

Robert Barnes: US Attacks Iran: Jordan, Bahrain & Kuwait Were Hit Within Hours

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Wednesday, June 10th, 2026, and our dear friend Robert is here with us. Welcome, Robert.

#Robert

Happy to be here.

#Nima

I want to start with what has happened between Iran and the United States. Finally, Benjamin Netanyahu, he's so successful in dragging, you know, these sort of wars going on and on and on. And we had Israeli, you know, it all started with the Israeli attack on Beirut, on Dahieh. Then the Iranian response to Israel. Israel responded to Iran. Iran attacked Israel again. Then the United States—yesterday Donald Trump came out and said, what? There is something going on in the Persian Gulf, in the Strait of Hormuz. Our helicopter was there to patrol the region, the Strait of Hormuz, which is so strange to be there. And then the story is just amazing, hearing how a drone attacked the helicopter, destroyed the helicopter. Then the two pilots survived the attack, and they're safe and uninjured. What is your understanding of what's going on? Because today Donald Trump is just arguing a lot of things, that he said today we're going to attack Iran again. Your understanding of what's going on?

#Robert

So the president has had multiple opportunities to get out of his self-created disaster and debacle since early April. And Vice President Vance has taken the lead on a lot of those efforts, because Vance was a critic of the war from the inception, as the New York Times and other publications have now confirmed. There'll be some misunderstandings along the way because Trump and Vance, internally and within the chain of command, will be the loyal foot soldiers. But what happened inside the Situation Room was he advocated against the war all the way through. But you'll have people

like Colonel McGregor and others, they'll hear from their sources that there's no deviation between Vance and Trump on the war. But that's because of internal messaging, not what was happening in the Situation Room.

And so the original deal that was there was for the Strait to be opened, a ceasefire in all conflicts, and no blockade or anything like that as stage one. And then stage two would progress to setting up the parameters of negotiations, which we had agreed to as part of that ceasefire — that stage two would be about economic and sanctions relief in return for liberalizing certain aspects along the Strait of Hormuz and other components before transitioning into negotiations controlling nuclear enrichment capacity and any existing enriched materials. The president then — and then that deal, that second stage of the deal — was reached past the ceasefire. Well, first I should say that the ceasefire happens, and then Lebanon, as you point out now, but also all the way back then, immediately breaches it.

In fact, they escalate right after the ceasefire is entered into. And at first, people thought, oh, they're just doing that to try to get everything out before they have to really shut down with a ceasefire. No, they were doing it to completely undermine the ceasefire. So in response, the Iranians were not fully opening up the Strait. And then Trump said, OK, I'm keeping the blockade in. Then the deal is there's an announcement of a ceasefire, Iran announces the Strait is open, and Trump decides to confabulate in his brain, literally just make it up, that, oh, really, they've agreed to give me all their nuclear materials, and they've agreed to all these things they didn't agree to. And so Trump blows it up. Trump says, oh, all throughout this, the Iranians are playing us. No, it's Trump playing everybody.

Nobody, the Iranians have been straightforward through the whole negotiations. Everybody inside the White House knows. The guy that keeps tap dancing around this is Trump himself. So then Iran was like, okay, we'll reclose the Strait. And since then, at least six times, that original deal has been put back into force, with just Iran demanding a little more each time. Like, okay, if you're going to breach it, then we're going to have to demand that you pay a higher price before any good conditions get met. And the latest was some amounts of money being released, which, contrary to what Trump has said, has already happened to some scale and will continue to happen. It just comes through intermediaries rather than directly from a U.S. bank to a bank in Tehran. Every time he gets close to a deal, Trump rug-pulls it.

It's kind of like his crypto coins. If you invested in them, you ended up busted pretty much — 96%, 97% decline. But not in the Trump family. They made half a billion, conservatively, off of those rug pulls. Yesterday, for example, Vance is out to persuade people on the deal we're about to sign. And while that is going on, Trump hits the panic button. He sees all this criticism from the Israel lobby because he obsessively watches Fox News. He hears it from the donor class and from senators like Wicker and Graham and all those lunatics who he likes to listen to for whatever reason. And he chickens out over and over again. And people always assumed he would chicken out in favor of the markets.

Instead, he doesn't. He chickens out in favor of the Israel lobby. He's so intimidated and afraid of criticism from that crowd that he decides to make what was likely an accident, if it was anything. The idea that a drone attack was targeting a helicopter that was flying however high in the sky, and the only two people on board come out completely unscathed — sorry, that doesn't happen. So the narrative that they're pushing, I think the president knew it, by the way. It just became a cover. It became a cover for him. "Oh, I don't want the Israel lobby mad at me. I can't take that." So he immediately goes back in and starts escalating again.

And in his confabulated mind, when he emotionally decides, for psychological reasons, he needs to do something that's just plainly stupid. He keeps saying, "Every other president before me has been stupid," and that's how Iran has played him. No, every other president before Trump has not been as stupid as Trump. He's going to go down as the dumbest president we've ever had in his second term, as well as the most corrupt in American political history, which is saying something in the recent era. Trump decides to go back in and re-escalate. And he's talking about doing it again today. So he can't do a deal that compares him to Obama. He can't do a deal that the Israel lobby attacks and critiques him for.

And when you can't do either one of those deals, you're literally deal-incapable. What the Russians figured out six months ago, unfortunately the Iranians are figuring out in a lifetime, that Trump is not capable of a deal. That's why Joe Kent and I and some others, with friends and allies on the anti-war side in the administration, have been advocating from day one a path: just get Trump to get out. He's never going to do a reasonable deal. He's not capable of doing a reasonable deal because he is so fear-riddled. You know, whether it's the post—I mean, what got him talking the right way for about 10 days was the risk that Iran had or would show off nukes if this escalated, whether it was true or not true.

I know there's different, you know, there's assumptions that either—I mean, what I do know is that that information was relayed to the White House. That I do know from Iranian and Pakistani sources. So what I don't know is whether they were bluffing or not. What the White House doesn't know is if they were bluffing or not because of the religious implications and ramifications of announcing a reversal, of course. But from the polling data I've seen, and this was kind of true for a while, but now Professor Mamdani confirms it's definitely true, the sentiment in Iran amongst the people is to get a nuclear weapon. I mean, it's like every—I mean, the Sadat professor at the University of Maryland polled this question in Iran all the way back to '07, '08. And even then there was a strong sentiment within Iran that they should have nuclear weapons, as a matter of pride and deterrence.

And I have no doubt that the overwhelming sentiment in Iran now, particularly amongst the military cadre, is that we made a mistake by not developing a nuclear weapon, because we're not going to use it. I mean, my understanding is also—you might know this better than I—obviously, people that know the Shia Islamic tradition would know it much better than I. But my understanding of the

fatwa is that there are ways, even if we consider it enforced past the death of the leader that issued it, that the interpretation of it is you could never use a nuclear weapon, not that you could never necessarily have one if circumstances and conditions change.

And so part of what the White House is assessing is whether that threat was real. But while Trump was worried about it, that's what motivated him to say, OK, we definitely got to exit. And once he got blowback, not from Iran but from Israel, the Israel lobby, he convinces himself, oh no, that's probably not really a risk. That's why I keep telling people he can't make good decisions. The decision-making process is completely broken. The Trump anyone has known from any time before is gone. It's just gone. And so he thinks like a toddler, like it's two-year-old-level thinking. And the consequence of that is what he will do is he will convince himself that the bad thing can't happen.

So when he changes direction for emotional reasons, he then self-rationalizes his decision to say, oh, that's how, even though literally everybody told him the Straits would be closed, they would randomly close the Straits or move or at least try. He convinced himself when he decided to go in that no, no, that won't ever happen, and then acted shocked afterwards. And similar to other things. So people have to understand his mindset is such that he's driven entirely by fear—fear of humiliation, fear of embarrassment, fear of comparison to Obama, fear of criticism from the Fox News crowd and the Israel lobby, fear of being humiliated on a global stage if Iran actually does develop and show off that they have nukes.

It's just fear, fear, fear, fear, fear of getting so crushed in the midterms that he gets impeached and removed from the presidency. That's all that's motivating him. But whatever fear short-term dominates, he rationalizes and excuses and justifies to himself that the other fears on the other side of the ledger will never come true. And it takes massive efforts to break through to him. That's also why you see him flip-flop within a day, within a minute, within an hour. It's different emotions, different fears dominating at different times. But in my view, the best hope for the U.S. and the world is a Trump exit, not a Trump deal, because he's not capable of a deal.

#Nima

I think with the attack on Iran, they attacked two islands and one port — the Siri Island, the Qeshm Island, and the Jask Port. And what was amazing is that they attacked two water supplies. In Sirik — why is that? Why do you need to? Because it's an island. You attack that — do you want the same thing happening in Israel, for example, if they try to do that? Because Iran has tried to avoid attacking desalination plants during the war. They have not hit any of these desalination plants during the war. That's part of the Shia ideology, by the way — you don't hit the water supply. But it seems that on the part of the United States, if they try to do that, these sorts of escalations are going to spread all over West Asia, I would say. Not only in Israel — in GCC countries, they can do the same.

#Robert

Yeah, and all of those countries are far more dependent on their water plants than Iran is. So there's two possibilities with that. One is that it was a mistake. It's been confirmed from people I know that, in fact, the Pentagon is using AI to help pick targets. AI is notoriously inaccurate anyway. But the idea that we would experiment using it in a live war is really stupid. But what corrupts it is the AI industry is deeply embedded within the Trump administration and the Trump family and their donor-class allies. And people like Lutnick, people like Besant have personal financial interests tied to it with their friends and allies as well.

So you've got a bunch of cabinet members that need AI to be super profitable, that need to convince people these IPOs are about to roll out — initial public offerings for Anthropic, OpenAI, for SpaceX — which all have some serious or entirely AI-driven entities. And the only thing that's held up the stock market is AI. The only thing that's held up our GDP in Trump's first year is AI. And what if it's a bunch of crap? They decided they can't afford to ask that question, so I think they're employing it. I think they employed it on behalf of Ukraine and ended up hitting that girls' school, just like they hit the girls' school in Iran to start off the whole war.

They've never answered questions honestly about that at all. So I agree with you. Now, the second possibility is that Israeli officers are in the room making decisions about targeting. That wouldn't surprise me at all, unfortunately. And if that's the case, Israel's whole goal is escalation, escalation, escalation. Bibi Netanyahu cannot afford for this war to end. His only chance, it's increasingly clear, of re-election in Israel is that this war be going on in October and November. So even though Vance is running around telling everybody, don't worry, they will definitely be out of this before the midterms, he can't guarantee that because his boss is not a rational actor.

He's an emotional actor with serious decision-making defects in his current psychological makeup. Like, some people worry, oh, he's a narcissist or that. Those people are still rational. Trump is not. And until and unless somebody literally takes away the keys from him, then I don't see how we're gonna get to an enforceable negotiated outcome to this. And since escalation, as you point out, is that Iran holds the escalatory dominance outside of the use of actual nuclear weapons. Other than that, all the tools of escalatory dominance are in Iran's hands.

On both sides, both the pain they can inflict, but as important, the pain they can absorb. They take the oil and gas. People on X that follow this for a living have been pointing out Iran's got at least seven months ahead of their budgeted revenue because of how they budget revenue, the delays in which they receive monies for receipts, and because of how much oil and gas spiked during this time period. And you aggregate those factors, the blockade's not going to work. Trump was really naively thinking somehow that would. He's obsessed that the world must think like him. This is why he doesn't even understand religious people and religious leaders and religious movements around the world, or certain kinds of political movements, in the same capacity.

That's why he could never understand Venezuela, can't understand Cuba. He thought, just go in and bribe people. Isn't everybody motivated by just money, by material needs, by material wants, by material desires? The reality is, there's large parts of the world that are not. I mean, that's been—Iran's proven that for the better part of half a century. They've sacrificed financially for the principles and ideas that the regime holds in ways that very few civilizations would, but not a surprise that a historic civilization with the pride of the Persians does. So Trump doesn't understand Iran. He'll never understand Iran. He really is dumb enough to think if he got in the room with the Ayatollah, that that would lead to a deal. That's where Trump's brain is at.

And so given that, what everybody around the White House and in the Pentagon and in the court of public opinion should be advocating for, in my opinion, is exit. Because the deal is extraordinary. I understand why Dr. Parsey's arguing for a deal. He thinks the deal is the best deal for the world, the best deal especially for Iran, for the ordinary people of Iran, because he thinks it can lead to future change if there's Western investment in Iran that has the best of the moderating effect on the regime that could reform it or overturn it. But Trump is not deal-capable. He hasn't been deal-capable on anything. I mean, look at all the deals we've done on various trade deals. Have any of those deals actually been made into law? I think zero have. Zero. So he promises all this money is coming in. I think very little of it has actually come in. Look at the Board of Peace.

It's a Board of Peace where they're diverting the money to two other accounts other than the official transparent account, where no peace is taking place in Gaza. And Trump doesn't have the guts of Ronald Reagan, doesn't have the intelligence of any of his predecessors that turned down this precise war request that Israel has been making since literally the late 1980s, ever since the end of the Iran-Iraq war, that they thought would take both sides out when it didn't. They started demanding we got to invade Iran. That's when all of a sudden they're about to get a nuke, two weeks away from getting a nuke since 1989. But even if they got a nuke, it doesn't mean they're going to use it in a way that's dangerous to the world. That assumption has always been a faulty one. But only the U.S. has ever used a nuclear weapon. So you look at all of these factors, you got to hope he exits.

And then he finds some cover and pretext to do so. The American people wouldn't care what the pretext is. They just want out. And the economy is starting to scream, scream, scream. And the midterms are so disastrous at the moment, my projections—and I've been betting on these things since I was a kid—is that the Democrats will have 240 or more seats in the House and that they'll have 53 or more seats in the Senate, which means impeachments, investigations, all the corruption scandals. And what happens when people figure out all these corruption scandals are connected to the Israel lobby, whether they are or not, or this war, such as connected to the Emiratis and some of the Saudis, some of the others, some of the Qataris.

Now, the Saudis and the Qataris appear to be off the war train, but if they had been off the war train from the get-go, we may have never gotten into this war. But people don't know that it's not

just the Albanian island that the Kushners are trying to buy to build a fancy resort on that has all these underground tunnels from Soviet communist days, but that little deal involves the Rockefellers—I'm sorry, the Rothschilds—which is synonymous with the foundation of Israel itself and the Israel lobby in the United States, as well as the Qataris. So I think Americans are going to be shocked, and Trump will be faced with a real risk of removal. So that's why some of us have been saying, are you exiting? Are you from his fears?

If you want to get Trump to do something, focus on the fears. What if this terrible thing? What's kept him from sending troops in is Joe Kent's constant warning that he's going to end up like Jimmy Carter. And Trump recently admitted this in either a CBS or CNN interview, that he doesn't want to end up like Jimmy Carter. And he mentioned it in the context of sending soldiers in. So that worked. So think of fear, push the fears that motivate exit rather than escalate, and hope that the people around the president in the Pentagon and the vice president's office are enough to get him out, because Secretary of State Marco Rubio is busy now promoting himself in the context of the war, thinking it buys him the support of the Israel lobby for his 2028 primary nomination challenge.

So there's no hope from the State Department. The CIA is all over the place, even though the regular agents have repeatedly informed and the analysts have said this will be a disaster from day one. But now that Gabbard is out, Amarillo Fox, her deputy, is out, Joe Kent is out, others have been pushed out that are not as high profile but were having influential roles. Trump can handpick what intelligence he wants to receive. And so Trump is not a reliable, trustworthy decision-maker in this context. So cheer for exit, because otherwise what we'll get is escalation.

#Nima

Robert, the reality in the United States, I think, is not changeable, or he cannot change, you know, change the reality with the economy, with the suffering that people are feeling right now. Both CNN and Fox News reported that U.S. inflation rose to 4.2% in May, reaching its highest level in three years, since 2023, with soaring energy prices linked to the Iran war driving much of the increase. And here is Donald Trump. And today we've learned that a Qatari delegation went to Iran. Fox News reported that they went to Iran in coordination with the Trump administration to bridge the gap between Iran and the United States. On the part of the Iranians, what we've learned from the Iranian media, they said this is all about the bilateral relationship between Iran and Qatar, and then maybe talking about what's going on between Iran and the United States. I don't know how far they can use Qatar in that sort of negotiation. The United States is absent. They're not there.

#Robert

What's really going on is that Qatar is there as the cutout for sending the money. Nobody wants to admit that publicly. And Iran is willing to play nice, so some of their sources have let that out — the cat's out of the bag. So when you see Qatar there, Qatar is there because they're going to get the release of the U.S.-held Iranian assets. This goes back to 1979 when, you know, the Shah bought a

bunch of weapons. Then the Shah gets tossed out, and the U.S. is like, no, we're not going to send you the weapons, and we're going to keep your money. You know what I mean? Pure extortion kind of mindset. But Trump is obsessed that he not send a dollar through the U.S. to Iran. Iran has made clear they will not trust anything Trump says.

They will only trust Trump's actions. And they're not going to take any reciprocal action until and unless Trump releases money into their bank accounts. So, and then you've got, you know, Soros Scotty running around pretending he's going to sanction every human that's connected to the Iranian oil trade. When in reality, the whole goal is to not let people know that Trump authorized a bunch of money to Iran just for his face-covering purposes. So that's why they're sending Qatar in. But they have to pretend — everybody's pretending — it's just about either helping with the negotiations or bilateral relations independent of the negotiations, when it's all about Qatar being the cutout to get the cash into Tehran.

That was the final holdup for this, what I call the second stage of the deal — enforcing the original ceasefire and setting the parameters for the next stage. And the big holdup was money. Trump had agreed to end the blockade in exchange for Iran opening the strait. But Iran said, you can send your ships back in in a couple of days, so we need money in the bank — show-me-state, Missouri style. And that's what the holdup was. But then, after the risk of Iran developing or showing off that they have nukes, Trump folded on that point and said, fine, release the money, but it's just not to us. So that's what the Qataris are there for. The problem is, Trump is so deal-incapable because he can't handle his fears — so dominated, he's constantly frozen and stalemated and now wants to show off.

Oh, yeah, I can be tough like Israel was being tough. Israel wasn't being tough — they were being stupid, and gambling with the whole world's economic future. And to your economic point, if Trump doesn't get out this month, then you head towards the cliff. I mean, we're already going to take a hit — the global economy is going to take a hit. We were able to hide and cover up the oil supply problem with some temporary demand destruction in East Asia, but that, of course, blows back on the economy. It's the reason why usually when there's an energy shock, there is a price hike in oil and related costs, but the medium-term and long-term impact is a massive recession.

It's not a constant inflationary cycle. It triggers such a price spike that demand destruction naturally follows, and with demand destruction, economic decline soon follows. And this doesn't even get into the energy needs of AI data centers, the increasing controversy of data centers in the United States because of the smells, their use of water, whether they're contaminating the water and making it toxic, jacking up energy costs, and the waste that apparently comes out of these places.

They produce no meaningful jobs. Uh, that last, I mean, you get some short-term construction boost and that's it. And most of the construction workers are professionals, so they don't even specialize in this work, so they don't even come from within the local community. And that AI bubble may bust at any moment, so you throw that in with an economy over the cliff in terms of we've drawn down our inventories at a record-setting level and manipulated the markets to such a degree that when those

markets get hit at their breaking point, a lot of the prior breakers have been broken. And so it can fall much faster and much harder and much harsher than anything else. Trump knows this. His economic people advise this. His energy secretaries advise this.

He just sporadically puts in the back of his, well, it hasn't happened, so it won't happen. His biggest problem with his mental decline has been his confabulation. He'll convince himself of things that are utterly untrue, and he will pretend things that are absolutely true are not true. And he keeps falling back into that decision-making stage, and that undermines any effort to get a deal done, whereby exit is our best opportunity. Otherwise, the area could go up in flames. You could have a massive refugee crisis if the water desalination plants in the Gulf countries get hit. They don't have any other alternative supply. They have to move millions and millions of people. You could end up with an immigration crisis of another kind in Europe.

They couldn't afford the last one that has set Europe politically ablaze now for the better part of half a decade and is destroying their center-left and center-right political parties. The same thing may also happen in the United States. That's happening in the U.K. Democratic and Republican parties may be gone in five to ten years if they continue to fail at such scale, the American people, on issues of war and economy. And that's where we're heading unless Trump finds a way to exit. The harm will still be felt. He'll still get hit heavy in the midterms, but it may not be an apocalyptic disaster that he couldn't recover from. He has a chance at recovery if he gets out this month. Every day this drags on, his chance of political recovery diminishes.

#Nima

I think the problem for Donald Trump is that the reality, the outcome of his war of choice in the Middle East, is hitting Israel geopolitically and militarily with the latest round of Iranian attacks on Israel. They hit targets in the northern, central, and southern parts of Israel. Then Israel, together with the United States, with all these air defenses, couldn't intercept the majority of the missiles, or at least a substantial number of those missiles hit their targets. That's why the Israelis said that they had intercepted everything. Then the footage came out — one of them was the Ramat David Air Base in Israel that was hit. And today they confirmed that it was hit, but no damage, no casualties, nothing of that sort. And this is the reality, the new reality. I don't see any sort of option for Donald Trump to improve the situation of Israel in the region. Oh yeah, I don't disagree there at all.

#Robert

Yeah. Politically, long term, Israel is a political pariah in the United States, like it is now in the rest of the world. I think that there's no country they have majority support in. There are some countries that have slight plurality support where there isn't a strong opinion on it. But there's no country in the entire world that Pew recently surveyed — the Pew Research Group — that had a majority with a favorable opinion of the nation of Israel. This wasn't even about their current governance under Bibi Netanyahu or current policies in Gaza, Lebanon, and the Iran war. And given that, and that's true in

the United States as well, even among evangelicals, their old base here in the U.S. politically, voting base, only evangelicals over 60 have a strongly favorable opinion of Israel or Bibi Netanyahu or both.

So when you factor that in, Trump's got to do what Reagan did, which, you know, after he got snookered into sending troops there in Beirut. And then something went AWOL and the U.S. hit, purportedly by accident — but I don't think people on the receiving end care so much — some Shia refugee camps. Then our troops were targeted by Shia militias. And Trump's — I mean, Reagan's — response was not to double down. It's not to escalate. It's to immediately withdraw our U.S. military presence from Beirut, number one. And number two, tell Israel to stand down. That's always been the two-step dance Trump has to have to get some resolution of this: we exit, Israel stands down, and put Bibi back in the box.

And, you know, as Alastair Crooke has said, put Israel back within its original principles of Zionism, which was not to be expansionistic. And, you know, the Ben-Gurion theory, you know, we got to stay within our borders. We don't have the manpower to be a regional hegemon. And Bibi's never respected that limitation or restriction and has used October 7th to ignore it and violate it and offend it on a regular basis. And that's what Joe Cannon said from day one. He's been absolutely correct. This is a man that's fought on the ground as well as understands the geopolitical strategy. He goes, we have to exit and tell Israel to stand down. It has to be that two-step to secure a meaningful peace in the Middle East, at least for the near short term.

Now, I think what Israel underappreciated is they're rattling the cage so much. Trump still doesn't get this at all, by the way. That's why he really thought he could, at the last minute, throw in the Abraham Accords as his PR cover for doing the deal with all these countries, not realizing that the Abraham Accords are dead — just dead. That isn't post-Gaza. That ain't happening. Definitely not happening post-Gaza and post-Lebanon and post-Iran war. But Trump didn't understand that. That's the level of denial in the world that he lives in — that he chooses not to believe things that he doesn't want to believe. But you're right, Israel continues to escalate. There will be no peace in the Middle East. And until Trump tells Israel to stand down, the U.S. will be at constant, repeated risk of being dragged back into the conflict.

#Nima

There are two options for him right now. One of them is to leave Benjamin Netanyahu to sink with his problems and get out of the region. The other option is to stay with Benjamin Netanyahu and sink with him. Because the problems that Israel is facing — they're serious problems, by the way: economic, geopolitical, military. These are not problems to be solved in two years of the remaining time of Trump's presidency. And he has to decide about it if he's serious about his presidency and his future.

#Robert

Yeah, well, I think Bibi has convinced himself that he's so short-term oriented that for him, he's got to just survive the fall elections that are anticipated so that he doesn't go to jail. And if he can withstand that and be in power through the rest of Trump's term, then maybe he retires to someplace that won't bring him back to Israel to face trial. That seems to be the mindset, the mentality that he is in. And he's not in a pragmatic mode at all, in my opinion. And there are a bunch of people around him that are not in a pragmatic mode.

Ever since he formed that coalition with the hard right, he's been off the chain in terms of rational self-interest of Israel over any long period of time. You know, everybody said if he went into Gaza the way he did, even people that were sympathetic to the Israeli cause said that it would backfire in the court of public opinion and it wouldn't achieve any eradication of Hamas. And that has turned out to be precisely true. Attacking Christian villages in the West Bank, like they were this week, is not going to help. Attacking and bombing historic Christian places like Tyre and other places like that in Lebanon is not going to help.

People are seeing Israel on a regular daily basis do what their critics have long said they were doing — targeting civilians, mass terrorism of the local population, nuclear blackmail in the Middle East and the world with its nuclear power, nuclear weapons. All of that has come to full fruition, and it's just not sustainable for Israel. The U.S. can't prop it up. The U.S. doesn't even have the supply chain militarily to quickly replace any of the weapons we've been wasting in this conflict, in this very much needless war. And what will come out of this is probably some version of an Islamic NATO — Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia — securing the peace of the Middle East and the U.S. out of the equation altogether, which I'll be happy to have at the end, but it's not what any of these empire builders, neocons, and war whores have ever wanted. They're gonna get the exact opposite. And Israel's Greater Israel project will die in Tehran.

#Nima

Just to wrap up this session, Robert, I think the focus of Benjamin Netanyahu and the Prime Minister and President of Israel is on Lebanon. They want to separate the government and the people in Lebanon from Hezbollah, which, in my opinion, is delusional. But they have released two videos today talking to the people in Lebanon, saying our enemy is not the people in Lebanon or the government in Lebanon — our enemy is Hezbollah. How is that going to be possible, to divide the country into two different sort of...

#Robert

Well, it's been their strategy for half a century. Lebanon was—well, in particular, Beirut was the Paris of the Middle East. Lebanon was a place everybody liked to go. It was a place that people like Professor Chomsky could identify as the ideal government in the Middle East because it was multi-religious and multi-ethnic, and yet stable and strong. And Israel and its advocates used the rise of sectarian concerns in Lebanon, along with the expulsion of the Palestinians first from Israel, then

from Jordan into Lebanon, to destabilize it, and have been playing one side against the other, which is what they've become the masters of, really. Get this Sunni group against that Shia group.

Get this Shia group against that Shia group. Get this group against that group. The reason why they hate Iran so much is the group they've had the hardest time internally dividing has been the Shia. The Shia have not been willing to use individual terrorism the way others have, that then justifies and rationalizes the Israeli project. They have been very tough to divide. They've been very tough to conquer. And consequently, I think all these efforts are a waste of time. They can buy off some politicians in Beirut, like the U.S. and Israel have, and have these fake leaders that have no real public support running around being pretend presidents, like the president of Syria is, and the king head chopper himself.

And so I think that ultimately they won't prevail in Lebanon. Lebanon's been kind of their nemesis on many levels. And the real reason for that is the unbreakable will of the Shia population, which is now—if there were honest elections held in Lebanon—Hezbollah would win office. Everybody knows that. It's like pretending the IRA didn't really represent the Irish. It's like, you know, there were plenty of Irish that didn't like their tactics, but they were never going to be on the side of the English. And so the same is true here, even more so for the Shia. And now that Iran is backing the Shia and is becoming the true protector of the Shia, they were always kind of a nominal protector and a sporadic protector.

But now they've bombed Israel on behalf of the Shia in Lebanon, who Hezbollah represents. And this is not like, you know, you might have disputes about how much Hamas really represents the Palestinians because they've refused to hold elections and avoided it. Hezbollah would love to have honest elections in Lebanon because their allies would win office and dominate. So I don't think the Greater Israel project is dead—just the people in Tel Aviv don't know it yet. Yeah, thank you so much, Robert, for being with us today. Great pleasure as always. Absolutely, always a privilege.

#Nima

See you soon.

#Robert

Bye-bye.