

# Paul Craig Roberts: Ceasefire Shattered: Iran Vows Strike on Northern Israel

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## #Nima

Just in the recent hours, we've learned that Israel told the people in the southern part of Beirut, in a city called Dahia, that they have to evacuate their homes because they want to attack and destroy everything there. Then we've seen a massive evacuation in that city. Looking at the pictures, the footage is coming out. Then Iran reacted to that. We had the Iranian foreign minister, and we had the head of the Iranian parliament say that there is no direct or indirect talk with the United States and no messages anymore. And they issued a warning to Israel that they have to evacuate the northern part of Israel.

Because as soon as they start attacking Dahia, after that evacuation, Iran is going to attack and hit the northern part of Israel. Then we had a phone call between Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu. It seems, as he posted, he said that, "I had a very productive call with Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu of Israel, and there will be no troops going to Beirut." I don't know what that means, because he's talking about the Israeli attack by their fighter jets on Beirut. And then he said that likewise, through a highly placed representative, he had a very good call with Hezbollah. This is just more amazing. I don't know who was talking with him on the part of Hezbollah, but he made that in this tweet.

And they agreed that all shooting will stop, that Israel will not attack them, and they will not attack Israel. President Donald J. Trump. This is what has happened. And what we've learned later on from Benjamin Netanyahu, they said, if Hezbollah attacks us, we're going to respond. And Hezbollah said, as long as Israelis are in the southern part of Lebanon, as long as they're occupying Lebanese territory, we're going to attack them. We're going to attack and we're going to force them out of Lebanon. What is your understanding, Paul? Who's running the show? Is it Donald Trump? Because when it comes to these sorts of pressures, you see Donald Trump can do something, can call Benjamin Netanyahu. And how do you find it? How do you feel about what's going on?

## #Paul

Well, I think there was no point in Donald Trump calling Netanyahu and getting Netanyahu to stop. It's Iran. Iran is calling the shots. And Iran said to Israel, okay, you go ahead and bomb there, the southern part of Beirut, and we're going to take out northern Israel. So you better start evacuating from your homes. So it's totally controlled by Iran. Trump didn't do anything. What did Trump do? What's Netanyahu going to do when he hears the Iranians say, okay, if they have to evacuate their homes in Lebanon, the Israelis have got to evacuate their homes in Israel. That is what's important. And obviously Netanyahu believed Iran. I wondered why Iran was letting Israel get away with the continuing attacks in Lebanon.

But apparently, the Iranians decided that it had gone far enough. So that's my assumption. I don't think Trump had anything to do with it. I mean, what can Trump do? And why does he need to tell Netanyahu, hey, you don't want to be bombed and have to evacuate your homes? Netanyahu knows that. So I suppose that all of that fighting that the Israelis renewed in Lebanon was just a test to see if Iran would do anything, or if Iran's like Putin and won't. And it seemed it took Iran too long to do something, but it seems what they did is effective. So it tells you Israel knows it can't protect itself from an Iranian attack. And so I think it's a good thing that the Iranians acted.

## **#Nima**

The problem, Paul, with Israel is that they're so desperate with the tactics or with these sorts of weapons that Hezbollah is using—FPV drones. And with these rockets, even the rockets are hitting targets in Israel. Correct. Iron Dome is not working. It seems that Iron Dome is failing over and over again. And you see, that's the main problem for Israelis today, Paul. That's why they need to hit, they need to go to Dahia, to Beirut, to hit targets there, because they cannot fight Hezbollah in the southern part. The only reason they need to escalate is that there is no solution for them.

## **#Paul**

Well, you know, the Israeli security minister said that Israel would not allow Trump to withdraw from the war. And, of course, the Israeli security minister was succeeding, because what would stop Trump from withdrawing would be Israel attacking Lebanon and forcing Iran to abandon the ceasefire. So that keeps the war going. And this was happening. In fact, I wrote about it today. I was going to run it tomorrow, but with this latest development, I'll have to adjust it. But what Iran did, they said, well, fine, you keep attacking the Lebanese and you've ordered them to evacuate their homes, so we're telling you the same things will happen to you.

But this is Iran talking, not Hezbollah. And if Israel can't deal with Hezbollah, it certainly can't deal with Iran. So to end this situation and to force the far-right-wing extreme Israeli Zionists off of their Greater Israel agenda, Iran needs to give them a knockout blow. Someone has to make it clear to

the Israelis—all of them, all the political parties, all of the people—that there's no chance of Greater Israel, and you can give it up or you will be destroyed. That's the only way there'll be any peace in the Middle East. It doesn't make a difference what Trump says or does. It's just bluster.

He has no effect on the outcome there now. The Americans have proven they can't deal with Iran. And now the Israelis are finding out. And they need to find out in a great big way. When a country like Israel has this agenda, declared again just the other day by the security minister, that we have no intention of stopping these wars, that our goal is the Middle East—this is what the security minister said, I've quoted him—well, if you're up against that, what do you negotiate? Ceasefire? I mean, what are you talking about? You either surrender or you win. And maybe the Iranians are coming to that understanding.

## **#Nima**

They're coming to that understanding. Sorry for interrupting you, Paul. We had the head of the Iranian parliament just the day before yesterday coming out. I have never seen the head of the Iranian parliament or some negotiators in Iran, those people who are in charge of negotiations, talking this way. He said, we decide everything on the battlefield, and we document the results of the battlefield on paper. I have never seen such a thing in Iran. This is new. This is a new tone. This is a new strategy. This is a new understanding on their part.

## **#Paul**

Well, that's good. That's good because it's the only thing that will stop the wars. Someone has to win. And as long as the Iranians were showing a hesitancy to win, the Israelis and the Americans could keep going. But if the Iranians say, why are we hesitant to win? and decide to win, then Israel has to come to terms. And that means they have to give up the agenda of Greater Israel. And the Iranians have to pressure, threaten the Gulf states: you're either with us or against us. They have to use the words of President George W. Bush: you're with us or you're against us. That's what the Iranians need to tell all the Gulf states. And if you're against us, we're going to destroy you. This is the only way you can talk in a situation like that. You can't pretend it's a misunderstanding and you can negotiate it away.

## **#Nima**

I think, Paul, the point that you're making is so right, is so correct, because before this all happened, the Iran war, and they're going to attack the northern part of Israel, the United States suggested to Hezbollah, if you don't want Israel attacking you, then you have to stop attacking Israel, not in the northern part of Israel, in the southern part of Lebanon. You stop attacking Israel in Lebanon, in the southern part of Lebanon, then Israel decides not to attack you in Beirut. This was just mind-

blowing. He says, what's going on with that? Then Iran started, then Iran entered the calculation. They said, nothing's gonna happen, and we're gonna attack Israel. It doesn't matter what Donald Trump is talking about.

## **#Paul**

Yes, you see, the Americans have defined Hezbollah's resistance to an Israeli invasion as aggression. So Israel invades Lebanon and Hezbollah resists the invasion. And who's guilty of aggression? Not Israel, but Hezbollah. So the Trump regime's position is that southern Lebanon belongs to Israel. Israel's been claiming it for a long time. Look, this is the third time—it's at least the third time—that Israel has gone in to occupy southern Lebanon. In previous attempts, the Israeli army was driven out. I think this time it may be harder for Hezbollah because they lost so many of their leaders to Israeli assassination.

You remember the story about the cell phones that were actually explosive devices that Israel could set off, and so they killed scores of the Hezbollah leaders. And then, of course, Syria's gone, so the avenues of supply to Hezbollah from Iran are gone. They're hampered. And so Hezbollah is at a disadvantage compared to previously. But still, I have the impression that the Israelis have not been able to cross the river. No, so their invasion has stalled. It can't go forward. And I think that they have to be...

## **#Nima**

In some areas, Paul, which are close to the border—their border—they don't really have a border, but if we assume they have one, in some areas the Litani River is approaching their border. They're getting to the Litani River, but they're far from the Litani River in Lebanon in the other parts, you know. Well, they're not even close to the Levant.

## **#Paul**

Right. Well, it'd be a mistake to have a ceasefire that lets Israel keep part of Lebanon. See, that's how they stole Palestine. They've been stealing it since 1947. They go steal some of it, and then there's a ceasefire and it stops for a while, and then they go steal some more. And now they're stealing Gaza and the few settlements that are left in the West Bank. And they thought they were on a roll because they had the United States to attack Iran for them. So they started again on Lebanon.

## **#Paul**

The Iranians stood up to it. And I think the tough talk that the Iranians issued, as you reported, I think that's probably true, and it's effective because there's nothing the United States or Israel can do to block the missiles coming in on Israel. I think it would have been even better if, instead of the Iranians issuing a threat, they had simply dumped a whole bunch of missiles on Israel. And say, now

you evacuate. Here come some more. Evacuate Tel Aviv. We're going to destroy Tel Aviv. Get everybody out of Tel Aviv. That's the way you bring a war to an end. You make it clear that you are as determined to destroy them as the Israelis are to destroy Iran and Lebanon.

Well, if you're always willing to have a ceasefire and negotiate, then people don't take you seriously as an opponent. Look, not even tiny Latvia. What's it got? Three million people? Three million people? They don't even take Russia seriously. Why? Because Putin never does anything. Well, to be taken seriously, you can't turn the other cheek. You just have to take somebody's head off. And the Israelis have had this coming to them for a very long time, and no one's done it. And this is why Palestine's destroyed, Iraq's destroyed, Syria's destroyed, Libya's destroyed, and Iran's at war, and Lebanon's at war, because nobody stood up to the Israelis.

## **#Nima**

Paul, I really see the moment if these Arab states and these leaders in the Arab GCC countries continue with the same attitude and behavior that we've seen so far, the policies that we've seen so far. They're going to have the same thing as we are witnessing in the southern part of Lebanon. Someday Israel would go to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and capture all of them and say, it's a buffer zone between Israel and Iran. I want to have a buffer zone, a dead zone. And these people, you don't see any sort of learning curve for these GCC countries. There is nothing there. I don't know what they're thinking of.

## **#Paul**

They don't think. Or they just say, oh, I think I want to enjoy the evening. We'll worry about it tomorrow. Look, the Israelis have already made it clear to Saudi Arabia. They have redefined Greater Israel. It's now from the Nile to Pakistan. So the Israelis have already told the Saudi Arabians, we claim you. Saudi Arabia is part of Greater Israel. They've told the Turks the same thing. You know, I've reported on this program with you before. Last February, the former Israeli Prime Minister Bennett—is that his name, Bennett?—he came to attend the annual meeting of the Israel lobby in America, and he told them, Turkey's the next Iran.

Well, this was the instruction Israel was giving the Israel lobby—to start demonizing Turkey, turning Turkey into terrorists, getting all the stupid American people down on Turkey so that they would accept an American attack on Turkey. So clearly, after Israel, it was to be Turkey. If Iran had not stood up and stopped it, that's what would have happened. So the only force in the Middle East that's stood up is Iran. None of the others. And not even the Palestinians. I mean, the Palestinians have been passive since they started in 1947. They've just accepted that they get driven out of their villages.

## **#Nima**

You mean the Palestinians in the West Bank? Because we know that Hamas is fighting back.

## **#Paul**

All of the Palestinians. I mean, what's now Israel used to be Palestine. Haven't you seen the maps of the shrinkage of Palestine over time? I mean, Israel was a tiny piece of it. Now Palestine's a tiny piece. And they were just passive. Instead of arming themselves, they left their homes. They left the olive groves. And I may be wrong, but I think there are now three generations of Palestinians born into refugee camps in Jordan and, I think, Lebanon. They're born in, they live in refugee camps—three generations of Palestinians. Well, the Palestinians outnumbered the Israelis. They could have destroyed them, but they didn't bother.

They fled from aggression. The feeble efforts that Egypt and Syria made, I mean, it wasn't even serious. So this is a change. What Iran has done is a change. And if they continue to have the ability they seem to have, and they decide that they've got to see this through to completion, they can destroy the Zionist agenda of Greater Israel. And then that would end all these decades of conflict. I mean, I think the Israelis also have to pull out of the West Bank. They've got to give back most of what they stole. They've got to pull out of Gaza. East Jerusalem? They should be forced to do that.

You know, Netanyahu has already admitted that they are now incorporating 70% of Gaza into Israel. And his audience said, "100%, 100%." He said, "Yes, it'll be 100%, but we're just going to do it a little at a time. It doesn't produce the same opposition if we take it all at once." He said, "Look, we had 50. Nobody said anything. Then we had 60. They didn't say anything. So now we're going to have 70. But if we took it all at once, somebody would say something." So this is the way the Israelis have done this. This is how they stole Palestine. You know, what people think of as Israel is actually Palestine. In 1947, it was all Palestinian.