

# Prof. David N. Gibbs: The End of American Power? Iran, China & the New World Order

See Full Interview: <https://www.youtube.com/live/S3wwzKwImwI?is=k2VN0ZE3e72-XWE6> Follow me: Substack: [https://substack.com/@dialogueworks?utm\\_campaign=profile&utm\\_medium=profile-page](https://substack.com/@dialogueworks?utm_campaign=profile&utm_medium=profile-page) X (Twitter): [https://x.com/Dialogue\\_NRA](https://x.com/Dialogue_NRA) Patreon: [https://patreon.com/Dialogueworks?utm\\_medium=unknown&utm\\_source=join\\_link&utm\\_campaign=creatorshare\\_creator&utm\\_content=](https://patreon.com/Dialogueworks?utm_medium=unknown&utm_source=join_link&utm_campaign=creatorshare_creator&utm_content=)

## #Nima

What has been happening in the last two or three days? We had an Israeli attack after Iran announced that if Israel attacks Lebanon, they're going to respond. Then we had an Israeli attack on Lebanon, in the southern part of Beirut. It was some sort of test, I don't know — maybe they wanted to assassinate somebody — but they basically attacked an empty building in the southern part of Beirut. Then Iran responded to Israel in the northern part of Israel. After that, we had Israel responding to the Iranian attack, then Iranian retaliation. Then, two days ago, the United States came out — Donald Trump said that Iran had hit one of these Apache helicopters in the Strait of Hormuz that was patrolling the region, facilitating the passage of a tanker or something like that.

It was hit by Iranian drones. We have to respond to that. And he attacked Iran. Then Iran attacked Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan. So that attack happened while we had the Qatari delegation in Iran, talking with the Iranians and bridging the gap between the two sides, as was mentioned on Fox News and by Iranian media as well. So right now, what we're witnessing is that Donald Trump has announced that he's reaching some sort of deal with Iran. It's not a deal; it's a memorandum of understanding between the two sides. And Iran has confirmed that.

And we had some sort of speculation today because some outlets in Iran mentioned a 14-point plan on the part of Iran. They said these are going to be the main points of the agreement or memorandum of understanding. Then Iran's foreign minister came out and said these are all speculations, they don't know what they're talking about, but we have never been so close to agreeing on this letter and this document, which they call a memorandum of understanding. And Donald Trump retweeted the Iranian foreign minister's tweet about the memorandum. Here we are today, looking at what has happened in West Asia, in the Middle East, and the Strait of Hormuz. What is your understanding of the current situation there?

## #David

My understanding is that Iran retains the upper hand here. And it's not clear to me that they really have that much interest in an agreement, because we're talking about the memorandum of

understanding, which is, as they always say, the agreement before the agreement. It only settles things in a provisional way without any final settling of the issues at hand. And, of course, there's always the possibility, one might say the likelihood, that this will simply be violated — or Israel will violate the agreement and draw the United States into it once again, as has happened repeatedly.

And so there has to be some degree of trust, even between warring countries, in order to get a peace settlement — something that isn't unconditional surrender, something short of that. There has to be some degree of trust that the other side will honor what they agree to. And Iran, based on the record of the United States and Israel, has no reason to trust anything that is said or agreed to. And so it's not clear to me they have that much of an incentive for an agreement, which makes me skeptical about the whole thing. Let me say I would like to see an agreement. I would like to see an end to the war. There are all sorts of ways this is extremely dangerous. So if an agreement, even a provisional one, is established and the fighting stops, that's all for the good.

I'm just not entirely convinced that's a likely outcome here. If there is an end to the war, I think it's most likely to end with the U.S. effectively just walking away and accepting what will, in effect, be a defeat for the United States and a humiliation for Donald Trump. Or there might be some fig leaf of an agreement. Again, the problem with it is that Iran has the upper hand here militarily. It controls the Strait of Hormuz, which is a really critical point of leverage. Some have called it Iran's nuclear weapon. Iran, I can't imagine, would relinquish that leverage, relinquish control of the Strait of Hormuz. They also will have to control it for an extended period to generate enough funds to reconstruct their country from the damage that has been done.

And, you know, given all those considerations, the United States would have to accept Iranian control of the Strait of Hormuz. That's at least my guess. I doubt Iran would part with that enormous power they have from control of the Strait of Hormuz. And so given that, I just don't see — I don't think Trump is at the point yet where he's willing to accept defeat. And given that, I'd be pessimistic about an agreement. But I could be wrong, and I certainly hope I'm wrong. I mean, one of the backers of Iran clearly is China, and I think China is a country that is interested in stability. And I think they would have some preference for some agreement. They have some leverage over Iran, but I don't think it's decisive leverage. So I guess we'll see.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, I think when it comes to the memorandum of understanding, if they sign it — which, let's go positive, they're going to sign it — because, as they were talking about right now, the latest news is that Pakistan's foreign minister is traveling to Geneva, Switzerland tonight to continue efforts to mediate between Iran and the United States, according to Iranian media. And when it comes to the Iranian position, there are some points that are so important for Iran. First of all, to put an end to the war on all fronts, which includes Lebanon. This is of particular importance for Iran.

There is no way, in my opinion, looking at the Iranian media, looking at the tone and atmosphere in Iran, you can believe that they're going to back down on this issue. They're going to demand it, and they're going to achieve it, or the United States decides not to make a deal, not to, you know, go along with this memorandum of understanding. But after all, as we talk right now, Israel is attacking the southern part of Lebanon. The attacks are happening. That's why I don't see—I don't know what your understanding is of the relationship between the Trump administration and the Israeli one—but there is nothing there for Donald Trump to do. He proved that he's incapable of putting pressure on Israel.

## **#David**

Well, the U.S. does clearly have an option here. It's more than just the U.S. Under Trump, and under every other president, it has been unwilling to take that option, and that option is to cut Israel off from financial, military, and diplomatic support. The United States provides crucial support to Israel in the form of annual subsidies. Since the early '70s, they've been doing this, which is very important to Israel. It would be very difficult for Israel to engage in quite the degree of military aggression it has been engaging in if they didn't have the United States backstopping them with financial aid. Plus, there's military support, giving Israel high-tech weapons and so on. There's diplomatic support at the UN Security Council, vetoing efforts to censure Israel for its conduct, and so on.

All of these things the United States gives to Israel, and it could simply put a stop to it, and it could do two things. One, it could condition the aid on better behavior by Israel—that Israel will stop its aggression in Lebanon and will abide by U.S. demands in that respect and not simply ignore them as it has done—and condition support on those kinds of behaviors. Or better, in my view, just cut them off. Tell Israel that they're going to be treated like any other country in the world, with no special privileges, no special aid, and they're on their own. And if the United States were to do that, Israel would have to behave very differently from the way it's behaving. It could not engage in the degree of military attack they've been doing if they didn't have the world's biggest superpower behind them.

So the problem, of course, as everyone knows, is Israel does have a lot of influence on the U.S. government and U.S. politics. You know, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt wrote the famous book *\*The Israel Lobby\**, which, as far as I can tell, is completely accurate. I've never seen any credible refutation of the claims that were made, which were 20 years ago, and it's as relevant today as it was then. Also, the U.S. support for Israel is predicated on other things as well, which is, I think, there is an ideology in Washington—the dominant ideology of neoconservatism—which is predicated on the idea that what America needs to do is become more like Israel. Israel is seen with admiration in policy circles, especially neoconservative policy circles, as showing the way for what America should be like.

And that ideological connection gives Israel a lot of prestige in Washington and a lot of influence among the elites. In the past, there has been significant U.S. public support for Israel. This was

shown by public opinion polls over decades. What's very interesting, however, is that support is rapidly eroding. Public support in the U.S. is definitely going down. And that's true both in the Democratic Party and increasingly also in the Republican Party. A critically important development, in my view, is the decline of support for Israel among evangelical Christians. Evangelical Christianity is an immensely large, influential bloc in American politics, and they've been rock solid in their support of Israel on biblical grounds. Israel is seen as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. And so, in many ways, evangelicals have been more uncompromisingly supportive of Israel than Jews.

Jews, I think, are becoming much more divided, but increasingly you're seeing younger evangelicals—and this is brand new—younger evangelicals are moving away from this and are starting to view Israel much more negatively. I think what's happening is very simple: they can watch YouTube like anyone else, and they can see what Israel is doing in Gaza, and some of the very disturbing videos of the results of Israeli actions in Gaza and elsewhere in the Middle East. And I think that's starting to weigh on the consciences of evangelicals just as it is on everyone else in the world. And so I think you are seeing a new situation in the United States, and it's very possible that you will see the United States distancing from Israel in the future just based on the fact that the public may increasingly demand it.

## **#Nima**

I think that's the feeling among the Zionists in the United States, because the way this new Section 224 is, basically they want to merge the two militaries—the U.S. military and the Israeli military. That's right. This is a sign that they're feeling somehow threatened by what's going on within society in the United States. They didn't need before to go that far, and they want to formalize something because they're afraid that maybe in the future they could face some sort of substantial policy changes, or maybe foreign policy changes, vis-à-vis the Middle East.

## **#David**

Well, I agree with that. I mean, there has been an effort by Israel to sort of put provisions into legislation to effectively merge the Israeli and American military-industrial complexes at the level of intelligence sharing and other things like that, as a way of sort of entangling the two to such an extent that it would be very difficult to disentangle. I think that is a sign of weakness and fear along the lines exactly of what you said. Something else, by the way, is that there's an increased level of repression, an extraordinary resort to blocking open discussion of Israel, including on American university campuses.

This is the worst I've ever seen in my career, I have to say, the extent to which there is really intimidation of open discussion of this issue. Just this last semester, I taught a class in U.S. foreign policy. I announced in advance to the students, we will not be discussing Israel and Palestine because it is just too tense and the risks are too great. So I'm just taking that off the table. And the students nodded as if they understood exactly what I was talking about. But again, I don't see that

as a sign of strength in the long term. I see that as a sign of desperation by the Israel lobby, resorting to these kinds of extreme measures.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. When you look at the way that Donald Trump has been, I would say the Trump administration was used in the war in the Middle East because the Israelis have been asking the United States for this war. Benjamin Netanyahu wanted this war for such a long time, but finally he got it with the Trump administration. This is what John Kerry said. He said Benjamin Netanyahu, each and every time he came to the United States, was asking, "Let's go, let's attack Iran."

Obama administration, Bush administration, then Biden administration. He asked each and every president in the United States, but finally he got it through the Trump administration because the structure of the Trump administration facilitated that, in my opinion, because many people were so close to the Israelis, particularly Benjamin Netanyahu himself. That was a huge factor in deciding to go along with that war. But what else can the United States do for Israel? I think this is the peak of what the United States could have done for Israel.

## **#David**

This could be, so to speak, the straw that broke the camel's back. This could be the event that fundamentally changes America's attitude towards Israel. It could also be the event that ends American hegemony. That, again, is just an American defeat in the Persian Gulf, which I think is pretty close to inevitable as far as I can tell, would be such a blow to American hegemony that it would be very difficult for the U.S. to recover from it. And domestically, yes, it would be very difficult to explain to the public how Israel got us into this war that we lost at enormous cost to the economy. And so I think all of those things could produce basic changes in U.S. politics and international politics.

The short term is likely to be very bad, in that we may very well—almost certainly—get an economic downturn of some kind. The question is, how bad will the downturn be, especially since we're seeing the possibility of an El Niño in the South Pacific and possible effects on things like harvests? And so the short term will be very bad. In the longer term, I would be somewhat optimistic about the prospects of Israel being restrained and the United States being restrained. I think the American public is ready for a change in U.S. foreign policy. The public, I think, is getting tired of permanent war. And again, this is true in both parties.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, both parties are somehow supporting the Israeli agenda. But David, when it comes to the Israeli agenda, look at the Middle East today. Israel is basically, I would say, they're saying that Israel is occupying the southern part of Lebanon, but this occupation is some sort of trap when you

look at what's going on recently with the case of Lebanon and Hezbollah, how Hezbollah is fighting back. You know, you may ask, we may ask the basic question, why does Israel need to attack somewhere like Dahiya, which is a huge populated area—500, 600 thousand people in that area. They said, they announced some sort of evacuation, that you have to get out of your homes, we're going to demolish, we're going to destroy everything. Why do they need to do that?

Because the way that Hezbollah is attacking them, they said that the Israeli ambassador in the UN said that the use of FPV drones, the use of rockets, the ambushes that are happening in the southern part of Lebanon—they don't have a solution for that. Particularly with the case of FPV drones, because they're hitting Merkava tanks, they're hitting air defense system batteries, they're hitting Israeli soldiers. And it's too difficult for the air defense system to detect these FPV drones. So if you cannot fight on the battlefield, you cannot fight on the ground, you have to do something else. That's why you need to attack Beirut. And here comes the Iranian role. They come and say, you attack there, we're going to attack. We're going to level the northern part of Israel. You have to evacuate. This is a totally desperate situation considering what it was for Israel before this war started.

## **#David**

I'm going to have to say I think Israel is pursuing what to me seems like an irrational policy. There's no way Israel is better off starting a war with Iran. You'd think they would have learned their lesson in June. And you'd think some of this was predictable. Well, not entirely. Iran is much better prepared for war, I think, than anybody expected. They've been extraordinarily well prepared, I have to say. That, by the way, is also a source of strength for them because there's the classic image of David versus Goliath. And very clearly, Iran is David here. And there's a natural human tendency to sympathize with David. And when David strikes a blow, even people who don't like the Iranian regime, as I do not, have to basically see that there's some... One has to be very impressed by the fact that they've been able to resist Israel and the United States to the extent that they have.

That's also true of Hezbollah, which is Iran's forward line of defense in Lebanon, which is why Israel is going after Hezbollah. I don't really know why they're bombing... I'm not quite sure what they had in mind there. I suspect there's a story behind this that we haven't heard yet. Southern Lebanon is fairly obvious. They want to destroy Hezbollah. I should add that the image of Greater Israel has also included Lebanon south of the Litani River. That's among ultra-nationalists in Israel, who seem to have a lot of influence on their current policy these days. Southern Lebanon has always been on their agenda, on their radar screens. And so that's somewhat easy to explain.

And, of course, getting rid of Hezbollah is easy to explain in terms of getting rid of a potential ally for Iran. The problem they're facing is, as with Iran, Hezbollah is more formidable than the Israelis would have imagined. And they really should have been forewarned because they went to war with Hezbollah in 2006, and Israel had to withdraw in what was essentially a military defeat. Hezbollah is better armed and better organized than the Israelis realized in 2006. And you'd think 20 years ago

they would have learned their lesson, but evidently they haven't. And it's amazing, the extraordinary appetite for risk Netanyahu has, and his willingness to take what would seem like very reckless risks—risks that obviously are going very badly for Israel right now.

I don't really see Israel's exit here. As you noted, Israeli soldiers are being killed in Lebanon in larger numbers than they might have expected. And, you know, Iran and Hezbollah have both made very effective use of missiles and drones. And Israel does not have a good solution to this, as far as I can tell. And they're going to come out of this greatly weakened. Israel will come out of this weakened, for sure, both diplomatically and also militarily. There is some tendency in Israel to be overconfident. I have to think back to the 1973 war when Israel was caught by surprise and almost defeated. And there was an Israeli general who tried to explain why Israel wasn't prepared. He said, well, we figured we were just fighting against Arabs, not Germans.

**#Nima**

Okay.

**#David**

Against Germans, they'd be worried, but against Arabs, not so much. Well, you know, there's a tendency for Israel to overestimate its capabilities and underestimate those of its adversaries. We're seeing that playing out right now in Lebanon.

**#Nima**

Yeah. That was, I think, considering what has happened in Syria. You remember the fall of Bashar al-Assad in Syria. That was, they said, a huge victory for Israel, and it's going to be a game changer. But as time goes by, the enemy was Iran in those days. Right now, the enemy of Israel is not just Iran, it's Turkey. They want to pick a fight with Turkey. That's going to be, in my opinion, when you say Israelis right now, they're talking about, at this step, we're fighting Iran. The next step is going to be Turkey together with Pakistan. The war is expanding. These people are expanding the war. They're not shrinking. The shrinkage is not happening in their attitude. They don't care. That's why I think this Section 224 is going to be a huge, disastrous policy for the United States, because these people are going to expand this war over and over.

**#David**

Well, the legislation you're talking about is worrying. I'll grant you, it's very worrying. I think that what you're—I'm very surprised at the extent to which Israel seems to have the need to be in a state of permanent war. It's not good for their economy. I mean, one thing you're getting in Israel is a brain drain. Israel has become very proud of the fact that it has a very large technology sector. It's the startup nation. They're very proud of that fact. They've been successful in that area. They have

a high standard of living, supported by the United States partly, but also partly on their own initiative. They have a lot of talent in Israel.

That talent is leaving. One of the most widespread activities in Israel is acquiring a second passport. Jews who are of German or Polish descent, even distant German or Polish descent, can usually get a passport from those countries, which gives them even working rights. Other Israelis manage to get passports from Canada or the United States. And large numbers of Israelis are doing this, and many of them are taking out their passports and simply leaving—and leaving for good. And who leaves? It is the most talented people who leave. This can't be good for Israel's future trajectory. And so I don't see how the war is helping Israel.

There's also an Israeli general that said the Israeli Defense Forces are at the breaking point. They've had too many deployments. There have been too many call-ups of reservists, and the soldiers are getting exhausted. You'd think Netanyahu would listen to those facts and not be constantly hungry for new wars. But there does seem to be kind of a political dynamic in Israel that always needs a new war. In some ways, you might say they suffer from the same malady as the United States, which also seems hungry for war. Really, the two most aggressive countries in the world are Israel and the United States. It's not an accident they're allies.