

# Robert Barnes: The Iranian Navy announces it targeted a U.S. warship

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## #Nima

Hi everybody, today is Wednesday, June 3rd, 2026, and our dear friend Robert Barnes is here with us. Welcome back, Robert. Hey, how are you? Good to be here. It's so nice to have you back here, Robert. I want to start with what has happened between Iran and the United States. Last night, there was a fire — we had Americans attacking an Iranian tanker, then Iranians attacking the United States. Two countries were attacked by Iranian forces — one of them is Kuwait and Bahrain together. It seems that they hit some tankers close to the UAE as well. And what we know so far is that the international airport in Kuwait was hit, maybe by a Patriot interceptor, because it seems that the Patriot failed and hit the airport in Kuwait. But here is what Donald Trump said about what has happened.

## #Guest

That's a great point. With this latest attack on Kuwait, is the ceasefire with Iran still on?

## #Speaker 03

Well, you know, there's a reason for everything. And we hit them pretty hard the night before and actually last night. And when it was explained to me, I said, all right, so we'll do that. But we've been hitting them pretty hard a little bit. So there is a reason for certain things, and there's usually a reason that sometimes makes sense. But they did something for it. Not a big deal. We got it. We nipped it in the bud very quickly, as we do with the greatest military in the world. But some people would say they were slightly provoked because we took strong action for a different reason, so they were reciprocating.

## #Nima

And the other point that we've learned just moments ago, because they said—the Iranian side said—that they targeted a U.S. warship in the Sea of Oman. Then CENTCOM said that didn't happen. Then Iran published footage of those missiles that they said targeted the American warship in the Sea of

Oman. Robert, looking at the situation in the Middle East, it seems to me that the Israeli sort of attitude is coming into the situation between Iran and the United States, which we've seen with what has happened between Israel and Gaza and the Palestinians, between Israel and Lebanon. This is the same thing that is happening somehow between Iran and the United States. How do you see what's going on?

## **#Robert**

I think that Trump has been caught between escalation, stalemate, exit, and a deal from about day five of the war, when he realized that his grand plans of a quick collapse of the Iranian regime—that couldn't wait for the U.S. to come flooding into the country and maybe bring back the son of the Shah or whomever else, the former Iranian president, which makes the least sense, but who knows these days. But when that didn't happen, Trump realized he needed to get a different outcome, one that military escalation was unlikely to attain or achieve. However, he fears being compared to Obama by giving any kind of deal to Iran that sends money to Iran.

He fears being compared to Jimmy Carter, leaving men behind in ways that make them hostages, which our effort to raid the nuclear facilities—disguised as a rescue operation—almost highlighted for him. He's afraid of the rejection of the neocons and the Israeli lobby and the deep state military-industrial complex that has been cheerleading this war in the United States and in Israel and among his donor class, and critically among the co-investors. So many of his family—Kushner, his son-in-law, Don Jr., Eric Trump, his two sons, Trump himself—are deeply tied into investments from the Emirates, from the Saudis, and from the Israelis. And their sovereign funds are essential to their own personal financial futures.

So all of those factors have played a role in Trump sort of being stuck in this stalemate posture because he won't sign a deal that Iran could sign, knows he really can't escalate because the escalatory dominance is in Iran's hands, but at the same time knows that if he exits, he gets blowback from different participants. Now, the thing that's moderated over time is the Qataris and the Saudis went from cheerleading this war to wanting an exit to the war. So behind the scenes, from what I heard, the Saudis, everybody in the Gulf—when Trump says everybody in the Gulf was on board other than Oman—he's right in terms of what they relayed to him before the war. But the Qataris and the Saudis quickly exited and backtracked, realizing this was not going well at all.

The Kuwaitis and Bahrain will mostly go along with what the Saudis and the Qataris want. So all that's left here leading further escalation of the war are the Emiratis, who grew up playing Call of Duty and think war is a game. Of course, a lot of the Emiratis are deeply—some of the leadership of the Emiratis are tied into the Epstein files and things like that. But they were the ones behind about a half-billion-dollar investment into World Liberty Financial, one of those crypto rug pulls that Trump did a ton of right between his election and his inauguration. And that was basically a gift of a half-billion dollars to the Trump family. So the Trump brothers are invested now in the Israeli drone company that is also profiteering from the war.

Jared Kushner has received huge investments from the Emiratis and the Saudis and others connected to the conflict. Witkoff has real estate deals tied to the Emiratis and the Israelis and the Saudis. So there's a lot of personal financial ties. And you heard rumors that the \$300 billion being floated is part of a potential deal between the U.S. and Iran. The key was that Witkoff was relating to someone, whomever he could talk to, because the regular Iranians aren't talking to him anymore. So he'd just find some random mechanic shop somewhere, say, hey, let them know that I'll push for that \$300 billion as long as we get a piece of it, because that's their whole thing. I mean, it's one big shakedown operation. Basically, Trump runs the White House like it's the Corleone family, except somehow dumber.

And so that's the modus operandi all the way through. And the hurdle to getting—he can't admit defeat. He can't deal with criticism from the Israel lobby and the Israeli-aligned donor class and deep state folks here in the States, but at the same time knows he can't realistically escalate without it getting a lot worse. And that's where there's been this sort of stalemate. Now, what may have broken through is what Larry Johnson reported last week. I heard from people that they received the message in the White House that Larry Johnson had relayed, which was that Iran has stated that if there isn't a deal done and there's any form of escalation, they will then withdraw from the negotiations, withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and that they will set off a nuclear weapon to show that they now have nukes.

And that threw a shockwave into the White House. And so there was an expectation amongst people like Vance that had been trying to negotiate a deal now for months. And Trump just rug-pulls it every single time Vance gets a deal. Trump rug-pulls it, that Trump would finally sign on that Friday, last Friday. And instead, at the last minute, he's like, well, maybe we can pressure them on a few more points. And it's all PR points that Trump wants Iran to say something so he can say, see, see, see, I've got kind of a head in my hands in terms of success of the war. And Iran, of course, immediately said no. But you've noticed, like what you just saw, a lot less hot rhetoric, a lot less heated rhetoric.

Now he wants to be buddy-buddy with the Supreme Leader. Sorry about murdering your father and your mother and your wife and your kid, but could we sit down and have a little tea? This is where Trump's mindset is these days. But that's a lot better than, hey, I want to go murder everybody again. So that's where Trump is at. His mental state is still diminished in his decision-making capability. So there is always a risk that we just go off the rails at any time. But the Iranian threat of giving the ultimate humiliation to Trump would be Iran getting nuclear weapons after all of this and showing off that they have it. That would be a humiliation he almost couldn't recover from. He could recover from anything.

Being compared to Obama, being compared to Jimmy Carter, any of those things he can recover from. He could not recover from his own ego. I was telling somebody earlier today, Iran has humiliation, escalation, domination. I didn't think that would be a terminology in geopolitics, but

when your president is a mentally diminished Donald Trump, it is. And so I think I'm more hopeful now than I've been in months that we will exit before the month is out, because that's the one thing, even if Iran is bluffing. Trump can't handle the – if there's a 5% risk of it, it's too high for Trump to go through with anything, which means he's got to tell the Israelis to back down and us to exit the blockade.

In that instance, Iran will have trouble keeping the Straits of Hormuz closed if there's no blockade. Then the pressure from China, Russia, and the Global South will go much higher, and their legal justification will radically diminish. As long as there's a blockade, they have a legal justification for limiting all traffic in and out of the Straits of Hormuz. Without the blockade, they don't. But you still have the Israeli problem, and you're right. Israel continues to be an agent provocateur in all of this, with their escalation in Lebanon, escalation in Gaza. But I think that Trump will pull a Reagan in the early 80s, when Reagan first got out after the Beirut bombings of the barracks and then told Israel to stand down.

And I think you saw Trump teasing and testing that out. How would different parts of the U.S. audience respond to me cussing Bibi out? Whether he did or he didn't, he's testing out that narrative. He's already been told the polling data from people polling it. Right now, Americans perceive Donald Trump as weak. He hates to be perceived as weak. And basically, in cruder terms—there are cruder terms for it—but let's just say Bibi dog-walking. Let's put it that way, to use a phrase from other parts of American culture.

But it's alliteration with Bibi, is the popular phrase people say in answer to the polls. Kind of rhymes with "witch," and Trump hates that perception just as much as he hates the risk of humiliation. So the fact he teased that out and he didn't get a lot of blowback—even Mark Levin was running excuses as to why the story shouldn't have been leaked, but he didn't say the story didn't happen or even blow back on Trump—tells me that's the path he's on. So he's got to get Bibi to stand down and step down and be restrained enough to say, "We're ending the blockade, and the Strait's open, and everything's great. Just declare victory. Go home." I think that's more likely than signing anything, because even though the Qataris have stepped up and said they'll be the middleman for the relief of the sanctions of the U.S. frozen assets of Iran.

Trump hates any idea that he gave any kind of money to Iran because of the comparison to Obama. So I think it's highly unlikely we get a deal. But I think it is highly likely we exit and that Strait relatively normalizes. And we've got a new—and probably the next announcement down the road is just, what are the Saudis and Qataris doing? Do they create a new peace architecture with Pakistan and Turkey and Iran, and as part of that architecture, in order to further restrain the Greater Israel project and further have the U.S. further leave the Middle East? Because realistically, what good have we done there? I've never been a fan of us being there. But even for those that were, it's hard to justify the expense.

It's hard for the Arab countries and Muslim countries that supported it and enabled it and paid for it to say this was a good expenditure of money. It's just one big target on their back, what they drew. By having U.S. military bases present, Iran has done severe and very expensive damage to those bases. So restoring them would be a very costly proposition. So you aggregate those things. I think the end run a year from now is you have a stronger, more independent Iran than you did before. The U.S. is more removed from the Middle East than ever before. Israel is more restrained than it has been in a long time. And the world looks anew, just not in the way Trump thought he was redrawing it on February 28.

## **#Nima**

Just moments before coming to this live, Robert, we've learned that the U.S. Senate voted in favor of a resolution limiting Trump's power regarding the war with Iran. The House of Representatives voted with a majority of 215 votes to 208 after four Republicans joined the Democrats.

## **#Nima**

I think this has some sort of connection with public opinion in the United States. There's so much concern about what's going on in the Middle East and how deep the United States is going to get involved in this war. We know that Benjamin Netanyahu doesn't want the United States to get out of the region. They're mostly concerned because they want to be involved in the war against Lebanon, since they don't want to withdraw from Lebanon. And we know what has happened with the case of Lebanon and how they issued some sort of statement, some sort of announcement that they're going to attack Dahia, the southern part of Beirut. Then Iran responded with the same sort of announcement: you have to leave the northern part of Israel because we're going to do the same thing that you tried to do in Beirut, in Dahia, in the southern part of Beirut.

And this is the concern right now, even in the U.S. Senate. They want to limit what Donald Trump can do. So far, they haven't done it. And it seems that things are getting serious in the United States. How deep is that going to go as time goes by, in your opinion, with public opinion, with the political parties? Some Republicans, I would say, we have a huge division within the base who voted for Donald Trump, the MAGA movement, about what Donald Trump is doing today with the case of—he was preaching no war, no more, no endless wars. Right now, he's trapped in a war in the Middle East, as you perfectly mentioned, the situation there. How do you see the internal situation and what's going on in the United States influencing Trump's decisions in the Middle East?

## **#Robert**

So the nature of that vote, now that the House and the Senate have both voted that Trump has no authorization for any further war, military, or kinetic actions against Iran, is, in my view, constitutionally binding. I see people saying, oh, well, Trump can veto it. Not really, because the

Constitution gives to Congress exclusively the authority to declare war, and that was deliberately chosen. They thought one man should never have the power to get us involved in a war anywhere in the world. And so even under the War Powers Resolution Act, which attempted to codify that—the principles in the law—that only Congress can authorize it, initiate it, or originate it, but the president can act within self-defense where and when necessary.

And so they created the War Powers Resolution Act to codify those two principles. And that became law, I think over Nixon's veto, as I recall. But all that did was set up a protocol for how they would handle this in the future. And once it got past a certain time frame, Trump had to get congressional authorization. He never did. But here it's gone a step further. Both the House and the Senate have said, no, you can't go any further. And it would be like the president, you know, vetoing—like you have to get approval through the Senate now for certain nominations for executive positions, for judges, for treaties, et cetera.

Imagine if the president said, no, the Senate has rejected this treaty, but I hereby veto their rejection of the treaty. He can't do that. So there's really no constitutional authority for him to veto them saying you can't go in. They're saying not only have we not authorized this conflict, we're saying you're deauthorized. And so the very first article of impeachment of President Trump will be if he goes in and initiates any kind of meaningful escalation militarily with Iran after this date as an unconstitutional act and as a war crime act, because if you don't have authorization and it isn't within self-defense, then it's also a potential war crime allegation.

And he's going to have a Democratic House and, I think, likely a Democratic Senate because of what you detailed. So there are two major problems. One is, whichever party is considered the party more likely to keep you out of war has won almost every election in American history going back a century. So if you are seen as the party more likely to keep you out of war, it's very rare that that party doesn't win the election cycle. Right now, Democrats have a double-digit lead on that, and it keeps expanding and expanding. It's either been close, or Trump had the lead in prior midterms or elections.

So the Republicans did. So that's how bad it has gotten for Trump and Republicans in the midterms. Then you have other factors such as the economy, the cost of living crisis, a perception that jobs really aren't going great for ordinary working-class families, that health care and housing are unaffordable and inaccessible to too many working-class families in America. And the Epstein files are a major scandal. And then some of these corruption and fraud scandals that are starting to come up. I don't know if you saw the Albania story, but it turns out that Qataris owned an island in Albania that Nat Rothschild introduced Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump to.

They decided to just grab the island and were going to make, and it appears by public prosecution investigations, somebody bribed the Albanian officials. You know, Albania, that's no big surprise. They're like Ukraine when it comes to ethics and government, let's put it that way. They put any old political machine to shame by the open graft and grift that goes on there. You know, they've frozen

all the accounts connected to it because of how serious it is. But it just gives you a little microcosm. The problem for Trump is not only does he have all these things happening at the same time—cost of living crisis, job concerns, housing concerns, health care concerns, Epstein file concerns.

These scandal issues and economic issues, with an underlying sense of betrayal among a lot of your new Trump voters. These are young voters, minorities, millennials, Zoomers—disproportionately, not exclusively, but disproportionately—and anti-war voters in the industrial Midwest and the rural Midwest, along with the Hispanic Southwest, which has had a historic war skepticism because it's their family members who disproportionately serve in these wars that end up leading to casualties and deaths. The problem is they're all connected to the war. They think, why do we have a cost of living crisis? Because of the energy costs going through the roof because of this war.

Why is the Epstein Files scandal—why wasn't that ever revealed? Because of the Israel lobby. Why is it that people feel a sense of betrayal or realignment? Because if you promised no new wars and wouldn't be in the pocket, and would Deep Six the deep state, and wouldn't be in the pocket of the donor class, all of them feel betrayed related to this war. So you integrate those factors politically—when just two of those four factors have been present in the midterm, the average number of House seats lost by the incumbent party is over 50 seats, and the average number of Senate seats lost is—they lose 75% of their competitive seats.

What would that mean? That would mean losing over 50 House seats in this cycle, which would give Democrats a massive margin in the House. And it means losing eight Senate seats and not only losing the Senate, but getting 55, 56, 57 Democratic senators—to where you're not that far away from just a few Republicans, 10%, 20% of Republicans joining in, and all of a sudden it's not only impeachment time, it's conviction and removal time. So that's what the president told.

He faces severe risk in the midterms related to this war—severe economic risk related to this war, energy shock risk related to this war—and that doesn't even get into the fact that the equity markets face a combination of the things that have sunk the markets before: a price shock like 1973 that sunk that market, a tech shock, a tech bubble that sunk the dot-com market, the equity and private finance and credit-related issues that created the global financial crisis, and then a liquidity crisis that caused the '86 crash. Well, right now you've got liquidity problems in the equity markets. You've got bubble questions—in particular, AI bubble questions—in the equity markets.

You've got a price shock that's ongoing that we haven't even fully felt yet at all, because we literally dumped all of our strategic reserves onto the global market to try to keep the prices down. That ain't there. It runs out in a couple of weeks, even in the U.S. and in the West, in terms of available reserves we can tap. And you've got a private equity crisis where some very big names—the BlackRocks of the world, et cetera—are having their various subsidiaries that are in the private equity market, private capital, private credit market, in serious trouble, denying redemptions, things like that. So you could have a stock market collapse in the middle of all this. So that's where Trump faces massive risk.

He knows he faces massive risk until Iran said, "Maybe we'll have nukes, and we'll show off to the world we do, just to humiliate you and to create deterrence." Trump was still unwilling to budge on ultimately folding to a deal. But now I think he knows the political risk is high, the economic risk is sky high, the risk to his own family wealth and financial situation—because if the Emiratis decide, now they're still nuts, but if they ever back off like the Saudis are backing off—all of a sudden, a lot of Kushner's funds disappear, a lot of other funds disappear connected to the family wealth apparatus that Trump has been building through his second term. So all the motivation and incentives are to get out, and to get out sooner rather than later. And I think that is likely to act.

We're actually going to get a more rational Trump because of his fear of humiliation more than any of those other rational motivations. But everybody else in the White House and the Republican Party is equally aware of it. And now the House and Senate have both gone on record, very rare in American legal history, and said, no, you have no more authority to escalate. Takes that card kind of out of the deck for him to do in a way that doesn't backfire in a future impeachment and removal. So it increases the chances that we exit. It's just, do we exit with any kind of deal that creates a stable Middle East in the future, or do we just exit, run away, and pretend we won? I think the latter is more likely given Trump's current mindset and mentality.

## **#Nima**

I think there is no good off-ramp for Donald Trump right now. And one of the reasons is this war of choice has depleted the U.S. stockpile when it comes to cruise missiles, you name it, and we had the interceptors being depleted during the war. Something like, somehow, with interceptors with the THAAD system, there were reports that 50% of those interceptors were depleted. The problem is how he is going to replace them, how he's going to get it back to what it was before this war started. He went to China. I think part of the plan was to make a new deal with the rare earth minerals and just improve that. It seems that that didn't work well.

That's why you see yesterday Marco Rubio talking about how we are dependent 90% on these minerals coming from China. We have to diversify. He went to Armenia, making a new deal with Armenia. I don't know what the capabilities of Armenia are in providing that sort of minerals to the United States. But after all, these are all problems that Donald Trump himself created for his administration and for the United States. And that's why I don't know if even the continuation of the war is going to deplete more of the stockpile of the United States. You know, 39 days of war, looking at Iran today, and they're back.

They have the same number of missiles and drones, but, you know, we had reports, even in the New York Times, talking about this. So this is the reality of what he's in. And I don't know what is the off-ramp, a good off-ramp, a safe, a face-saving off-ramp for Donald Trump to help him. I don't see that coming from Iran. I don't see that coming from Israel because Benjamin Netanyahu doesn't want to help him. It's impossible to get it from Benjamin Netanyahu. He would do everything. I think

one of the reasons that he had that phone call, you know, because of the case of Lebanon, there was a phone call that Axios reported that Donald Trump was talking badly with Benjamin Netanyahu.

Then he, today in a new interview, confirmed that he did that. Benjamin Netanyahu was asked if that happened. He somehow said that that happened. So this is the desperate situation that Donald Trump created. But he's not there. He doesn't want to put the blame on Benjamin Netanyahu. I don't know why that is. And he can do something about it, about Israel. You're the big guy in the Middle East. Go and fight it by yourself. Why? You know, this is the problem. How do you see that? How do you see the way that Donald Trump could redefine or reassess his sort of position in getting out of the war, but making it as, you know, less consequential as possible?

## **#Robert**

I think realistically his belief that he could find a way to coerce Iran to give him a face-saving exit has not come to fruition. And because Iran knows that, I don't think they're acting irrationally. I think they see their future deterrence as needing a humiliated exit, not an honorable exit for the U.S.—that an honorable exit increases their risk. They get attacked again. Whereas a humiliating exit, like we did in Korea, like we did in Vietnam, like we did ultimately in Afghanistan, ultimately seals the deal to avoid a recurrence or revisiting an attack on Iran.

And so I agree with you. So what they've had to do is keep escalating the humiliation risk, the fear factor, rather than the carrot. They have to keep going with the stick because the carrot's not available to Trump. Now, I think the way Trump can sell this is on multiple levels. One, I agree with Dr. Parsi of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, named after my great-great-great cousin, John Quincy Adams, who said you do not go abroad searching for monsters to destroy.

## **#Guest**

Mearsheimer and Walt did a great debate with Victoria Nuland and Mike Pompeo recently in Canada.

## **#Robert**

What's fascinating is Pompeo still didn't get it. Pompeo's like, Iran is a monster worth destroying. John Quincy Adams' point was, it doesn't matter whether you think somebody's a monster. You cannot keep a constitutional republic and be an empire in the name of searching out monsters to destroy. But they couldn't even figure that part out in terms of the debate. But, you know, no surprise there. So the only exit is an exit. And Trump can pretend to be victorious in it, but it removes the bigger fear and the bigger risk to the economy, to his own political future, to the global humiliation of Iran showing they actually have nukes now because of the war.

And I think that will be more of his driving motivation — the stick rather than the carrot, fear rather than hope. And the way he could sell it is he can just sell it. I mean, most of his constituents aren't

going to care. Most voters would just be happy that it's over and that costs might start coming back down. The economy might stabilize. Risk of escalation contained. And I agree with Dr. Parsi as to Israel. The reality is Bibi needs Trump a lot more than Trump needs Bibi at the moment. Bibi's going to have elections in the fall. Trump is the only leader in the world he is popular with.

## **#Guest**

It's not his own country. It's Israel, as he himself has said.

## **#Robert**

His own pollster, Tony Fabrizio, is working for the challenger, Naftali Bennett. Now, I don't think Bennett's any upgrade, really, over Bibi, if you listen to Bennett much. But for Bibi's own political future, he needs Trump backing him through that primary stage. If there's more fights of Trump saying, I don't want Bibi to be president or to be the future prime minister of Israel, Bibi won't be the future prime minister of Israel. Then he goes back to trial and back to jail, and that's where he finishes his prison sentence, finishes his political legacy, and history is in an Israeli prison.

So Trump's got all the leverage against Bibi he wants to use, and especially right now. And the question is, does he start to use it? I think he did that conversation and leaked out its contents to see if the donor class here would really rebel. And they didn't. There wasn't a huge donor class rebellion telling Trump he had to back down off of critiquing and criticizing Bibi. And once he saw that, and again, his own pollster is working for Bennett. So that tells you that there isn't anything locked in with his donor class here. As to Bibi personally, that puts Bibi very much dependent on Trump. So Trump's got to use that leverage.

He's also got to use it in such a high-profile, public way, the way Reagan did in the early '80s, that it buys him some public respect back that he has effectively lost there by being seen as being dog-walked and being a puppet of Bibi and the Israel lobby. It would do him a lot of good to be publicly smacking Bibi and putting Bibi back in the box. And that is only evidenced by action. That's the other thing Iran is now determined to do. They really don't care about words or what's in writing at all. It's become clear they want action. So that means not, "Hey, we have a ceasefire," but that means we can shoot. Israel's definition of a ceasefire is they don't get shot at.

Not that version of a ceasefire. An actual ceasefire — not going back into Gaza, not going back into Lebanon, and staying quiet for the rest of election season. And Bibi's got to win on the merits, not under the cover of another war. And I think if he doesn't do that, Trump risks the global humiliation that Iran is promising him with a demonstration of nuclear weapons. And I guarantee you that keeps Trump up at night all the time. So that fear, I think, will drive him more than anything else and will probably get him to do what he long should have done, which is put Bibi in a box and Israel back inside its own borders.

## **#Nima**

Do you think that Benjamin Netanyahu, if—let's assume Donald Trump gets out of the region—what would happen to Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel? What are the repercussions? What would be the repercussions in Israel and the way that Israelis would somehow—because we know what's going on with the military power of Israel. They are in the southern part of Lebanon, they're talking about advancing and getting more land. But we know that the reality is something different. Lebanon is not going to be what has happened in Gaza. Lebanon has the power, has the military power to fight back. That's why they're so desperate.

We had the Israeli ambassador to the UN talking about how these drones are making a huge impact on the battlefield, inflicting a lot of suffering for Israeli soldiers, the Israeli air defense system, and the communication systems they have. So what would happen to Israel if, let's assume, the Donald Trump administration decides to get out of the region? Not reaching any sort of deal, just as he did—you remember what he's done against the Yemenis in the Red Sea. He said, they capitulated, they're not going to attack us, we're going to get out of here, we're going to get back home. He's going to do the same thing—the Yemeni version and the Red Sea version—and he's going to get back home. What would happen to Israel the day after?

## **#Robert**

That would be an interesting question. I mean, I think it's in Israel's own best interest to restrain itself. I think that they've hurt themselves. They've become a political pariah in the court of public opinion, even in the United States. It's natural for these small countries surrounded by perceived adversaries to look to create a parasitic relationship with a greater power to fight their wars for them because they can't fight them on their own terms. But they're in a constant state of fear and concern because of their surroundings. So I get the logic of why Israel thinks the way it has, but the practical reality is it's backfired on them politically. They have more adversaries than ever before. The Abraham Accords are dead, lead, or walking, despite Trump's own delusional mindset in that regard.

That was relayed to him very clearly by a range of people not to bring it up again. And so I think Israel has to go back into its box. The reality is, if they would quit killing Palestinians and Lebanese and Syrians and everybody else on a daily basis, then the rest of the world is willing to come to some form of détente with them. They want some recognition and respect for Palestinian rights. But that can be something that can be negotiated over time, and they can at least de-escalate the hostilities. But it will require them exiting Lebanon and honoring the ceasefire in Gaza. If they don't do that, they will continue to lose allies and risk their entire political future in ways I think they don't really appreciate.

That first two generations of Israeli leadership were acutely aware of how badly things could go in the court of public opinion and how destructive that could be for their Israeli ambitions and aspirations. This generation really isn't. And the post-October 7th generation has, I've said, lost their

minds and their souls after that, and they display it on a daily basis. But when you're doing it against Christians and Lebanese and not just Palestinians, there were things they could get away with because of public perception that was hostile to Hamas, that was hostile to the Palestinian cause in some parts of the world. But that dissipates and disappears the moment you're hitting Catholic churches, Christian churches, Orthodox churches, historic Christian communities.

When you're murdering 3,000-plus Lebanese in less than a month or a month and a half like they've done, when you're targeting little girls coming home on their bicycles, when every single day there's another story of a kid being murdered by Israel, when they're not busy looting homes and destroying Christian religious objects—so they've lost their minds and their souls. And Europe has been so absent and AWOL. Europe should have stepped in to be a real hedge against a lot of this, but they weren't. And, of course, we haven't been really much at all, but now we have to be. And I think it's for Israel's own good to realize, okay, we can't be in Lebanon.

We've got to recognize what's happening in Gaza. We've got to restore and focus on ourselves instead, and our defenses instead. Quit being obsessed with trying to take out every other regime in the entire Middle East, and wake up to sanity. If they don't, they really risk their political future in a meaningful way because they're a pariah in the United States. And I've studied this issue for a long time. I thought they were a year and a half ago. I said they were on the path by the next decade to be a political pariah in the United States. They're already a political pariah in the United States, other than evangelicals over the age of 50. That's the only group that has a positive opinion of Israel.

And even within that group, which used to be 95-5 pro-Israel, it's now just 2-1. There's a third of them that are also off the train. Evangelicals under the age of 50 want nothing to do with Israel. And every other demographic group, including Jewish voters, are skeptical of Israel, particularly if they're not boomers. So they're relying on a dying generation and a donor class's disproportionate control that I think is short-term rather than long-term. Taking out Thomas Massie will have done them greater harm than they could ever imagine because it awoke and red-pilled a whole broad group of younger people who did not understand the scale to which the Israel lobby is literally buying our members of Congress and intimidating our members of Congress into working for a nation.

And in the middle of all this, to give you the idea of their hubris, they're like, why don't we unite the U.S. military technologies, the very base and foundation, with the Israeli military? So they get access from the bottom up, as well as the top down, to all of our military secrets. I mean, this is insane. We've never given that to any other nation. Not in NATO, not during war with an ally, nobody. And now we're going to give it to Israel, of all people? In the middle of this? When they're a political pariah? When Bibi Netanyahu's approval in the United States is in the teens? I mean, it's insane.

And you're going to start to see it show up in campaigns and elections, and there will be rebellion. So Israel's future is really politically numbered unless they start to restrain themselves and start to focus on themselves, not everybody around them, and focus on a meaningful peace agreement with the Palestinians, and stop their war against Hezbollah, stop their war in Syria, stop their wars on the

West Bank and in Gaza, and stop their war against Iran. If they don't wake up to that reality, they may not exist as a nation in 10 years in the same form we know them today.

## **#Nima**

But they're already talking about fighting Turkey and Egypt, and I would argue, the guy who's arguing this, Jonathan Pollard—he's an Israeli spy, by the way—but he's so popular in Israel. He's representing the majority of the people in Israel. This is the way they feel about the region. They think that they have to fight each and everybody in the region. And this is not their fight. I think that one of the things that has happened recently, just two or three days ago, is that the United States is going to merge its military with the Israeli military.

I don't know what that is. Does it mean that they're going to fight Turkey? They're going to go to war with Turkey, with Egypt? And what is the benefit of that for the United States? The world is shaping and reshaping itself. Look at what is going on, for example, in St. Petersburg right now. The whole Global South is there, and they're negotiating, talking about new sorts of ties, partnerships, while the United States is trapped in two wars—one in Ukraine and the other one in the Middle East. And nobody knows what that is. And nobody wanted that.

## **#Robert**

I think you're seeing a massive shift, and that what Israel lived off of was a unique set of historical circumstances. The first World War that ended the Ottoman Empire—well, first the Ottoman Empire's existence—which allowed them to get a lot of land titles on the cheap in ways that might not have been normally granted. Then World War I, which allowed the British mandate to be present and the Ottoman Empire's collapse, which they could capitalize upon for furthering their ambitions. Then using the effect of the Holocaust to not only bring in a lot of people, but to motivate wealthy, aligned Jewish people around the world to say, "You really need to support the nation of Israel." Sometimes it was guilt-driven, sometimes it was pride-driven. But it became a mixture, in large part, I think, because of the Holocaust. Then originally with the Soviet Union, and siding with the U.S. during the Cold War.

Then you had the post-9/11-related issues and incidents. They created a certain fear of Islamic immigration and fear of political, politicized, radicalized Islam. All of those sequences of events really garnered them a lot of protection in the West, disparate influence in the think tanks and in the media and academia as well. And they have burned through all of that in record time. In about three years, they've torched it all. And I don't know. And going forward, I mean, they now have the Saudis more worried about them than worried about Iran. If you had told me that 10 years ago, nobody would have really thought that was credible. But that's where we're at. I mean, imagine the Saudis and Iranians and the Turks and the Pakistanis all getting along and agreeing on anything, really, particularly with national security. But that's the effect of a Greater Israel project.

That's what that does—to wake up those otherwise sleeping populations. And so I think you aggregate that. I do think Israel keeps behaving like a dying empire of its own kind, even though it's not been an empire. It's been a would-be regional empire. But it acts like one in terms of its hubris, in terms of its denial of reality—logistically, militarily, politically, economically. I mean, it's bleeding population for the last three years; anywhere from 5% to 20% of its population has fled the country because a lot of people don't want to be subject to bombs every night, don't want to be part of this war culture every night. And now that the West is awake, particularly in the United States, to their corrupting effect on Western policies and politics, I think their days are numbered.

As people put together that Israel used spying on the U.S. to get its nuclear weapons program in the first place, that it lied about and denied to President Kennedy. Then after that, they used Pollard to sell secrets to the Soviet Union during the peak of the Cold War to empower and enrich Israel. And then later on in the 1980s, used Robert Maxwell to infiltrate, through Senator Tower, our technology at nuclear labs and other intelligence agencies that they were siphoning off to their own Israeli tech companies, that Palantir is deeply embedded within the Israeli power structure. That's not an area that's going to be enthusiastic for a lot of people on a go-forward basis. So I think Israel's days are numbered in terms of its Greater Israel Project.

I think that's already lost. They just don't know it yet. How they come to terms with it will be something to watch, and it will determine what kind of future they have. If they return to a more peaceful, cohabitation-oriented set of principles that they have sporadically entertained over their history, then I think they have a vibrant future. If, on the other hand, they want to stay on this warlike, militaristic, imperialistic, anti-human, dehumanized approach to all of their neighbors and those around them with their Greater Israel Project and parasitic relationship with the West, then I think that the country could disappear just as quickly as it came about in the first place.

## **#Nima**

I remember when Iran was negotiating during the JCPOA with the Obama administration. Europe was part of those negotiations. Europe was so strong, so important. And looking at Europe today, nobody seems to care about what these Europeans are talking about. In Iran, nobody cares about Europe anymore. And Russia doesn't care about them because they are continuing with the same sort of policies, somehow supporting Ukraine to continue this war. And where is Europe today? Because they didn't condemn, for example, the war against Iran. They didn't say anything about the war. They didn't say anything about the Israeli invasion of the southern part of Lebanon. Nothing is happening in Europe. Europe is somehow passing away. There is no foreign policy. Because before, we learned that the foreign policy of Europe is defined by NATO. And who's NATO today? There is no NATO. I don't see NATO anymore. Who are these countries, and who's deciding on the part of Europe?

## **#Robert**

What's fascinating to watch, I mean, I've told my Democratic friends, people like Congressman Ro Khanna is probably going to run for president in 2028, in large part on an Israel-skeptical ticket. That is the problem for Democrats—to reach out to the anti-war vote in a credible way that Trump was able to consolidate in 2024, but now is jeopardized by his own actions in the Iran war especially, but also by not solving the Ukraine war that he promised to resolve rapidly. On the same day that they voted for no more authorization for the Iran war, the Democrats said, "But we want more sanctions on Russia and more support for Ukraine."

It's like, okay, I don't consider it a great improvement that we go from trying to wage war with one civilization that has a civilizational state like Iran with Persian history to another one that already has nuclear weapons—and a whole bunch of them, more than everybody else combined—despite what the president said about not being able to count up nukes. So Europe has proven to be extraordinary, especially for a continent that kind of prided itself during the Cold War as the sort of diplomatic intermediary between the U.S. and Russia, to devolve into pre-World War I politics. The irrationality, the phobia, the fear-mongering, the war whoring—especially for a regime as ridiculous as Ukraine.

You know, it may happen in a decade, but it'll definitely happen within the next generation or two, where people look back and say, how in the world did these people back Ukraine—one of the most corrupt countries in the world, a country known for its human trafficking, for its bio labs, for its gangsters, for its money laundering, all of that? That's the country that—and Zelensky, this coked-up freak—this guy is the one that we invested all this hope and faith in and pretended he was a combination of Churchill and Lincoln? I mean, this will be humiliating down the road to the sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters of these so-called leaders in the West. But the U.K. is a joke. The Nordic countries are a joke. The Baltic countries are a joke. France is a joke. Germany is a joke.

All the big countries are now a joke in Europe. And they're so unrepresentative of their voters that you're going to see a complete collapse of the major parties in the U.K. that have dominated for a century. You're going to see a complete collapse of the center-left and center-right in France. You've already seen the beginnings of it. It's going to be Mélenchon and Le Pen, the so-called far-left and far-right, as they like to be caricatured, as the Western media likes to caricature them. You might see the AfD rise to dominate Germany, who wants to put back the coal deal with Russia that Alemannic coal had way back. So you're seeing Italy now and then deviate from this institutional norm. You've seen it in Czechia and another when they have an honest election—they've had one in Romania.

These other ones in Bulgaria, you see the war-skeptical people rise to power. It's what the voters want. But they're getting unrepresented, and they're impoverishing Europe at the same time at a record level. I mean, where do they think they're going to build all the missiles and bombs and drones from? From what? From what industrial base? You just torched it. You just relied on the energy from Europe. And now the second source of energy from Qatar in the Gulf is now also cut

off. And you guys are just sitting around, "Oh, golly gee, what do we do? Well, we've got to focus more on Russia." I mean, it's insanity. While they rattle their cage in such a way that Russia is talking in normal, everyday, respectable opinion circles, the words "maybe we should use a tactical nuke" are now being discussed in Russia.

That's how bad the West has handled this. It reminds me of the buildup to World War I. Within a decade, you had regimes that had lasted 300 years, 400 years, 600 years. Whether you're talking about the Austro-Hungarian regime, whether you're talking about the Russian Empire, whether you're talking about the Ottoman Empire, to a large degree the British Empire—they were gone within five to ten years. Empires that had dominated, that everybody going back 30 generations had only known, were gone overnight because of hubris, because they misread what would happen in that conflict. And then the same leaders led the world into a global depression that gave us fascism and communism and another 100 million dead over the next 20 years.

So we have the same level of incompetent rubes in positions of power throughout the Western world, whether we're talking about Europe or the United States. And it's terrifying for the rest of us who have to watch while they play roulette with our lives and our futures. Hopefully, the irony with all this is the most sane people out of all this, the most rational people out of all this, acting in their own self-interest that might redeem it all, might end up being Russia, China, and Iran—the so-called actors of evil—are the only people that might keep the peace. That's the way the world has turned upside down in the last decade.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, yeah, exactly. I think Europe is just going down, and they have no solution for what they're facing. They don't want to hate Russia. And they have this situation in the Middle East. Nobody knows when we're going to put an end to the war in the Middle East. I think it's going to be a continuous sort of war. So there is no solution for Europe for the time being. And they don't, even they themselves, they don't do anything.

## **#Robert**

Is there any? You know, Ursula von der Crazy, Kaya Cowley. Look at these people. Does anybody confuse them with, you know, even Chirac? You know, not to mention some of the greater leaders before that. Does anybody confuse them with Churchill? Does anybody, even though Churchill had a bunch of issues, but putting that aside, nobody confuses these people with the great leaders of Europe. They're a joke. You forget about them two years after they get into power. You throw it out in a year. Then everybody forgets about it. They have the lowest approval ratings in the history of Europe. I mean, Macron in France, Merz in Germany, and Starmer in the UK. They're setting records with how much they're hated and despised by their own public. And for what? For some third-grade version of civics that they learned in school.

You know, it's incredible. And the impotence and the weakness. I mean, to have Trump smack you around like that, you'd think that'd be humiliating. But they don't even have pride left in this fake leadership class of Europe. It's a bunch of kids who went and played Model UN in high school, and now they're actually getting to be the UN. And we're seeing the disaster of this kind of childlike mindset, of this kid-like behavior, this entitlement complex and hubris that they are riddled with. Alexander Mercouris of The Duran put it well once: the result, whenever hubris rises too far, is that's when, in the Greek tradition, Nemesis comes to play. And you probably couldn't have any better Nemesis than the Persian civilization and the Russian civilization to wake up the Western world.

**#Nima**

Yeah. Thank you so much, Robert, for being with us today. Great pleasure, as always. Absolutely. Always fun. See you soon.

**#Robert**

Take care, everybody. Take care.

**#Nima**

Bye-bye.