thing, they destroyed an Iron Dome. Okay, maybe they did, maybe they didn't. Then you see the video.

Well, they destroyed that Iron Dome. You know what I mean? So what that then translates to is that you have a weapon that works across all lines of warfare, all levels of warfare. It's a tactical weapon, but it disrupts the enemy's operations. It's at the operational level. It disrupts the entire plan of attack, the entire concept of operations. Again, the Israelis are saying we can't operate during the daytime because of the drones. So on the operational level, it's incredible. And then on a strategic level, you're hitting things like Iron Dome that are necessary to prevent larger attacks on the Israeli public.

And then since that's no longer there, now you're in the political level of warfare, right, where you're actually having an effect on the enemy's morale, on their will, right, on their public support for the war, having a psychological effect there from a weapon that, again, is \$300. I mean, so you really see here this idea of 21st century warfare being played out against a 20th century opponent, you know, whether it's against the empire itself, against the American Navy and Air Force directly or through its allies, through its proxies like the IDF and Southern Lebanon.

And, you know, this is revolutionary. This is, you know, a transformational, and this is historic. And, you know, I don't know if that is appreciated in Washington, in London, in Brussels, in Tel Aviv. The response has been, we're going to do this project and this program, and we're going to spend this money, and we're going to create a counter-drone system. And yeah, great. They'll have some better nets, and they'll have some electro-optical/infrared cameras that can see the drones against the sky. And then they'll have miniature rockets that can blah, blah, blah, blah.

And then 30, 45, 60 days later, Hezbollah will counter those countermeasures with their own, you know, those countermeasures, and so it goes on, right? But, you know, this is revolutionary here, and this is why the Israeli plan for conquest of southern Lebanon should be seen as in doubt, as well as overall the American Empire's wars around the world. As I said the other day, you know, looking at it this way, particularly through what we're seeing carried out in this warfare by both the Iranians and Hezbollah, you know, this could be replicated around the world. And so, you know, bad days ahead or bad times ahead for the American Empire.

## **#Nima**

Matt, how the case of Israel for most is changing the Israeli calculation. You remember before all these wars started, we had the Abraham Accords, we had the talks about normalization of relationships between Israel and GCC countries, Israel and Turkey. Right now, Saudi Arabia is talking about a non-aggression pact with Iran. Yeah. And how the situation is changing in the Middle East.

## **#Matthew**

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, it's, it's, this is—you know, I think we'll see it too, Nima, on a larger level, a global level as well. Not immediately, but this—again, the world is watching. The world has witnessed these two or three summits, right? Arachi, Trump, Putin in Beijing. I mean, like, the world is watching this. The world is seeing this. They see Harold Cooper unable to explain what his boss, the President of the United States, wants him to do in the Middle East and how he's going to do it, and, you know, they see all this. They see the reality of warfare now, the way that the American military is not overextended, their performance is not underwhelming, but also, too, that they're getting beat. You can defeat these guys, right? And then when it comes to the—so then you're talking about the order of things.

And, yeah, we're seeing shifting alliances, or the creation of alliances or relationships—maybe you want to call it that—in the Middle East that were not as clear as before. I mean, before this war started, you saw this conversation about this Pakistan-Saudi-Turk-Egyptian axis that was forming. And, you know, certainly you have this agreement between the Pakistanis and the Saudis. They signed a deal. The Saudis are claiming that this deal with the Pakistanis means they're underneath the Pakistani nuclear umbrella. I don't know if the Pakistanis have verified that or not, but that's a big deal. But also, too, we saw in the past week the Pakistanis send a squadron of their fighter aircraft, the JF-17, the Chinese-built aircraft that the Pakistanis used, from what we understand, pretty successfully against the Indians a year ago.

They sent a couple of squadrons of drones, and they sent an air defense battery as well—8,000 soldiers in total, I believe. You know, that's a big deal. You're right. I mean, and this is the country that borders Iran sending this to Saudi Arabia. What does that mean? What is that? What are the Pakistanis saying to the Iranians? What are they saying to the Americans? But then also, too, what is the deal between the Pakistanis and Saudis? Is this giving the Saudis the ability to say to the Americans, if the Americans want to restart the war, you're doing it without us, we're not involved? Right. And we've seen that indication already because Project Freedom, Donald Trump's plan to open up the Straits of Hormuz that lasted 36 hours—that stopped, that collapsed.

That didn't happen because the Saudis and the Kuwaitis said, you can't use our airspace, you can't use our bases for Project Freedom. You know, that was something that, three months ago, we would have thought was impossible. There's no way the Saudis or the Kuwaitis are telling us no. And they did. And the reason why Project Freedom hasn't started again—I mean, there's probably several reasons—but, you know, one of the reasons is because the Saudis and the Kuwaitis would say no again. You know, I mean, so, OK, are you looking at the Saudis breaking from the American alliance here? Right, breaking out of the American empire.

And then supposedly, at least according to this week, there's the possibility of this Saudi-Pakistani agreement bringing in Turkey and Qatar. Right. I mean, so then you have this alliance, right, this bloc of the Pakistanis, the Saudis, the Turks, and the Qataris. That's pretty formidable. I mean, you're talking about two countries with very large, very capable militaries—the Turks and the Pakistanis—with two very wealthy countries. I mean, like, so the possibility's there for that bloc being not a regional power but some type of world presence. Absolutely. I don't think they're going to build a fleet, a Great White Fleet, sail around the world or anything.

But yeah, it is. OK, what happened? What happened to the Egyptians in that equation? Well, the Egyptians supposedly sent one or two squadrons of their aircraft to the Emiratis. And as you've seen this Pakistani-Saudi relationship, you've seen this Israeli-Emirati relationship. And of course, the proximity to Israel, the long relationship now of the Egyptians and the Israelis playing ball together. You know, the fact you've got the dictator Sisi in charge and the Emiratis' own view of themselves breaking away from the Gulf arrangement and being a leader, being a dominant power and seeing that future through the Israelis and the Americans.

So now do you have then an American-backed Israel-Emirati-Egyptian alliance, right? I mean, so this is all. And then King Hussein is going to go where the Americans and the Israelis tell him to go, as we know that. What's going to happen with the al-Qaeda boss and his team of jihadists and Salafists in Damascus? We'll see. The Iraqi state is a state that is ready to be torn apart. The Americans control all the money. The Iranians have serious political influence. It's a state that has never healed from the American wars, from the American invasion and occupation. It's a state where the Israelis are killing Iraqi soldiers as they want.

And the state is not answering to it. And the people are saying, what the hell is going on? Right. I mean, you have a state that has shut in essentially all its production, gas and oil production. So, you know, if they could get the money from the Americans, there's no money anyway. I mean, so you just look at all this. We could talk about the Kurds as well. We could talk about, you know, where the Bahrainis would go, the Kuwaitis would go. You know, I mean, the only ones, I think, with any sense in their head, trying to keep things from blowing up, are the Omanis, I believe. But I do, you know, I would say if I was advising anyone, if I was going to give an attaboy to anyone, it would be to the Pakistanis, the Saudis, and then the Turks and Qataris.

If that's the block, that's the alliance they form, as I understand it. Maybe I've got it completely wrong. But if that's the way it's going, then I would say they're doing the right thing for themselves, for their own interests. That sticking with the American empire is a dead path. And then, or the hope that the Russians or the Chinese or someone are going to be your best buddies, are going to be on your side, etc. No, I wouldn't trust them either. So, you know, and where does that leave Iran? But now then this idea, as you brought up, of a détente, which we had seen before.

We had seen this Chinese-brokered détente between the Saudis and the Iranians, the establishment of diplomatic relations. I mean, this is going back a couple of years now. But this proposal by the Saudis to create a security accord within the Gulf, within the Middle East, similar to what happened in the 1970s with the Helsinki Accords between essentially NATO and the Warsaw Pact, people looking back say that was a very good thing. That actually brought down tensions. That allowed for arms control talks to happen. That established the OSCE. That gave some type of monitoring and trust and confidence between the various countries, let alone the two blocs.

So if you do have these blocs set up, then something like a Helsinki Accord for the Middle East would certainly, certainly be necessary, because if you're going to have a bloc with Iran and the Axis of Resistance, a Pakistani, Saudi, Turk, Qatari bloc, or whatever that looks like, Emirati, Israeli, Egyptian, U.S. bloc, how do they coexist? And so you would need some type of mechanism, I think, to have some degree of trust and confidence and communication between them. So we'll see. I mean, maybe that's all fantasy. Maybe that's all just speculation. But you can see how that reordering is occurring. But certainly, I think this idea of the United States being in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East as it once was is certainly over. I think you'll see a move to the Emiratis, Egypt, Jordan, and Israel. That will be where the Americans are based.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. Thank you so much, Matthew, for being with us today.

## **#Matthew**

Great pleasure as always. All right. Thanks, Nima. And again, Nima is always too modest to say it. So hit like, subscribe, send this to people, you know, help build it. Yeah, yeah, help build Nima's. You're close to half a million now, aren't you?

## **#Nima**

Yeah, you're getting close. That's fantastic.

## **#Matthew**

Yeah. Okay. Well, thanks, Nima. Thank you so much, Matthew.