

Scott Ritter: PEACE WINDOW CLOSING? China & Pakistan's Secret Iran Deal

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#Nima

We know during the Biden administration we talked a lot about the war in Ukraine. We knew who was in charge, who's doing this, who's doing that — Antony Blinken, Jake Sullivan, Victoria Nuland — all these people who were somehow in charge of some sort of policies when it came to Ukraine and foreign policy. Right now, many people are asking, who's in charge in the Trump administration? Is it Donald Trump himself? Because look at Pete Hegseth today. I don't believe that this guy is making any sort of policies, but following the orders of Donald Trump.

Marco Rubio, the same. You see no sign of Marco Rubio's policies when it comes to Ukraine, when it comes to the Middle East. He's not even negotiating on any of these two fronts. And we've seen him in Armenia signing a deal. Nobody seems to understand that. But after all, you don't see Rubio participating in major issues of the foreign policy of the United States. Who's in charge? Is it the Israeli lobby, by the influence they have on Donald Trump? Is it Donald Trump himself deciding about these things? What is your assessment of that?

#Scott

Well, it's not the Israelis. The Israeli lobby, you know, got us involved in this war, but we lost the war and Israel no longer has a vote. I mean, let's just be clear about it. Israel has no vote. They can scream, they can shout, but they're irrelevant. This is about domestic American politics. That's what drives Donald Trump. If he can't sell it to a domestic American audience, he pays a political price. So let's forget about Israel. I mean, again, let's talk, you know, Hegseth. Hegseth promoted a war that can't be won. He should be paying the price.

Hegseth is sitting there listening to Donald Trump. You know, NATO didn't come to our assistance, so we're going to start drawing down in NATO. And we're going to do—and Hegseth's like, okay. And we also are facing a monetary shortfall. We're out of money. We don't have any money left. We're putting a heavy brigade out of Texas onto ships, sending them off to Poland to do this nine-month rotation. It's going to cost us an arm and a leg. If Trump's unhappy with Europe, we're canceling it. Pete Hegseth, we're canceling the 4,200 troops heading to Poland.

#Speaker 03

We're canceling it.

#Scott

Not going to happen.

#Speaker 03

The heavy brigade isn't going. It's done.

#Scott

And everybody's like, wow, look at the United States actually taking action based upon statements made by the president. Then the president comes out and goes, nah, we're transferring 5,000 troops to Poland. Now, imagine being the Poles going, what the hell is going on here? Imagine being the average American who doesn't know anything about anything, because the average American is going, 4,200, 5,000 — I mean, it's a write-off, right? No, the Poles know the truth. So those 4,200 guys, part of that rotational brigade, are part of a negotiated systemic approach to America providing military assistance to a larger NATO deterrence posture in the region.

So every nine months, we rotate in a heavy armored brigade. And we have status of forces agreements built to do just that, that are very comprehensive because we have to bring our ships into Hamburg. We have to offload the materiel, then get it to Poland. So we've negotiated ways to make this happen — customs-free transfer, the whole thing. Then they get in there, and we have status of forces agreements on where they stay, how they operate. This brigade doesn't stay as a brigade. We send it off to train in the north. We send it down to train in the south. We move it all over Europe. And then nine months later, it rotates out.

Another brigade rotates in, and we keep a heavy brigade there. You know, that was the idea. The 5,000 troops that Trump's talking about is a brigade, a Stryker brigade, I believe, that's based in Germany. It's a Stryker brigade. It's light armor. It ain't a heavy armor brigade, but it's 5,000 troops. There is no status of forces agreement with Poland to do that. You can't just make it interchangeable. We're talking not temporary rotation; we're talking about permanent relocation, which means now we need the kind of status of forces agreement that we have with Germany, negotiated over the long term. What happens to the families that live there?

Do we now build base housing? Who's going to pay for the base housing? We're talking about billions of dollars of infrastructure that they have to put in before we can begin to think about transferring these 5,000 people. And more importantly, Congress has to approve all this, and Congress hasn't been consulted on this whatsoever. Even Trump loyalists are saying, we never

heard about this before, and it ain't going to happen. So what Poland's seeing, the reality from the Polish perspective is, we ain't getting 4,200 troops, and those 5,000 troops ain't ever going to show up here, so we're getting nothing. Nothing. That's the reality of Trump policymaking.

This is the insanity of the system. It's just crazy stuff. Look at Marco Rubio. He was Secretary of State and National Security Advisor. I mean, it's supposed to be Henry Kissinger-like. He received a phone call from Lavrov, and Rubio said, I don't really like Lavrov. He said, you're going to take it. Okay, I'm taking it. Then Lavrov says, this is what's going to happen to Kyiv. This message needs to get to the president. Rubio then said, well, you can't talk to me that way. You're not allowed to threaten people, Rubio. Get it to the president, because this is the reality. Donald Trump has literally neutered his cabinet, cut their balls right off. Sorry for the language, but that's what neutering is. He's emasculated them.

None of these people play the role of a traditional cabinet. The only person who tried to, Tulsi Gabbard, had to resign. Now, ostensibly for the health of her husband—and I'm not denigrating that, it's real—but people have managed with, you know, sick relatives to stay in office when they're feeling well. But Trump was unhappy with her because she dared contradict him on some big-ticket items like Iran and its nuclear program. And she was disinvited to, you know, participate in broader discussions about Ukraine, about the war in Iran, et cetera. So she resigned. You can't cut off her balls because she doesn't have any. And yet, as a woman, she has bigger balls than everybody else in the cabinet.

She's more of a man than half the men there because at least she stood up for something and had integrity, and ultimately, confronted with the failure of the president to live up to his duties and responsibilities as commander-in-chief, she did the honorable thing and resigned. You know, all of these cabinet members need to resign or invoke the 25th Amendment and get rid of this crazy man, but they're not going to do that. Who's in charge? I'd like to say Donald Trump, except he's insane. So nobody's in charge. Literally nobody's in charge. You can't say Donald Trump because he changes every six seconds. That's what happens when you have an insane man, a schizophrenic narcissist, who you can literally get to make a decision simply by threatening his ego. Do you understand how dangerous this is? How easily manipulated this man is?

#Nima

What is your understanding, Scott, of the battlefield between Israel and Lebanon, basically in the southern part of Lebanon? Because it shows we are witnessing various footages coming out of the southern part. They're hitting Israeli soldiers, communication systems, you know, Iron Dome batteries—they're hitting everything. They try to do something about, you know, some sort of protection for the equipment they have in the southern part of Lebanon. It seems that that has failed.

Just keeping their soldiers in a safe place in the southern part of Lebanon is becoming one of the greatest challenges that the IDF is facing right now. And what is your understanding of that? Because yesterday they said the yellow line, and we're going to cross the yellow line they drew in the southern part of Lebanon. And it doesn't seem that they're going to be able to, you know, hit these FPV drones because they're getting out of hand for Israel. They don't know how to deal with that. What is your understanding of Israel and their policies in the southern part of Lebanon?

#Scott

Well, I mean, Israel wants to defeat Hezbollah. That's a strategic objective. They've been working on that on a number of fronts. But ultimately, to defeat Hezbollah, you have to win on the battlefield. And Israel right now is stymied on the yellow line. They are stuck there. Every time their forces attempt to push through it, they get beat hands down by Hezbollah. I mean, the Radwan forces are better than the Israeli Defense Forces when it comes to a stand-up fight. Israel is trying to mass forces and do a breakthrough. But the problem with massing forces is mass requires sustainability. You have to bring logistics in to create the potential of the mass to move forward.

Then you have to sustain it with continuous logistics provisions. And that means all you have to do is take a look at where the yellow line is and draw a line back to Israel where the logistics bases are, and they have to get equipment from there, material from there, push it forward through occupied Lebanon. And again, look at the map. It's difficult terrain. It's got limited lines of communication that are predictable. They create funnels. And yet, that's how you start. So what Hezbollah is doing right now is employing FPV drones not only to beat down the Israelis on the front lines, but more importantly, to control up to 20, 30, 40 kilometers deep.

You have FPV drones right now operating inside Israel, you know, taking targets out, but more importantly, interdicting the sustainability, which means you can't do an offense. I can't run an offensive operation with sputtering logistics, because when I commit to it, I'm committing. I'm telling you to push forward, and there must be reinforcing capability, supporting capability, sustaining pressure on the enemy. The moment you stop sustaining pressure on the enemy, the enemy's up and they're able to counterattack, pinch off, counterstrike, disrupt, and your offensive sputters out.

Welcome to the reality of modern war. And so what Hezbollah is doing right now is, as Israel tries to push forward, they're breaking up the sustainability with these FPV attacks—hitting logistics, hitting resupply, hitting force structure—and Israel doesn't have a solution to it. Hezbollah is just learning how to do this, first of all. They have some, but it's not like an overwhelming number. They haven't come in with a drone swarm yet. They're just learning how to do this. And you saw early on with some of the videos how they're tentative. They come in a little hesitant in what they're doing, etc.

They're getting better. They're more and more decisive. I will tell you that if this was Russian drone operators or even Ukrainian drone operators operating with the resources available to either Russia

or Ukraine, the IDF would be wiped off the battlefield, eliminated in totality because it doesn't know how to operate in this environment. And Hezbollah is getting better and better and better and better, and the Israelis don't have a solution. Maybe they will get a solution at some point in time. Solutions are there, but it requires force structure.

You have to develop your own UAV branch, and you have to train them, equip them, have doctrine, have tactics, and make sure everybody's trained up on it. Israel hasn't even gotten off the ground. Hezbollah now has taken some important steps. But now imagine if you're in the United States or any NATO country and you want to take on the Russians. You won't stand a chance. None. You'll never get out of the forward operating positions. You'll be dead before you know it because Russia is drone dominant. Ukraine has drone capabilities that the West doesn't have. Israel has nothing to counter the Hezbollah drone superiority that they enjoy at this point in time.

#Nima

Scott, one of the main reasons that we are not talking about the war in Ukraine is because Donald Trump has created huge chaos in the Middle East, which has influenced the global economy. And everyone, every one of us—I'm here in Brazil—my economy has been hit by the crisis in the Persian Gulf with the Strait of Hormuz. We know what has happened to our economy and how the prices are increasing here in Brazil, for example. So that's why many people want to know what's going on in the Middle East.

That's a huge problem, in my opinion, when you look at what's going on in Ukraine, because the escalation is going on and on with the Ukrainian drone attacks on civilians in Russia, which somehow is escalating. Who's providing these drones? We know the Europeans are doing that. Ukrainians themselves are producing some of them. And the outcome of this drone production is new escalation. That's why Russia used again a Russian missile in Ukraine. How dangerous is the situation getting on the battlefield in Ukraine between Russia and Ukraine?

#Scott

Well, on the battlefield, first of all, you have to separate the two. There's a battlefield reality, and then there's this other reality taking place. The Ukrainian long-range drone operations are having some impact on Russia, but it's primarily psychological—psychological warfare, mental warfare, people would call it—trying to instill notions of impotence, to sow disillusionment with Vladimir Putin, et cetera. They're not playing to the liberal elites of Russia; they don't exist anymore, they're not politically empowered. They're playing to the true patriots, the people that want to win this war, who are now getting the feeling that Russia can't win this war, that Putin won't win this war, doesn't know how to win this war.

That's what these long-range drone attacks are doing. So they're not having a militarily significant impact. They're having a mentally significant impact, therefore a politically significant impact. And

they crossed the red line. They struck a girls'—you know, had the girls, the teacher school—primarily girls died. I think three guys died as well. But they're students, teenage students. Had they done this a month ago or two months ago? Remember, the Ukrainians went into Kursk and slaughtered, butchered hundreds of Russian elderly, innocent civilians whose only crime was they couldn't evacuate a village long enough. So when the Nazis came in—literal Nazis came in—they raped them, they murdered them, they dismembered their bodies, they left their bodies to rot.

And the Russians have documented everything because these idiot Nazis went in there and they filmed the rapes, they filmed the murders on their cell phones, and then they went out and got killed by the Russians, who captured the cell phones and can document the crimes. But that didn't get Russia to change the paradigm. Putin has been running a very well-balanced war that he's winning, by the way. I don't care what pro-Ukrainian social media says. The facts are the facts. Putin has stabilized Russia's economic situation, flipped the script, has a growing economy that's completely mobilized when it comes to the defense industry, churning out the weapons necessary. And he has a sound, stable geopolitical base through diplomacy to have, you know, China and others together on pursuing a multipolar world, and got China to recognize that Ukraine is to Russia as Taiwan is to China.

Therefore, China will never walk away from Russia on this issue. This is all a victory that could only happen if Putin was very pragmatic and patient on the battlefield. He didn't want to get sucked into overreacting in a way that undid the diplomatic support, disrupted the economic development or recovery, and weakened him overall. You could win on the battlefield but lose strategically. Putin has been slowing it down on the battlefield, winning strategically. But the problem is that this attack at the school, at this point in time, was the straw that broke the camel's back. It just turned out to be the story that the Russian people were no longer willing to stomach. And this had political ramifications. And Vladimir Putin's government is now taking decisive action.

Let me explain what has just happened. Ukraine lost the war. NATO lost the war. Europe lost the war. You will not win. They will not win. It's impossible to win because Russia now views this as existential in nature. We're going to be looking at the erasure of Ukraine, the physical erasure of Ukraine. You know, the head of the State Duma on Defense gave an interview where he expanded upon the statements made by the Foreign Ministry and the Defense Ministry. But basically, what's about to happen to Ukraine is going to continue until Ukraine accepts unconditional surrender. That's it. So Russia's made that choice now. It's no longer a debate. It's no longer a discussion. We don't have to debate what did Sergei Karaganov mean or what did so-and-so mean. We now know. At least what Russia says.

Now, we can find out that Russia's all talk, no action. I don't think they are, but I think you're going to wake up tomorrow seeing a completely different reality on the ground, or wake up soon. Russia has given sufficient notice for people to leave Kyiv. I think 48 hours is more than enough notice. So we'll see what happens tonight. It could happen very soon. But it's not just one airstrike, one airstrike. I think you're going to see a whole bunch of airstrikes. I think you're going to see a whole

bunch of capabilities brought in. And this is going to be sustained. It isn't going to let up. This isn't going to be one and done. This is the end of Ukraine. And if Europe wants to play ball, it'll be the end of Europe. I think Russia's at that point right now where they're done playing stupid games with stupid people. That's where we are.

#Nima

Do you think that the war will go to Europe because of the support, because of the way that they're producing arms?

#Scott

It's gone to Europe. What do you mean, will it go to Europe? Europe is an active participant in this conflict. So the war will go to Europe. Europe wants to play. I mean, it's amazing. Europe keeps going, we want war. We want it. We want to go to war. France, we're ready for war. England, we're ready for war. Germany, we're really ready for war. NATO, we're ready for war. The Baltics, we're ready for war. Not just ready, but we want war. We're looking for war. We will be at war. We are at war. That is a quote from Pistorius, the German defense minister. We are at war with Russia. Well, hey, guys. You don't have to ask for it twice. You want a war? You'll get the war.

And they're going to get the war, because once Russia begins the erasure of Ukraine, you're going to see that strings are attached to those people who continue to sustain Ukraine's elements. If Ukraine keeps launching drones, and, you know, Zelensky has promised a big month in June—a big month in June—I mean, he's going to attack everything. The British are giving him drones. The Germans are giving him drones. Everybody's giving him drones. NATO is giving him intelligence. And he's going to just blanket Russia with drones. Well, Russia is going to erase Ukraine. We know that's happening. But then they will start to erase Europe. Europe made that choice.

Now, the only way Europe can get out of it is to say, oh, we were wrong. We don't want war anymore. We're not looking for war. And you're starting to see that panic come out of the Baltics because the Baltics recognize they've gone a little too far, and they're sort of left hanging right there. That's why you have this group coming in, talking, we're going to defend the Baltics. But what they're really saying is, stop allowing Ukraine to use your country as a corridor, because I can guarantee you one thing: I'm going to be in Russia this time next week attending the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. It's a big deal. It's bigger than Davos. A number of people coming, etc. If Ukraine launches drone attacks to disrupt the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, it'll even get worse for Ukraine.

But moreover, any nation that facilitates the transit of Ukrainian drones that strike St. Petersburg during this time period or at any time period going forward is also going to pay the ultimate price. Naryshkin, the head of the Russian intelligence service, has identified, I think, seven decision-making centers related to Ukrainian drone operations on the soil of Latvia. And everybody's coming

together—oh, you can't talk, it's not really happening—but they all know what the truth is. The Latvians know what the truth is. And at this drone thing, the Latvians are, yeah, we've got to stop this. And they're saying, you've got to stop this because Russia will take them out. We just have to look at Russian production. Russia said they went into serial production of a drone in August of last year.

Let's call August a no month. They started, but they didn't get it. September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May—nine months. Now, let's say the low range of Geraniks that can be produced is five a month. Nine times five is 45. So there's 45 Geraniks. Russia's fired three. There's 42 left out there. I say that the production could go up to 25 a month, based upon my experience, direct observation at Votkinsk. But it probably isn't, because there's competing resources through the yards, which incorporate elements that are also with the Geranik. So you can't, you know, rob Peter to pay Paul. So let's say instead of 25, they're producing 12. That's a good median number—12. Nine times 12 is 118. It's not—108. Was I right? Yeah, 108. 108. You're right.

#Nima

Marine math. I mean, come on. Yeah, 108.

I said 118 first, but I was like, no, that can't be right. Yeah, 108. But you hit it right after that.

#Scott

Because every once in a while it clicks. But the point—because I'm counting on my fingers—but my point is, 108 is totally different than 42 in terms of capacity. The other thing is, Russia doesn't rush ahead of its capability. They don't get ahead of their skis, so to speak. When Russia makes a decision, they have the resources to back it up. All along, people go, "Russia's going to run out of missiles." I'm like, Russia will never run out of missiles. Once Russia agrees and goes on this, that's because a decision has been made that we can sustain this activity and sustain the feed into this activity without sacrificing overall strategic capabilities.

That's how the Russians think. Unlike the United States, we've got war in Iran, and we ran through everything, had no production, we had to steal everything, and we've weakened the whole world. We are the opposite of Russia. Russia doesn't work the way we work. Russia works differently. So for Russia now to commit to the erasure of Ukraine and to retain the capacity to launch debilitating strikes against Europe, I'm thinking that means their production level is higher than five a month.

#Speaker 03

I could be wrong. I don't know.

#Scott

We know also that they have other systems that haven't been publicized. The Russians have bragged about this. They said there are things, there's talk, whispers about an Aerofon 2.0—it's better than 1.0. We know that they have modern versions of the KH-101 missile, which is something pretty cool. I'd have to see the whole thing, but it appears that it was coming in and got intercepted, got knocked off, and then corrected and continued its mission. And we know that coming in, they're launching countermeasures that are sucking Patriots out. But they also have the Iskanders, the standard Iskander-Ms. They have the Iskander-Ks, long-range cruise missiles.

They've built those, again, with countermeasures. The Russians just have a lot of systems available. They could even employ the Yars with Avangard non-nuclear hypersonic maneuvering warheads to come in and hit other things. What game does Europe want to play? Russia is ready to play that game. I don't think Russia makes this decision because the Russians think through things—cause and effect relationships. And they don't make this decision lightly, which means they've thought it through. They have a plan. They have contingency plans. They have the resources to implement these contingency plans. Meanwhile, Europe has nothing, literally nothing.

They don't even have 4,200 American troops coming anymore. Because, you know, the Pentagon said, no, we're canceling that. It's amazing. But half that equipment is already put on ships. Now they have to offload the ships. They'd actually sent men and women to Poland as an advance party. They have to come home. And the disruption—I've been in the military. When a unit deploys, that means they've already taken all their leave, or, you know, they've moved their families. Many of them moved their families because, you know, you can't have your wife with a newborn baby sitting in a base house. So you've relocated your wife home.

You've done a whole bunch of stuff, put a whole bunch of money down. They're life-changing decisions. And now, nope, it all isn't going to happen. And now they have to get a training schedule back up. Schools were canceled. Schools were—The chaos that was done. This is why Pete Hegseth is the worst Secretary of Defense in the history of Secretaries of Defense. Because of the chaos that he has created for these soldiers. You think they want to reenlist? This is life-ruining stuff for some of these soldiers. He doesn't care. Trump doesn't care. We care about our troops. They don't care anything about the troops at all. Nothing.

#Nima

Scott, before wrapping up, I remember Colonel Wilkerson once said that the most dangerous country in Europe is Poland because of some irrational people in that country who are running the show—by the way, who are policymakers in Poland. One of them is Sikorski. And here is what he said.

#Speaker 03

I'm skeptical about Sikorski negotiating with Putin on two grounds. Number one, when you've been a dictator for over 20 years, everybody lies to you. And these dictators always drop some of their maximalist results too late because they don't know the true position they are in. And secondly, Vladimir Putin is a man whose word and whose signature cannot be trusted. He lied to us repeatedly. So I think the war will be ended by someone else.

#Scott

Of course, he's, you know, a criminal. You know he's a neocon. You know he has no legitimacy whatsoever. This is a man who posted "Thank you, America" when Nord Stream 2 got blown up. They had to take the tweet down. That was a mistake. You know, he's married to Anne Applebaum, who is one of the most virulently Russophobic Putin haters in the world out there. This man lives in his own fantasy world. Nothing he said there was true. Vladimir Putin has never lied about anything. One documented lie—give me one documented lie. Sikorski lies about everything. First of all, he's corrupt. There's a lot of corruption that follows this man. He's not clean. He's horribly corrupt.

He lies about his own social media postings. What has Vladimir Putin lied about? Vladimir Putin has been honest about every single thing he has gone into, because that's what legitimate leaders do. They don't lie. You know... look at Kiev. Did the United States and Israel give Iran advance notice that they were going to carry out a decapitation strike on February 28th? No. Were civilians impacted by that? So under international law, you're supposed to give advance warning, adequate advance warning, to any military strike that may impact civilians. That's a requirement by law. Vladimir Putin is the only leader in the world today that gives that kind of advance notice. He's the only one.

Only one. Iran did. I'll give Iran credit. Iran gave the Israelis advance notice. They would always say, this is where we're going to strike, leave. So, Iran. Amazing. Iran also abides by international law. It's funny how that works out. The nations that we tend to denigrate the most are the ones who abide by the law the most. I mean, you know, we're the ones who assassinated Qasem Soleimani as he was trying to broker peace in the region. We're the ones who kill Ali Khamenei at home. You know, but the Iranians give Israel advance notice. They're going to strike a place. They leave. And Russia has done the same thing in Kiev. So Sikorski is crazy, but Sikorski is not Poland.

People need to understand that there is a tremendous amount of pushback inside Poland by people who understand the consequences of these actions. And again, I think there's going to be a great awakening in Europe. Yes, voices like Sikorski and others are going to be magnified now when Kiev gets erased. See, this is what we told you about Russia. But the rational thinkers are going to go, well, you did that. You created that condition. You made this happen. And now you want it to happen to us too? So I encourage, of course, you to keep speaking, because every time he does, he just digs the hole deeper for him, his ideology, his sick, demented wife, and everybody else who buys into his neocon vision of how the world's supposed to work.

