

Ritter: Iran STRIKES Kuwait, FIRES on US Tanker

Former UN weapons inspector and US Marine Corps Intelligence Officer Scott Ritter joins the show to discuss the latest round of strikes between Iran and the US as Trump & Israel's war of aggression escalates to a point of no return. Follow Scott: <https://scottritter.com/> PATREON.COM /DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #iranwar #trump

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. As you can see, I am joined by Scott Ritter, former U.N. Weapons Inspector and U.S. Marine Corps Intelligence Officer, geopolitical analyst, and author. Scott, good to see you again. Thanks. Thanks for having me. Yes, everyone, hit the like button as we come on, and we're just going to get started with the latest developments. Scott, first, your comments on what is a war of narratives in many ways, but there has been kinetic activity overnight, and both sides, the U.S. and Iran, are saying different things about it.

First, we have the CENTCOM narrative of what has happened—another ceasefire violation. But according to CENTCOM, it is Iran that has committed what they say is an egregious ceasefire violation by retaliating against—well, this is what Iran says—but they're saying that Iran fired a missile at a U.S. air base in Kuwait. But this is only after the United States struck Bandar Abbas because Iran had sent drones at U.S. naval vessels near the Strait of Hormuz, claiming, once again, self-defense. Iran has a very different narrative of last night's events.

They say that they were actually intercepting tankers, including a U.S. tanker that was attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz with their transponders off. They stopped two vessels and forced two to turn back. And then Iran says that they fired on Kuwait as a warning that the strikes on Bandar Abbas that the U.S. conducted were not going to be without further retaliation—a warning that this could get even worse. So, Scott, what's going on in this war right now? There's supposed to be a so-called ceasefire, even maybe a memorandum of understanding on the way if the United States continues striking Iran despite it. What's happening here?

#Scott Ritter

Well, I mean, I've been saying this week, and I've been saying for some time, the United States is agreement-incapable. I don't think there's going to be an agreement, a ceasefire agreement, a formalized agreement, especially one that can pass muster in the United States Senate or become a Security Council resolution. Of course, that's the goal, that's the objective. But the United States is agreement-incapable. Even if we come up with an understanding, you know, the United States has deadlines. For instance, things have to happen at this point, at this point. And between now and then, Donald Trump will change his mind and seek to renegotiate because Donald Trump is not in the—you know, he's not interested in an agreement or a treaty anymore.

He is interested in the deal, and the deal is a completely different thing. A deal is, you know, a one-way street. A deal is what's good for Donald Trump. A deal is something that could be broken at any time because it becomes a bad deal, and then you have to replace it with a good deal. He can seem to have a deal, but then he finds out, if you're talking to people, it's really a bad deal, so he reneges on it. I mean, it has to be very frustrating to be negotiating with the United States at this point in time because we can't be consistent in anything. The Iranians have been very consistent from the get-go on what their demands are, what their requirements are.

And Iran does get to dictate because, after all, they didn't lose the war. We did. So that's where we're at. What's going to happen? Hard to say. I don't see an outbreak of full-scale conflict. The United States can't survive economically. Already we're in dire straits economically. Iran will collect its tolls. I know Scott Besson, the Secretary of the Treasury, just sent out a warning to both Oman and Iran that this will not be tolerated. But I don't think Oman and Iran really care what Scott Besson thinks or what the United States Treasury thinks. The bottom line is, Iran has a death grip on the transit of oil through the Strait of Hormuz, and nothing the United States says, does, wishes, or desires is going to change that.

The only thing that will change that is the United States adhering to, you know, an agreement which it's incapable of entering into. So I think there's going to be an agreement in principle on certain things, you know, whether it's the lifting of the blockade, whether it's the removal of U.S. forces, backing off, something will happen. But, you know, at the end of the day, Iran's not going to give the United States what it wants on nuclear weapons. That's just the reality of it. And Iran's not going to stop charging an environmental tax in the Strait of Hormuz. That's just the reality of it.

And Donald Trump, at this point in time, has said these are deal-breakers. So I think that's where we're at right now. We're just seeing the living proof of the fact that the Trump administration, the United States as a whole, is literally agreement-incapable. And I don't think there's going to be a formal peace treaty. Now, I'd love to be proven wrong on this. I'd love nothing more than, you know, tomorrow they've signed it and it's great. It goes to the Senate, they approve it, it becomes a treaty, it goes to the Security Council, and it's wonderful. I just don't see that happening because I don't think Donald Trump's capable of allowing that to happen.

#Danny

And it appears incapable of getting out of this war that you said, and I agree with you, that the U.S. has lost. But yet Iran seems to be doing everything it can to remain within the bounds of this current ceasefire, while also showing the United States in this last missile strike toward a U.S. airbase in Kuwait that it has the ability to continue onward. And it's only been promising this since the ceasefire, which was nearly two months ago now, was established. So what explains then, Scott, why the Trump administration, why the United States CENTCOM, why they keep on with these, I don't know what you call them, pinprick strikes, these kind of like striking Iran and then pulling back and saying, no, no, no, this is all within the bounds of the ceasefire? Actually, sometimes they're claiming self-defense. They are instituting a blockade thousands upon thousands of miles from their shores.

#Scott Ritter

First of all, there's never been a ceasefire. I mean, Iran would like there to be a ceasefire, but there hasn't been a ceasefire. There's been maneuvering. We have an ongoing act of war, which is the blockade. How can you have a ceasefire when the United States is engaged in an act of war? A ceasefire normally doesn't exist with the continued threatening of force. A ceasefire means a ceasefire, not a temporary halt in hostilities while you maintain that you're going to strike at any time. So there's never been a ceasefire, and I don't think there ever will be a ceasefire. I think the United States will continue to maintain, you know, the potential for hostilities at any time. I do think that at some point in time, we're going to have to basically withdraw. We can't afford this military posture much longer. Just understand how bad it's gotten. We've run out of operational funds.

So a heavy brigade of armor out of Texas that was supposed to rotate into Poland as part of the rotational force was stopped. PTAC said, stop it. We don't have the money to send them. You know, Donald Trump then came out with a statement and said, we're going to send 5,000 troops from Germany. Congress said, really? On whose budget? And who approved this? Poland is going, really? We didn't sign a status of forces agreement. There is no treaty relationship that allows this. I mean, so, you know, Trump lives in his own fantasy world, which is half the problem. But the reality is we have an unsustainable force posture. We can't afford to do a major escalation because it'll end up very badly for us and our allies. And Trump can't accept the terms that are being dictated by Iran. And so we're going to have this never-never, you know, soft ceasefire for some time, for the foreseeable future.

#Danny

And we have now two, and I'm curious on your thoughts about why exactly. It seems like they go together. This happened also last weekend. There have been two U.S. strikes in the last week. And prior, last weekend, there was a similar development occurring where everyone was talking about a memorandum of understanding about to be signed. Trump himself, he got together all the Gulf

countries. It was about to be signed. Everything was great. And then suddenly the U.S. was doing exactly what it did last night, which is hitting Iran in a very limited manner, pulling back and saying everything is still within the bounds of the ceasefire. And today we have a similar development. Barak Ravid, Axios' and I guess the Western mainstream media's favorite former Unit 8200 Mossad operative, now turned so-called reporter, says that the U.S. and Iran have actually reached a deal, but now it needs Trump's final approval. And then Iran has said, absolutely not. The Mosabeh Khamenei has not approved of any such thing.

#Scott Ritter

Why do this? Is this market manipulation?

#Danny

Is it something else? What's going on with this pattern, it seems like? It almost feels like an information operation that we've talked about on prior shows.

#Scott Ritter

Again, I hate to smile and say this, but it just has to be said. Normal geopolitical analysis is derived from rational thought and fact-based truth. We know politics can be played. You can slant things some way, you can emphasize things over others, but at the end of the day, the sky is blue and the grass is green. And there it shall be. Donald Trump doesn't live in this world. Donald Trump lives in his own world. First of all, Donald Trump is not your average American president. An average American president respects the office of the presidency and respects the Constitution that creates and legitimizes the work of the U.S. president. Donald Trump is a self-proclaimed dictator.

Just go to Davos and you'll hear him say, I am a dictator. A man who says the rule of law doesn't matter, only what he personally believes in, his sense of personal morality, which is laughable. And this is a man who operates as a cult of personality. He literally surrounds himself with sycophants. That's it. This is a man who has erected a gold monument to himself in Mar-a-Lago, had religious figures come in and pray through this monument to... a god. We don't know if it is the God, because they're sort of replicating what the Hebrews did in the Old Testament, where they abandoned God and they worshiped the erected golden idols to other gods, and they got smote, smitten, whatever term you want to use.

You know, Melania, don't look over your shoulder because you'll turn into a pillar of salt. You know, we are dealing with a man who is not well. In fact, I think he can be diagnosed, and has been diagnosed by board-certified psychiatrists and psychologists, as suffering from a malignant form of narcissistic personality disorder. That's a mental illness that manifests itself in antisocial behavior.

And this explains what Donald Trump's doing here. We're dealing with a mentally ill man. Literally, a mentally ill man. So mentally ill, in fact, that if he committed a crime and was brought to trial, he could be set free on grounds of insanity because he is literally insane.

This man doesn't operate in the normal realm. He's all about himself. It's all about the Don. It's all about the brand. It's all about the legacy of the family. All the traditional things that a politician at that level should care about, like the collective good of the American people, the security of the American people, of our allies, he doesn't consider any of this, none of this. It's only what benefits the Donald. And that's why it's almost impossible to, A, explain what he's doing, and, B, predict what he's going to do. How do you predict the actions of an insane man?

And the President of the United States is, from a legal medical perspective, insane. Go to the DSM-5. That's the manual that these professionals use. Go to narcissistic personality disorder, and you'll see two things. One, I think there are five criteria that have to be met to be diagnosed from a distance, but you're allowed to diagnose it from a distance. It's one of the few mental disorders that can be diagnosed from a distance. Normally, you need to bring yourself before somebody and be examined directly. But through observation, the diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder can be made and has been made. So the president is a mentally ill man.

#Danny

And, you know, with narcissism, of course, comes a bit of a detachment from reality, or maybe a lot of detachment from reality. But reality still exists, and one of the realities that the United States—at least the military, the empire, so to speak—is going to be struggling with, this is from the Center for Strategic and International Studies. They published a report recently about what exactly is going on inside the U.S. military, that the Iran war has essentially done, which is completely depleted it. And here are just a few of those reports.

So we have the THAAD, the Tomahawk missile, the Patriots, the JASSMs. All of these are estimated to take upwards of three to four years to get back just to pre-war levels. And that's assuming that there are no other wars engaged in by the United States under Trump or otherwise. And that's unfortunately a highly unlikely scenario. So maybe you can help us understand these numbers and why the United States—it seems like the Trump administration doesn't seem to care, the Pentagon even, people around the Trump administration—they don't seem to care about this. But how does it, why does it matter?

#Scott Ritter

Well, first of all, if you put that form up, we should look at it more carefully because you see estimated use in the Iran war—probably higher numbers than that—but that's the estimated use. And you take a look at deliveries in 2026. That's reality. So every one of those, they used 1,000 Tomahawks. Only 207 are going to be replaced this year. THAAD, 190 to 290, probably the higher

number. Only 92 are going to be replaced. You see what happened? We have a deficit we cannot dig ourselves out of. Do not look at the fiscal year 2027 request because that is not real. No money has been allocated. Therefore, no production capacity has been expanded. That's all fake numbers.

It has been approved by Congress, and we don't know if the industries—this is based upon the framework agreement goal. This is a bunch of guys getting together and just basically spewing out what we want to do. That's not real. And we live in the real world today. Today is about reality. We have run out of ammunition. We don't have any. We cannot fight a war. This is the reality. And this is the reality that's going to exist for several years. Because look at Tomahawk—2030, 2031. I mean, I'm not good at math, but it's 2026. That tells me four or five years from now—2029. I mean, again, three years—2029, three years—2029, three years—2028, 2029, two to three years, mid-2027. Good luck.

No, that money hasn't been approved. Late 2026, doubtful. The point is, this is all fiction. This is fantasy. It doesn't exist. We are in a hole that we cannot dig ourselves out of. Even if you allocate the money, how do you—let's again go through each one of these. It's probably classified, the amount of permanent magnets and other rare earth materials that go into the making of these weapons. These weapons can't be made without specific components—specific components which are tied to the ability to access the rare earth minerals out of China. China's denying us access to that, so we can't even make them.

Even if the money was there, we can't make these. We don't have the ability to make these. This is the fatal flaw of the approach the United States has taken to warfighting since the end of the Cold War, where we basically—don't waste them for bombs. Magnets are cool. Don't waste them. I don't know, I'm not going to get into it. But, you know, guidance and control—what do you think makes the bomb hit its target? You know, it's not just the bomb. They put guidance on it. What's in the guidance? What makes the little chips do the little chip things? So, sorry, I shouldn't read comments. But sometimes ignorance is bliss.

The point is, we programmed ourselves to fight wars where we would intimidate people with technology. The idea was to make anybody understand that if you fought us, we would overwhelm you with technology. We would come in with Generation 5 fighters that you couldn't touch. We have interceptors that shoot anything down you shoot at. We have long-range standoff weapons that make us immune to your air defense, but we can kill everything. And we'll come in and we'll hit you hard for a week, and you'll be destroyed and surrender because you can't stand up to it. And the Iranians have been preparing for over two decades to stand up to it. And the Iranians have been prepared for a long fight to ride out all of these weapons systems.

None of this took Iran by surprise, by the way. You know, where are they? Right in between Iraq and Afghanistan. Where are the two places where we fought major conflicts throughout the two decades of this century? Iraq, Afghanistan. You think we flew B-2 bombers over each one? Yeah. You think they dropped munitions? Yeah. You think all those munitions went off, or were there some

duds? Duds. And you think the duds could have been picked up and then turned over and reverse-engineered and all the components? Yes. You think that was shared with the Chinese and the Russians? Yeah. You think they added some analysis that fed back to the Iranians? Yes.

My point is, the Iranians have watched us fight forever. To show you how good they are, we had something called the Beast of Kandahar. I think RQ-170 or something of that nature. Giant delta-wing, B-2 bomber-looking drone. And this thing would fly. It got famous during the raid on Abbottabad, you know, the assassination of a 57-year-old diabetic with kidney failure, Osama bin Laden. So it's the system that flew over Pakistan filming the raid that the President of the United States and those who were watching saw. And the Beast of Kandahar flies over Iran as well, sort of immune. It's so high. Stealth features, fly over, take pictures, and all this stuff. And the Iranians sat there and watched it.

There's a technical team off the runway in Kandahar every day watching it take off, collecting the signals, you see, because there's a controller taking it off. Off it goes, flying. Yay, it gets to altitude. And then the controller turns it over to another controller operating out of, you know, Nevada. And there's a handshake that goes on. You click it. There's a handshake. The drone talks to the controller, and they go, beep, and then they shake hands, and they sync up their secure comms link, and he has control, and now he's flying it. And the Iranians are going, thank you. Play that handshake again. Play it again. Then they send it back to their smart boys who break it apart, and they go, we got this handshake. And so the drone takes off. They de-link it.

It goes into a handshake, and the Iranians come and go, we're shaking hands, took it over, and flew it back to Iran and took it. Do you guys understand how hard that is, how hard that was to accomplish? But the Iranians did it because they understand everything about what we're doing. There's nothing we do that takes them by surprise, not a damn thing we did that took them by surprise, except the timing of a surprise attack that was, you know, shielded by an act of perfidy that, you know, hey, we're going to negotiate with you. We got a deal on our way to Washington, D. C. for finalization. Everybody sleep tight. Boom, you're dead. Bomb. That's how we operate. We lie. We cheat. We steal. We don't operate honestly at all. And we still got our asses handed to us.

Because they're better than we are. They understood us better than we understood them. We went in there thinking we could kill Ayatollah Khamenei and collapse the regime and intimidate the crap out of everybody because we got F-35s. We got B-2s. We got everything. We're America. We're the best. And then we ran out of ammunition. We ran out of ammunition. And you know what? That ammunition didn't work. All those GBU-57s, you know, the big bomb that we drop in and it makes you go boom? At least four of them didn't go off. Guess who has them today? Not just the Iranians — the Russians and the Chinese, who are reverse-engineering them as we speak.

Every single weapon we fired, most of them don't work. The Tomahawks — 2017 — we fired a bunch of Tomahawk Block 4s at Syria. You remember that? Striking the so-called Syrian chemical weapons facilities that weren't chemical weapons facilities. Again, another failure in intelligence. We

fired, I forget what it was, 61 of them. 23 didn't work. 23 ended up in the fields of Syria there, intact, intact. And guess who captured them? The Syrians. And guess who they're friends with? The Russians. And guess who the Russians are friends with? The Iranians. Guess who has total understanding of the Tomahawk Block 4, every aspect of it, so it could be jammed, spoofed, whatever?

The Iranians do. All the things we fired, most of them didn't work, ladies and gentlemen. Most of them were jammed. Most of them were spoofed. And the ones that didn't, they hit buildings that were empty. We had zero impact on Iran in terms of bombing things. We had zero impact. Well, we might have had, like, a little bit of impact. But the overall effect is nothing. No impact on their ballistic missile production capability because it had all been removed from the above-ground facilities to underground facilities that we couldn't reach. Same thing with everything they do. We lost this war because they're better than we are.

Those weapons that you saw up there, most of them don't work. They're too expensive. They can't be replaced. And we built our whole warfighting way of waging war around these weapons. We don't have them anymore. There's a reason why people got mad when, I forget, what was the name of the senator who basically said, so what you're telling me is we're out of ammunition. And they're all, you can't say that, you're a traitor. But he was telling the truth. We're out of it. We don't have the ability to make the ammunition we need. We're defenseless in the Pacific. We're defenseless in Europe. And we're defenseless in the Middle East.

#Danny

Yeah, and now it seems that the U.S., the Trump administration, or at least the U.S. warmongers, they are once again trying to—and we know that in war, a lot of it, especially for the U.S., is to, you used the word intimidation, intimidate especially the people to agree to future terms that the U.S. is going to want. That, of course, has not worked. And we know that sanctions serve a similar purpose, maybe through a different weapon. And this time around, though, the sanctions are feeling quite desperate, Scott. Now the Treasury Department is sanctioning the Persian Gulf Strait Authority, accusing Iran of using the entity to, shocker, generate revenue from vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz. How can one sanction an entity that Iran created and has absolutely no connection to the U.S. side of the global market? It's a very interesting thing and feat to try to impose on Iran. But nonetheless, this seems to be also—

#Scott Ritter

For instance, any country or ship or whatever that goes through and pays the toll will be subject to secondary sanctions. So the goal is to get people to say no. Except, gosh, Scott, you haven't really thought this one out, have you? Because if they say no, then the oil doesn't flow, and then they die. Then they stay in the street or be sanctioned by America. I think they're going to choose sanctions, Mr. Besson, because your sanctions suck. First of all, my understanding is that they're no longer

paying in dollars, and the dollars are no longer going to the banks in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. That's the way Iran used to work until the United States went in and seized those assets worth \$12 billion. Congratulations, America, you got \$12 billion of stolen money that you're going to have to return eventually.

It always works out that way. But so now you're paying in yuan, Chinese currency, going into banks the United States doesn't control. Or I think one of the things I've heard is cryptocurrency, that they're collecting tolls in cryptocurrency. Again, the U.S. has zero control over that. And so we can't stop Oman and Iran from doing this, and we can't stop the countries from paying it because they have to pay it to survive. You know, we can threaten secondary sanctions, but all that does is make people pull further away from the American orbit. I mean... you know, Marco Rubio, who I despise openly, once said one of the few honest things he said when he was talking about Brazil. And Brazil was talking about de-dollarization and working with BRICS to come up with alternative means. And he said, we can't allow this to happen.

If Brazil no longer pays in the dollar, we can no longer sanction them. If we can't sanction them, we can't control them. And that is the most honest thing anybody's ever said, because the whole concept of the dollar and everything isn't about, you know, the smooth economic flow. It's about American control, American ability to squeeze, you know, your throat through sanctions. The world is waking up to the fact that there is a limit to American economic power. Russia proved it. China's proved it. Look, the Chinese were threatening— you can't buy, Scott Besson again, he should learn to shut up— China, your private oil refineries, no Russian oil is allowed to go in there. If they go in there, we're going to sanction you. The Chinese government went, in this regard, do the Russian oil.

If you sanction us, we'll crush you. And Trump already knows, last time he tried to over-sanction China, China crushed him, squeezed him to death, made him surrender. This is the reality of it. This is a humiliating moment for the United States because one of the greatest economic weapons that we've had, which we've abused over the course of several decades, is now being exposed as literally an empty threat. Scott Bessent isn't going to sanction anybody. You think Iran is afraid of sanctions? Not at all. They've survived under stringent sanctions. And Iran owns us right now. Because I can guarantee you, if given the choice of being hit with secondary American sanctions or paying the tariff, people are paying the tariff because they need that oil more than they need the blessing of Scott Bessent.

#Danny

Well, I think it's a good time now to talk about some other fronts, Scott. I wanted to ask your comment on the Ukraine front, because there have been, of course, in the last week or so, strikes that Russia conducted in response to the horrific war crime that Ukraine engaged in in Lugansk — the killing of dozens of students and faculty, staff. Now there's this kind of very strange — sorry

about that — very strange development where, after Lavrov warned that foreigners, embassy staff, anyone in Kiev from abroad should leave, now the EU is actually saying that Europe stayed in Kiev to stand with Ukraine while the U.S. left.

And now the U.S. is saying, no, they didn't evacuate their diplomats. But we are expecting things to heat up now with regard to Ukraine because it seems like Ukraine and their backers continue to get more and more aggressive, especially toward harming civilians. What is your assessment of what's going on and how it might relate to the United States — this particular, maybe precarious, position as it relates to Iran and the broader force projection it is trying to impose on the world?

#Scott Ritter

War in Iran — when you lose a war, that sort of exposes certain realities. The reality is the United States cannot, we can't fight a sustained fight against Iran, which means we can't fight a sustained fight against China. We can't fight a sustained fight against Russia. And we're not in a position to support others because we're out of ammunition. We're literally out of ammunition. We've got nothing left. So we've taken America off the board in terms of relevance. We can't even threaten anything. We can't even get our act together on troops in Poland. You know, 4,200 aren't rotating in, but 5,000 are going in, but Congress didn't approve, so 5,000 aren't.

You know, we don't have anything. We're literally a bunch of hot air coming out of the mouths of the most irrelevant people in the place. Unfortunately, there are some relevant people that are doing relevant things. The British are very relevant. The British have been running a very successful campaign which sought to divert the focus of effort away from the battlefield reality where, contrary to popular belief in the West, Russia is dominating across the battlefield. Things are not going well for the Ukrainians and haven't been for some time now. But the British have been playing a different game, a mental warfare game designed to collapse Russia from within.

Anybody who thinks that that's not possible, take a look at the collapse of the Soviet Union. You'll understand how mental warfare played a role in getting Russians to stop believing in themselves, Russians to start looking to the West as a dominant society, to lose faith in their leadership, to lose faith in everything, to abandon what you're supposed to be, who you are. That's what happened in the decade of the 1990s. Vladimir Putin did a reversal and built Russia up to where it is today, where they're proud of themselves with just reason and all this stuff. We're trying to break that down again. That's what mental war is.

And one of the things we're doing is exploiting the fact that Vladimir Putin doesn't want to escalate, that Vladimir Putin wants to keep this war confined to Ukraine and deal with the limited objectives of making sure Ukraine doesn't join NATO and doesn't retain Bandera's Nazi ideologies, things of that nature, doesn't pose a threat to Russia. So the West has been testing him all along. Every time a red line is drawn — you know, F-16s, red line, third world war, F-16s coming — Russia just responds by killing the F-16s. HIMARS, attack them, shooting them down, nullify them. When was the last time

you heard about HIMARS that was doing anything worthwhile in Ukraine? You don't. It's the same thing. Every escalation is managed by Russia.

Operation Spiderweb, drones coming in and hitting bombers — that should have triggered a massive response. Russia just blew it off because they said it doesn't change the fundamental direction we're heading. We're doing okay. But the British have been focusing on asymmetric warfare, hybrid warfare, using drones. Everybody talks about Ukrainian drone operations. At the tactical level, the Ukrainians — I think a lot of the innovation is theirs. But when you get up to the strategic level, this is 100% a British-driven operation assisted by the CIA and Germany. Firepoint, a Ukrainian drone production company — look at the CEO. She's some girl with no education who's just a bimbo who was given the job to serve as a way to steal money to enrich Zelensky.

But the British took it over and made it something real. The FPV Flamingo is a British-made weapon — a British-made weapon that's fired against Russia's strategic depth, claiming to be Ukrainian. You know, before this war started, the Russians made a point to Joe Biden: we will not tolerate NATO missiles based in Ukraine that can hit Russia's strategic depth. Now you have NATO missiles based in Ukraine that can hit Russia's strategic depth — a red line that was crossed. But the Russians went, we can ride this thing out, we can do this. The same thing with the FPV-1s, this wooden drone that flies in and hits oil rigs and all that.

The Russians are blowing it off, saying it's not a big deal. But there's a continuing echo chamber out there shouting about how weak Putin is, how impotent Russia is, how this, that, and the other thing. And it's starting to resonate within certain segments of Russian society. And you start to get defeatism. You've got people starting to doubt Vladimir Putin. Now, it hasn't reached critical mass. It's a long way from doing that. But it's there. This latest attack against Starobelsk Teachers College is the straw that broke the camel's back. I don't know if Ukraine and Great Britain intended it to be this way. I don't even know if they knew up front they were hitting a teachers college.

I actually think that AI assisted in the attack — designation of the target — just like we did with Manab, clearly a school for children. But we bombed it thinking it was the headquarters of a missile brigade. You know, here they thought, because they saw photographs of students from another college, not this one, wearing military uniforms, that this was a military facility. It's not. Those students were students who were participating in a game. They're noncombatants, not affiliated with the military or anything. That's the reality of it. But the AI doesn't see that because AI is not intelligent. AI just does what the people programmed it to do. They saw a photograph and said, this school is a military target.

And then the attack was sent in. FPV-1 drones, four of them, each one outfitted with air-to-ground rockets. That's the new variation, which means that somebody has to see it, because you don't fire air-to-ground rockets blind. This isn't a situation where you program in a GPS coordinate and the FPV-1 flies out there and dives in where it's told to go. There's another drone above this. There's Starlink connectivity, we know, because they've got the antennas. And it's being broadcast back to a

command center, and that command center is seeing the target. So these drones come in, and they cycle off their air-to-ground rockets. The eyewitnesses on the ground say, we heard rocket fire, we could see the rockets come in.

We could hear the rockets come in. FPV-1 is a propeller-driven thing. It's not a rocket. So, rockets being fired. Cycle back, fire again. Cycle back, fire again. Four times. Then they dive in at the end because they carry 200-kilogram bombs. Dive in, boom, boom, boom, collapse the building, kill 21 students. This resonated in Russia unlike anything. I mean, even in Kursk in August of 2024, when the British and American-led Nazis—literal Nazis, I mean, when I say Nazi, I mean swastika-wearing Nazis—went into Kursk, and the Russians couldn't evacuate the elderly from the border villages quickly enough. And so hundreds of them, 600 or so, were captured. They were all murdered, butchered, raped. These Nazis were raping 80-year-old women.

And then they go off and they get killed, and the Russians get the bodies, they get the cameras, and they have it. This is not speculation. This is a statement of fact. And that didn't trigger this Russian reaction. The Russians still went, we'll just kill them, kill 60,000 to 80,000 of them, recapture the territory, and keep moving. We're not going to escalate. This attack is different. It hit Russia at the wrong time, and it basically has created an outrage that cannot be ignored by the Russian government. So what the Russian government did, first of all, is respond with a massive strike designed to take out the units responsible. Remember when I said that Starlink was involved?

The problem with Starlink being involved is that the signal that's going back to have some guy watch this gets intercepted. And the Russians knew where it was. It was probably being run out of—there's a facility south of Kiev where the Ereshnik hit, a white church it was called—hit these above-ground garages. But we know that those were aircraft maintenance sites disguised on the ground, built during Soviet times, expanded by the Ukrainians, where the FPV-1 drone unit was that was directing this fight. The Russians took it off the map. It's gone. Finished. They struck other facilities in and around Kiev. It's funny how people are like, they struck a museum.

They struck a museum. They struck a shopping center. They struck civilian targets. Except, gosh, it's the Ukrainians that sit there and make the videos that say, the FPV-1 drone, a great weapon. We're hitting the Russian oil thing. But, you know, we don't produce it in a factory, because if we produced it in a factory, the Russians would hit the factory and destroy it. So today we're in a school gymnasium. Today we're in the basement of a museum. They sort of openly admit it. Every place the Russians hit were FPV-1 drone production facilities related to the attack on this school, command and control facilities, etc. That's what that attack was. That's all it was.

Everybody thought that that was going to be the big attack that does it. No. Then the Russians came out and said, because, you know, again, Putin doesn't do anything knee-jerk. Standard response, and then he sits there and he waits, he deliberates, and they come out and they say, that's it, we're done. No more negotiations. Negotiations are finished. So anybody, they call us and everybody else in Europe going, well, we're going to try and figure out who's going to represent us in the

negotiations with the Russians. There are no more negotiations. This will be unconditional surrender. That's it. Ukraine will accept Russia's terms as dictated by Russia without modifications, or Ukraine will die. That's where we're at.

Now they sit out in accordance with international law. They have to give adequate warning of any attack that may cause casualties among the civilian population. And so that's what Russia did. They did it in writing. They've done it with phone calls, and everybody said, well, why haven't they attacked yet? Well, because the Russians are smarter than you and me. I myself said I thought that Kiev would be erased. They're not going to erase Kiev. Why? Because the Russians are smarter than you and me. A member of the State Duma, part of the defense committee, gave an interesting interview yesterday where he said, because I'm like, take out the Rada, take out the parliament, make it a visually pleasing thing.

I said, the parliament's empty. And you want me to put an Iskander on the parliament? An Iskander costs \$50 million. \$50 million. You want to put a \$50 million weapon on an empty building that doesn't accomplish anything? No. When you use the Iskander, people have to die. Important people have to die. You have to collapse structures that are underground. That's what the Iskander does. So when they fire the Iskander, it's at a target that is designed to be collapsed and kill the people inside. That means you have to collect the intelligence on where that target is. So they're not going to strike until they get the intelligence. The other thing they said is that this is going to take place over time.

So it doesn't have to happen all at once. The fact is, if you go back in the intelligence business, sort of what I used to do when I was a weapons inspector, you call it "shake the tree." But basically, you go in and you do something to provoke. And then, in this case, I move in on a Special Republican Guard facility adjacent to a presidential palace because I believe the Special Republican Guard is hiding weapons of mass destruction documents. I can't prove it, though. So I go in there, and I jolt them. Then I see what happens. Do cars go out the back? Where do the cars go? This worked like a champ. One place we hit, and sure enough, the cars went out.

We tracked it to a place in downtown Baghdad, had the U-2 imagery take a picture of it. I went there, and it was an evacuation point for documents related to the work that the Iraqis didn't want us to know about. Shake the tree. Make them act. Go and you pounce on them. But in this case, it's not going to be inspections that pounce. It's going to be Oreshnik. It's going to be, you know, Iskander. It's going to be precision munitions. They're going to hit the important things—decision-making centers and, you know, command and control centers and defense industry production—because the Ukrainians are not going to put it all in a factory. The factories are going to disappear.

They're going to break it up and hide it around the country, as they are wont to do, and the Russians will detect it and kill it. This is a long-term strategy of absolutely degrading Ukraine's ability to stay in this fight. And that's what we're going to see going forward. I don't think we're going to see the massive strike that everybody's expecting. I was expecting it, but I don't think we're going to

see that because I've been listening. That's the sign of a good analyst, by the way—you shut up sometimes. We're on a talk show, so I'm talking. But when we're done, I shut up and I listen. I listen to what the Russians say.

I read what the Russians say, right? And I absorb it. And in absorbing what the Russians have been saying, I don't think there's going to be a massive decapitation strike. I think there's going to be a program of precision strikes over time that destroy Ukraine's ability to continue this fight, and there's nothing the West can do about it. The other thing is, the Russians are prepared to strike Europe, and the decision has already been made. Latvia is on notice that they allow it. Next week there's the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, and that's where I'm headed to speak. But the day after I speak, Vladimir Putin speaks.

The Ukrainians want to put drones into the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. They're not going to. If they fly through the Baltic corridor, then the Baltic nations will be destroyed, eliminated. That's just a statement of fact. And if Europe wants to do anything about it, then Russia will hit them as well. This is where Russia is at right now. They're just tired of playing games. They're tired of dealing with stupid people. And they're just at the point right now where if you continue to attack Russia in a way that threatens it existentially, Russia will respond accordingly. Ukraine, unfortunately, is going to find out this lesson.

It's the end of Ukraine. Ukraine will cease to exist in the state that it is. There will be unconditional surrender. Russia will control the government. The United States no longer has a vote. Remember how Donald Trump was talking about how we're going to have security guarantees, we're going to control this and that and the other thing? The U.S. doesn't have a vote. We're done. We actually backed out. We're finished. And they will never be invited back in. That's the reality. Europe's never been invited in, although they think they want to be invited in. Nobody will be invited in. This is between Russia and Ukraine.

#Danny

Well, if you could react to this, Scott, I'm seeing a parallel here. We had the Trump administration, really since February 28th, since the beginning of the strikes in Iran, claiming that everything was destroyed. And he said this for weeks and weeks and weeks — Iran's military capabilities, everything: missiles, drones, Air Force, Navy, all of it gone. And when you were talking about the way that Russia is being portrayed now across a wide range of the political spectrum in the West and in the United States, it's that Russia is on the back foot.

Russia, they've been trying to claim that the retaliation is a way to convince people everywhere that Russia is not weak. But last time I checked, these wars — the United States, NATO — they instigated these wars. And yet they're the ones who have not won them at all, like they haven't won these

wars. So it's an interesting thing when the United States, NATO, Europe, I guess the collective West as it is, claim that others are weak, that they're targeting, and yet they are the ones that are stuck and unable to dictate any outcomes in it. I find that very curious. What's your reaction to it?

#Scott Ritter

Well, let's just, again, let's look at the statement of that. Remember that—you don't have to put that chart up—but the chart that you had there before, they talked about a framework agreement. That's a framework agreement between the Trump administration and American defense contractors, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and others, that they're going to ramp up production. There's no money attached to that, so therefore it's purely theoretical, nothing's happening. That's the state of the U.S. defense industry—totally incapable of meeting the demands of modern war. As we saw, a 37-day campaign against Iran has literally drained the arsenal of the West. An ongoing conflict with Ukraine has done the same with Europe and whatever's left of the United States' arsenal. Zero.

Russia, on the other hand, has been building up its defense industry. It's just chugging along like you wouldn't believe. And Russia is not just building things and using things. That's how we operate in the West, by the way. That's one of the reasons why we don't have massive stockpiles, because you can't convince Congress of the need to overproduce and have 5,000 weapons sitting in a warehouse that may never get used. And if they never get used and they get outdated, that means we just spend a lot of money on weapons because our weapons are very expensive. So we can't overproduce them. We have to produce just the number we need to meet certain benchmarks of training and operational requirements. But our operations are always based on short wars because we're going to intimidate the enemy into surrendering.

We don't have any plan for long wars because we can't produce enough weapons to support a long war. Look at this 37-day war. We couldn't do it. Russia, on the other hand, operates only on the concept of long wars. So their defense industry is not just producing weapons for this war. But remember, their military went from 900,000, then was expanded to 1.2 million. Now it's currently expanded, I think, to over 2 million. That's a lot of people. Where are they getting their weapons? From the Russian defense industry. And it's not just guns and uniforms and ammunition. It's the weapons of war—tanks. I love when I hear stupid people like Jeff Fisher, some retired colonel idiot who's like, "The Russians don't have anything."

The Russians have everything, Jeff—everything you don't have, everything the West doesn't have. They've been producing tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery pieces on a regular basis. And they don't go to the front lines exclusively. They go out to equip the new units that have been created, like the 70,000-strong new Army Corps in the St. Petersburg Military District that has armor, artillery, everything. And you don't just build armor and artillery; you have the ammunition that they need to fight a sustained war. So they build up the ammunition stocks as well. This is what Russia is

doing. Russia will never run out of ammunition. Look at Iskander. You know, Russia's fired three of them. The first two were experimental models. I don't know what this one was—probably a serial production one.

They went into serial production in August. Let's just call August a wash, meaning we planned on going to serial production, but we hadn't quite produced it yet. So, September. September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May—nine months. Minimum production, five a month. Five a month, nine times five, 45. 45 minus one, 44. They have 44 Iskanders. That's minimum production. Maximum production, based upon what I experienced when I worked at Votkinsk, they could probably produce—you know, I mean, they were running out the, uh, you know, annual production for the SS-20s—80 a year or so. But let's just call it, you know, let's break it down. Let's call it half.

The bottom line is there's 60 or so. The Russians probably have somewhere, you know, around 50, 60, 70 Iskanders. That's a lot. They're not all going to be used against Ukraine. Right. There are Iskanders that are set aside for, first of all, Belarus, which has its own regiment—nine launchers. Each launcher probably has a complement of two. That's 18 missiles that can be armed and fired against Europe. There are other regiments out there. Germany's got its own Iskanders attached to it. You know, England does, France. You know, the Iskander covers a whole bunch of stuff. They have long-range, you know, Iskanders, thanks to the fact that we got out, now probably operating in the range of over 2,000 kilometers.

That can hit Europe as well, also hit Ukraine. But they've been producing these. When the war first started, the Iskander was an army-level battlefield support weapon. So in order to fire an Iskander, it had to go up the chain, and an army-level commander had to say, we're going to hit that target. You understand that that is not responsive targeting. That is strategic targeting—command posts, airfields—in support of a larger operation. Today, Iskanders, on a daily basis, are literally on launch-ready mode with a forward observer with a drone. And he can sit out there, boom, and he gets a target that is deemed worth hitting—troops training, something.

He can direct the Iskander to be fired instantly, and it will hit the target. Why can they do that? Because they've produced so many Iskanders, they can now bring it down to be literally a battlefield support weapon. The Russians have nothing but ammunition. And the British—500,000 Russian dead? No, no, probably 300,000. That's probably an accurate number. But the British can't tell the truth because they're involved in a psychological operation. 300,000 is a lot. That sort of matches the numbers that we lost in the United States in both theaters in World War II. So anybody pretending this isn't a bloody war is wrong. But the Ukrainian numbers are about 2.2 million right now dead. When you add wounded, over 5 million.

And the data seems to support this. Even Scott Blaber—no, not Scott Blaber, Pete Blaber, former Delta Force guy in the know—has come out and talked about millions of Ukrainian dead. Because that's the truth. We can try to disguise it any way we want to. The Russians aren't losing 30,000

men a month. It's not even close to that. The Ukrainians are losing 1, 2, 3, 4,000 guys a day. And they can't recruit enough. There's a deficit there. You know, this is the reality. You know, the Russians are doing everything right. They're not doing it the way some in the West would like them to do. There are a lot of people saying we want it to end, want it to do this, want it to do that. The Russians are doing it their way. Frank Sinatra literally sang a song about that.

They've done it their way. And this is the reality. The Russians are winning this war. And now the Russians are going to win the mental war aspect too, because they're going to flip the script on the British, and it's going to be the collapse. When the Russians begin this campaign of taking down Ukrainian decision-making centers, they're going to make it lethal to be somebody working with the Ukrainians. Right now, underground, there's a whole bunch of NATO guys, a whole bunch of American guys in there working with the Ukrainians. It's going to become lethal to do this. They're not going to hit the embassy and kill American diplomats. But if Americans have any of their technicians underground, they're going to die.

And when that happens, the rats will leave the sinking ship, and the Ukrainians will be on their own and eventually lead to the total collapse of Ukraine, which could happen as soon as this summer. June is going to be a critical month. I mean, that's why I'm sort of excited. I didn't know about this when I decided I'm going to Russia in June, but I'm going to be in Russia in one of the most important months of this entire war. This is a month of decision. I think the outcome is obvious, but still, it's going to be contested. Zelensky has announced that June is the month where he's going to launch the long-awaited drone offensive that was supposed to break the will of the Russian people.

Sixteen to twenty thousand drones are being provided by the British military. Zelensky is talking about launching up to 6,000 drones a day against Russian targets. The Russians will counter. It's going to get ugly fast. It's all going to happen in June. I don't know. They say in St. Petersburg at night, you're supposed to go out at night. They raise the bridges, you look at the ships go through, the stars — it's beautiful. I think we might get a different light show altogether, because this is the reality of war. But it's going to be a major month, and I think it's going to be the month that Ukraine stops functioning as a modern nation-state and starts functioning as a nation in absolute collapse, absolute decline.

#Danny

Yeah, Scott, I know you have an appointment soon. I was going to ask your final thoughts on Cuba, because the U.S. is supposedly preparing for war there, but maybe just a quick comment on that and also if you have any last words before we end here.

#Scott Ritter

Sure. Well, on Cuba, it's just simple. It looks like we're trying to apply the Venezuela playbook. The same thing — indict Maduro, justify removing him. We indict Raul Castro, justify removing him. The

thing about Venezuela, though, is that Venezuela once was totally owned by the United States. Chevron was in there. We owned all the families, the big families. You had Hugo Chavez come in and have his revolution, and Maduro took over. But at the end of the day, unfortunately for the Venezuelan people, the CIA was able to come in and reestablish contact with people and buy them out. And that's what happened. We bought out Venezuela. Okay, now we want to put that same model in play in Cuba.

Well, Cuba, you know, the revolution was in the 1950s. The mafia that was there is no longer there. Those families have long left, like, oh gosh, Marco Rubio's family. So the people that are in Cuba today are revolutionaries, people of the revolution. All they've known is revolution, and they will defend the revolution. You can't buy them out. You're not going to buy them out. Are they strong? Well, no, they don't have a lot of weapons. They've been under sanctions and all that. But the notion that Cuba is going to collapse is a fundamentally flawed notion. And I certainly hope we don't test that thesis, because it'll go very bad for us. We don't have the troops to take on Cuba. We can't occupy Cuba.

And if we tried to occupy Cuba, we'd get involved in a very, very bad fight with the Cuban people. It'd be tragic for the Cuban people, but it'd also be tragic for the United States. So that's my feeling on Cuba — that we think we can accomplish something that we're not going to be able to accomplish. If we try to accomplish it, it'll be yet another failure for the United States. Now, moving on just to conclude, as I said, I'm heading to Russia next week. I call it the revenge tour because, you know, the last time I tried to go to the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, the United States government stopped me at the airplane, took my passport, and said, you can't travel.

What we now know, because of certain criminal cases that are ongoing in Russia, is that the Ukrainians asked the U.S. government to pull my passport because the Ukrainians didn't want me to speak at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, because the Ukrainians were afraid of what I was saying — that I was deemed to be, and we know this is the case, the Center for Countering Disinformation called me the number one enemy of Ukraine at the time. I'm still up there. The Mirotvorets list had me marked for death, and they still have me marked for death. They sent a letter bomb to my house — yay, postal service, we're doing jack shit. So it's real.

This is real and all that. They tried to stop me. They're the ones who submitted a false affidavit through the FBI office in Kyiv that triggered an FBI raid on my house, claiming that I was a Russian agent. It's a classified affidavit. I'm still not allowed to have access to it. But again, through other sources from Russia, we know that it was the Ukrainians that did this. And the Ukrainians probably don't want me to travel this year, but I don't think the Trump administration is as receptive to Ukrainian input as the Biden administration was. But the bottom line is I'm going, and it's going to be a big deal. I'm really looking forward to it. And after that, I'm spending the better part of a month doing things.

I can't say what I'm doing, but I can say it's going to be perhaps the biggest thing I've ever done in Russia. And I go to Russia as an independent journalist. I pay for everything myself. I'm not subsidized by anybody but you. And why I'm saying this is I've got a big program in place. It's about 85% funded, meaning I'm going and I'm going to get a lot done. But you know, there, you can go and get a little bit done, a certain level of funding. You can go and get most of it done, then you can go and get everything done. Right now, I'm at the most-of-it-done level. I would just make an appeal: if people go to skywriter.com, to the donation page there, if you could do some donations and help me get over there so that I could get everything done. Just today, an opportunity came up.

I can't talk about it, but it's a unique opportunity. It's never been done before by anybody. And, um, I just need help to be able to do it because I have to pay for everything. I have to pay for driver security. I have to pay for interpreters. I have to pay for all the video production, all that kind of stuff. So to do things, as this new opportunity comes up, it has to be funded. And so I'm just making an appeal right now because this is going to be a cool trip. It's going to be a dangerous trip, but it's going to be a cool trip. And the information that I gather is sent back to you, the public. I do it. I publish articles. I do videos. It gets back to you. It's designed to empower you with knowledge and information. So view me as your tool and help me get the job done. And I'd appreciate it.

#Danny

ScottRitter.com is in the video description where you can do that. Well, without further ado, everyone, we're going to end the program here. Hit the like button so more people hear this. Go to ScottRitter.com. You can support his upcoming project. And be sure to support this channel as well in the video description below. I'll be back. Actually, I'm going away for the weekend as well, but original clips are coming to you during that period, so I will definitely be posting those. Without further ado, I'll see you all again soon. Thanks so much, Scott. Take care, everyone. Bye-bye.