

Col. Jacques Baud: US & Iran War Ends on All Fronts (Lebanon Included)

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#Nima

Hi everybody, today's Monday, June 15, 2026, and our dear friend, our brother Carmel Jacobo, is here with us. Welcome back home. Thank you very much for having me again, happy to be back. You know, what happened last night was just—everything was exploding before our eyes, in terms of the thoughts, in terms of the Iranian reaction. We had an Israeli attack on Lebanon. Then Iran said they're going to attack Israel the same way they first attacked Doha. I'm talking about Beirut and Dahia. Then the United States did everything—they started with, "We're going to release more frozen assets, we're going to lift the blockade, this and that, and don't attack Israel." And finally, it seems that Iran has achieved some sort of concessions in terms of Lebanon.

They said, if we don't attack Lebanon, Israel or the United States has to do something about the case of Lebanon, the ceasefire in Lebanon, and the ending of the occupation of Lebanon. That was a huge concession, at least mentioned in that document. So far, we haven't seen that document. We don't know what's in it. But at least it seems that it was mentioned that Israel has to be forced out of Lebanon. This is the main point. And as we said yesterday, many people were talking that Iran has, you know, maybe betrayed Lebanon or something like that. It never happens, because for those people who don't understand the relationship between Iran and Lebanon, it's not something to be betrayed.

There's so much the same thing, in my opinion. Whoever knows Iran, whoever knows Lebanon, as the head of the Iranian Security Council yesterday said, Lebanon is our soul. That is the importance of Lebanon. I think if it was Iran, if some part of Iran was under some sort of occupation, they would have done the same thing, in my opinion. And that's why today, looking at what's going on in Lebanon, people are happy, getting back to their homes in the southern part of Lebanon, in Nabatieh and other cities. Israelis are still there. They're trying to stay there. I think they hit two or three ports in the southern part of Lebanon to show that they're still there, that they have authority there.

But what's going on overall, as the Israeli media is trying to picture it, is a huge loss for Israel, what has happened. And I don't see, because the feeling in Israel is that the situation is moving without

Israeli participation. This is a deal between Iran and the United States. Israel was not part of the negotiations. They were not part of the talks. And if you, I don't know if you've seen the news, in the last three or four days they tried to spy on the administration in the United States because they didn't know what's really going on with the talks. It seems that few people within the administration knew the content or the basics of the talks between the two sides. Your understanding, Colonel, of what's going on?

#Guest

Well, first of all, we have to understand that what we are witnessing today is just a demonstration that Iran has the upper hand in this conflict. That's the first thing. The second thing is that we also have a demonstration here that Israel will not accept the result of the negotiations. It has been a consistent policy of Israel to have the U.S. militarily involved in the Middle East since the 1950s. So don't expect Israel to change its policy for some reason. Because they have been so aggressive towards their own neighbors, Israel, knowing that they would not be able to withstand a common attack, a general attack against Israel, they need the U.S. And since they have not abandoned this idea of security policy based on offense, on confrontation essentially, they need the U.S. in the region.

And therefore, they will concentrate all their efforts to push the U.S. to stay in the region. And this situation has also been exacerbated by the fact that after what happened in Gaza, the overall, not just image, but the mood of the world against Israel has dramatically changed. The whole world hates Israel. That means that Israel understands that now they should rely more and more on U.S. protection. But we are in a strange conundrum here. Israel creates its own threat and then requires the presence of the U.S. But at the same time, the U.S. doesn't want to get entangled in the situation. I mean, they attacked Iran because that was the assessment—not an intelligence assessment, but a Trump assessment—that Iran would collapse within days.

So it was a short and easy victory. And therefore, that's the reason why the U.S. engaged in that. But now they understand that they completely misunderstood and underestimated the situation, and now they try to withdraw. The problem is the situation has so dramatically changed that the U.S. is now—again, Trump is always sitting between two chairs. On the one hand, he would like to withdraw. On the other hand, he doesn't want to abandon Israel. And Israel, in that sense, has leverage on the U.S. So what we see today is that the U.S. is definitely the loser in the whole thing. Israel has identified that President Trump is probably one of the weakest presidents ever, and that's the reason why they managed to convince, for the first time, a U.S. president to attack Iran.

No other president did that because they all understood what the situation was. The only one who doesn't understand anything, because everything he decides is based on guts, not on brain. And therefore, the Israelis have identified this. So the absolute loser in the whole thing is the U.S., or are the U.S.? Israel is not completely losing in the sense that, yes, if they have to withdraw from Lebanon and all that, that will be a situation that will be unfavorable for Netanyahu, but not for

Israel. The security of Israel will be enhanced if they withdraw and if they abide by international law. That's what the Israelis have to understand. Their security will improve if they follow international law. But that would not improve the situation of Netanyahu.

So here you have diverging interests between Netanyahu and his accomplices and Israel as a country, and this is very important to understand. So Netanyahu acts based on his own personal interest, not based on the interest of the Israeli people or Israel as a state. Okay, that's important. But the absolute winner in the whole thing is Iran. And I think that's also very important to understand, and the Americans are starting to understand that. Now, there is another factor that, in fact, confirms this situation, which is that for some reason, Trump is working against the clock, while Iran has time. You know, the West has the clock, and Iran has the time.

This is the conundrum here, meaning that for Iran, it was not a problem to wait and to have a consistent agreement with the U.S., and to wait for that and to continue the war to some extent, because Iran does not have a security policy that is based on aggression. But nevertheless, they have the time to wait, but to strike on Israel as strong as they can. And in fact, eventually, as I said many times, there will be a resumption of the conflict. Don't get fooled by the MOU agreement and things like this. Israel will never accept that, whatever the agreement is, and at one point they will resume the conflict.

The question is how the U.S. will react to that in the future, and what kind of obstacles to further involvement of the U.S. in the region Iran can achieve through these agreements. That's the name of the game. But there will be a resumption of the conflict. Israel will continue to strike Iran. And therefore, Iran on this side understands that, as I said many times, Iran will eventually need a decisive victory against Israel in order to have peace. As long as Israel doesn't understand that its security depends on respect for international law, Israel will continue to attack its neighbors, including its far neighbor, which is Iran. And based on that, Israel will always be a threat to the region, including Iran.

But Iran has the capability to answer. And the only response in order to have peace from Iran will be a decisive victory over Israel, whatever it means. Would it be total destruction? I hope not. But at least significant destruction of the command and control system. I mean, even political as well as military command and control. Probably more the political than the military, by the way. And that's how Israel will have to answer. So we know that in the long run, everything we are witnessing today is only a step in a good direction, but that will not solve the problem. I think it's very important to understand that.

#Nima

It seems that they're going to sign the MOU, memorandum of understanding, in Geneva on Friday, which is going to be hosted by Pakistan. I'm just amazed how it's going to be in Switzerland but hosted by Pakistan. But before getting to Friday, I think we're going to see a lot of these sorts of

fighters happening in southern Lebanon, as Israel is doing right now, as we talked. But the problem, Colonel, I think when it comes to the United States, Donald Trump has done everything, everything for Israel so far. I think that's why he has decided to finally—he has exhausted each and every possibility with the, you know, protests, riots, economic pressure, sending weapons to Kurdish, these terrorists in Iraqi Kurdistan. Just moments ago, before coming to this live, there is a new group of Al-Qaeda that have announced that they exist.

They're in Iraqi Kurdistan. They're prepared to fight Iran. And they did everything. With the attack on Iran, nothing else is there for the United States to participate in. But Israel—you said Israel. If Israel attacks Iran, that means the United States has to help them. Without the United States, they're not going to be able to attack Iran in a significant way. They may attack Iran, but it's not gonna be significant. And Iran is gonna—the Iranian response, we know the air defense system, we know the capabilities of the Israeli air defense system and their offensive capability. They're not gonna be in the same sort of position that they were before this war started. This is the new equation in the region. I don't know how long the United States wants to stay there to help them with these sorts of endless wars.

#Guest

Well, we have to be careful here. Obviously, when we talk about, let's say, conventional war, if I can put it that way, I'm not sure the war between Iran and Israel slash the U.S. was conventional, but let's say it was closer to conventional war than what we have, for instance, in Gaza or Lebanon. In any case, of course, in such a situation, you have a balance of power, including those missile, air defense, or anti-ballistic missile systems, and conventional command and control systems, and so on and so forth. And in that game, we have seen that Iran definitely, as I said before, has the upper hand. Now, you mentioned Trump and the U.S., but it's not exactly true. You also have other actors that are playing in the region, France in particular, and they want to use the Kurdish militias.

I could even say mercenaries, because they just buy those militias in order to go and fight into Iran. They train them, they arm them, and so on and so forth. So we have—because if you look at the constellation, and I wrote several books on all the armed groups in the world, including especially those who are in Iraq, Syria, and so on and so forth—you have a constellation of militant groups. Iraq is now trying to put them together under the Ministry of Defense. So they try to gather those Shiite militias into something that is organized, that has a proper, I would say, command and control at the strategic level, and not having those scattered actions from different groups. In any case, all these groups do exist.

They are not completely united doctrinally or ideologically. They have slight differences and so on and so forth, so we don't want to go into the detail. But you have other groups, and especially the Kurds, who are still in demand for their own state. And of course, this is kind of a leverage that the West and Western countries, especially France—but France has been especially active in fighting, in conducting a covert operation against Iran by supporting terrorism in Iran and things like that—

together with the Israelis and the Americans, by the way. So it's not just the U.S. You have also a matter of some European countries, and you have also some other European countries involved in that conflict in support of the Kurds in order to destabilize Iran.

And of course, when we talk about missiles, ballistic missiles and all that, we have seen that Iran has a credible defense and ability in that. When it comes to insurgency or kind of subversive elements, this is another story. This is another kind. My personal view is that Iran will also have the upper hand in this kind of conflict. But this will continue. I mean, what we have seen in January this year, those riots that were in fact sponsored by the West, armed by the West, financed by the West, from a narrative and political support point of view, also supported by the West. You had that. By the way, you have recently one of those Kurdish bases that were attacked by a Shiite militant in Iraq.

And you had some French servicemen that were killed, and those were servicemen who were training the Kurds to attack in Iran. So that will continue. And that means that even if the settlement that we'll see today with this MOU and the agreement that will come at a later stage—because the MOU is not the agreement as such, the MOU just sets the stage for a further real peace agreement that should come, including the nuclear question and all that—but this is the surface of things. But I'm convinced that the West will continue trying to subvert Iran through covert warfare, and that will continue. There is no doubt that will continue.

So what we are trying to solve now is only the surface of things, probably the most destructive, probably the most visible, the most, in a certain sense, most dangerous, because that's the part that could evolve into a regional war — maybe not a world war, but at least a regional war. So that part could probably be solved through all those diplomatic moves that we are witnessing today, but the rest will continue. So that means that the war against Iran will not stop, and that is also very important to understand — that Israel will never stop attacking Iran. Never. Unless you have, and I hope that in the negotiation, Iran will also — I'm not talking about the MOU, but probably about what will happen later.

Iran, I hope they will include that because, again, what we are seeing today is only the surface of things, but much other things. I mean, everything that happened in the last 30 years, Iran has been constantly attacked by the West. And with spying and all that, you have regular people arrested for spying in Iran. And my view is that, to some extent, they're probably not spies in the James Bond style, but they are spies in the sense that they are used to influence things and to address opposition groups. They are involved in engineering subversion in Iran, and that applies to all those who have been arrested recently.

They have been released because, at the end of the day, Iran could probably assess that things are more or less under control. But this kind of thing will continue. This kind of thing will continue. There's no doubt about this. So we are in a situation where we have two conflicts, essentially with the same target, Iran. And we are trying to solve the most visible one, but the other will stay. And Israel will be instrumental in that. That's the reason why I repeat: to have peace, Iran at one point

will need to have a decisive victory over Israel. You can define yourself what decisive may mean, but that will be the case. That will need to be the case. And I think the Iranians are conscious of that.

#Nima

Here is what they reported on the Iranian media, First News in Iran. It says the MOU states, as I said, we don't have the text. That's why we need these sorts of leaks coming out of the media in Iran. It says that the future management of maritime services in the Strait of Hormuz will be determined by Iran and Oman. And when they're talking about maritime services, basically they're talking about that fee system that they're going to place. But that's not going to be in place before, because it says that they only accept free passage for ships for 60 days. They're going to have 60 days without any sort of fee or tolls. And after the 60 days, they're going to place a new system, or they call it, you know, an environmental fee or whatever they have it. They call it a service fee or something like that. And it's going to be paid by whoever wants to use the Strait of Hormuz or pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

#Guest

This would be a maintenance fee, as they call it, if I'm not wrong. And that's something they had negotiated already last month with Oman. And Oman has also declared it will impose an environmental fee. And that is the mirror of what Iran will do on its side, which, according to what I've read, is called a maintenance fee. But essentially, it's for the maintenance of the coast and the coastline, the sea in this region. We have to understand that you have thousands of supertankers, tankers, and cargo ships of any kind that are transiting in that area, which is a very small area. And obviously, you certainly have issues with pollution, with environmental issues and things like this.

And that probably requires, I mean, from that point of view, it's probably not unjustified. In addition to that, I think Iran contemplates this fee, or it's not called a fee, but let's say this maintenance. I mean, I don't know exactly what the correct or legal term would be. In any case, they also wanted to have this money used to reconstruct what the U.S. has destroyed on Qeshm Island and other islands where the U.S. has destroyed, for instance, water desalination installations or has caused damage to the oil storage facilities. And so you have to clean all that. So this is part of the reconstruction that was caused by U.S. and Israeli military action and strikes. So there is a justification behind this.

The problem is, and that's very interesting, by the way, that when you look at—I don't know exactly what are the final 14 points—but based on those 14 points that were published by Mehr News, I mean, this Iranian agency, and assume that the final agreement will derive or be more or less aligned on this to some extent. But it's fascinating to see that the Strait of Hormuz has become now almost the major issue for the U.S., although the Strait of Hormuz was totally free in February. So

that also demonstrates that the U.S. has cornered itself into a situation that it created. And this is extremely strange because we have exactly the same thing. We have done the same thing in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Ukraine.

Everywhere the West has acted, it has cornered itself into a situation that it couldn't manage at one point. And today, the U.S. has barely any control over what's happening in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Russia, in Ukraine. Now we have a war, obviously, but what we see is that Russia is getting the upper hand. Libya is also something that went totally out of control. Migration that was triggered by those actions is totally out of control in Europe. So we have cornered ourselves. All these conflicts have provoked a reaction that nobody had anticipated before. Nobody had planned for—not planned, but had even thought that the situation would evolve in that direction. And today, all these issues become essential issues.

When you talk about what's happening today in the UK, in France, you had a vote also in Switzerland just yesterday about the limitation of immigration. This is an issue in Germany, in France, all countries. And this immigration was triggered by exactly those Western actions. Where do the immigrants come from? They come from Syria, they come from Afghanistan, they come from Libya, they come from all these countries. So, meaning that we create the situation that we are not able to manage afterwards. And that's exactly what we'll have with Iran now. And this MOU is exemplifying exactly the stupidity of those warmongers that we have in the West. They don't even know why they should wage war. They don't even know why.

They just want to do it. But when you listen to them, they don't even have an objective. They don't know exactly what they want to achieve. That's exactly the same thing with Israel, by the way. What do they want exactly to achieve with Iran? They cannot occupy Iran. They cannot take the resources of Iran. They want to destroy Iran, but they will not be able to do that either. So what exactly is the aim of Israel? In Lebanon, you can assume that, as they have done in other parts of this region, they want to gain control over territory. So that's the reason why they just use this Rafah doctrine. The Rafah doctrine is to raze all the settlements that you have in southern Lebanon, exactly what they did in Rafah in the southern part of Gaza. You know, they just razed everything. Simply, all the buildings were leveled.

And now they do exactly the same thing in Lebanon. But that's not the doctrine. What do they want to achieve with that? Do they expect that those inhabitants that were expelled from their villages and things, they will not claim these villages after that? You know, this is so childish. And it's just pure brutality. It's brutality without intelligence — intelligence in the sense of the brain, not in the military, as has been said. So it's very hard to understand what they want to achieve exactly. And that's very true for Israel. That is a small country. Essentially, we see the limitations of such a small country surrounded by larger countries. Fortunately, those countries are not as aggressive as they are. But should those countries become as aggressive as Israel is, Israel would disappear within days.

And that's probably what will happen, by the way. That may happen. Israel needs to be conscious of that. They don't, because they think they have the superiority. They always expect that the U.S. will die for them. You know, this is this idea. But now Israel is so despised in the world that nobody wants to die for Israel anymore. Probably 50 years ago, people would have done that, or 60 years ago. But today, nobody would like to die for Israel. I mean, people would lose their honor in dying for Israel today, because you don't die for a country that has such a poor human rights record. This absence of understanding the strategic situation amazes me all the time. And that's in the case of Israel, obviously, but also in the case of all the Western countries.

#Nima

Carl, the Israeli Defense Minister, Israel Katz, says the IDF will remain in security zones in Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza indefinitely to protect borders and settlements, with Prime Minister Netanyahu leading the same policy. And they say that they're not going to get out. I don't know what would be the solution for Israel. I think the only solution is a military operation. Many people are angry with Israel today. It doesn't matter what Turkey is doing, what Saudi Arabia is doing, but public opinion is totally against Israel. You mentioned that moment would come if Israel continues with this sort of behavior. Everybody would attack Israel, would say something.

And that moment, I think that would be a huge, huge sort of problem for Israel if they decide to continue with this sort of behavior. And the United States under the Trump administration did the maximum. They did the maximum of the power that the West has to support Israel. Now, just imagine the occupation in Lebanon, in Syria. Syria is important. Lebanon is important. Gaza, they're talking about 80% of Gaza. They want to occupy 80% of Gaza. The West Bank is somehow disappearing from the scene because they're sending more settlers to the West Bank. This is the reality. And in your opinion, is it going to be finally decided on the battlefield, or can international law do something, can share some sort of burden of what's going on?

#Guest

Well, this is the dilemma. You know, you mentioned Lebanon, and you mentioned exactly what Defense Minister Katz just said. As you just said, it will remain just behind this so-called yellow line that they have arbitrarily decided. I mean, this was this yellow line, by the way, Colonel. Well, it's moving a little bit, expanded a little bit. But in any case, that's the idea that that was unilaterally decided by Israel. Now, the interesting thing is that the southern part of Lebanon, exactly this part where it's occupied today by Israel, from the southern border of Lebanon up to the Litani River, is the area of deployment of UNIFIL. UNIFIL is a peacekeeping operation, a peacekeeping mission. And in there, you have a very strong French contingent, but they do nothing.

The reason, the rationale for their presence, is exactly to prevent that — it was exactly to oblige Israel to stay out of Lebanese territory. That was the rationale behind UNIFIL. But does it enter the

equation at any point? No. You have all, I mean, you have several peacekeeping operations in the region of Israel. You also have the peacekeeping operation in the region of the Golan. You have several peacekeeping operations — the UNSO, UNIFIL is one. You had, I mean, I don't know, now I don't have all in mind — you have at least three or four peacekeeping operations. The oldest peacekeeping operations, by the way, are related to Israel. But when Israel does what it does, that means not respecting international law.

You mentioned the West Bank, for instance. The West Bank, it has been clearly said by the International Court of Justice in its advice to the General Assembly of the 19th of July 2024, that the whole Israeli presence in the West Bank, in East Jerusalem, and in Gaza is illegal, and that Israel should vacate those places as soon as possible, and that the rest of the world — that means Israel and other countries — should help to do that. What did we do to support this advice? What did the Security Council do in order to support its many, many condemnations of Israel, because Israel was occupying areas that it was not supposed to?

#Nima

Sorry for interrupting. Can they make some sort of forces — I'm talking about the countries in the region — to enforce what you've just said about international law? They have to get out of East Jerusalem. They have to get out of the West Bank. Militarily, they have to force them out.

#Guest

Of course they could, but they don't want to, because in the Security Council, obviously you have the US, and the US will refuse that. But in theory, the Security Council could do that. There are probably more than 100 UN resolutions that condemn Israel for what it does and for the occupation of the various parts of territories it occupies, including its behavior in those territories. So you have so many resolutions that would support a decision. The problem is that the US refuses to do so. And mostly you also have the refusal — and recently you also had an example — that the UK and France also oppose this kind of, let's say, vigorous language of the UN Security Council.

But in theory, that would be totally possible. Would our countries want to strive for peace? Would our countries strive for the survival of Israel? They would do it. The problem is that they are not interested in long-term thinking. Again, there is no long-term thinking in the West. It's always opportunistic, short-term related, tactical related, but there is no strategic long-term thinking in the West. If we had thought that way, we would have prevented Israel from doing what it does today. And Israel would be much better integrated in its region. It would have fewer problems with its neighbors. It would have fewer security problems.

You know, if you antagonize everybody, if you kill children, if you destroy hospitals, if you kill systematically and you target systematically civilians, how can you expect to stay in peace? This will not be the case. So Israel has done every possible thing in order to be hated in this region. In order

to counterbalance that, Israel will have to do a lot of effort, and they're not ready to do it. So we'll continue that way. And I predict, and I would say even sadly, but probably good for the region, I don't know. But sadly, I would say Israel, if it continues that way, will disappear. Because there will be a point, even today, the Americans are hesitating in supporting Israel. They realize that their ally is not an ally.

Israel cannot be a partner because it will always work for itself, never for the sake of the partnership. It cannot be a partner. And the Americans are starting to understand that. And what is the interest? I mean, again, if you go back in history, it made sense to support Israel during the Cold War because most of the surrounding Arab countries were associated in some way with the Soviet Union. And therefore, Israel was this kind of advanced post of the West into the Middle East. And for that reason, it made sense to have this support. Today, if you look from a mere economic point of view, or even a pure geopolitical point of view, you're better off supporting countries like Saudi Arabia or Iran than Israel, in fact. What is the benefit of supporting Israel?

Nothing. You are much better off being allied or partnered with Iran or Saudi Arabia. They have energy. They have industrial potential. We have seen that Iran has probably even better intellectual and academic potential than Israel. So what's the point? If you start looking at these things that way, then you may reconsider your alliance. The only reason why we support Israel is because of the story of the Cold War and because you have a lot of elites in the West who are under influence. And that's very strong when you see countries like France, the UK, Germany, the US. These governments are under influence. They don't act on their own. They are prompted to act that way.

And they don't have the freedom to do that otherwise. And that's sad because these forces—political forces or other kinds of forces that influence our government—act upon their own interests. They are not even acting in the interest of Israel. The interest of Israel is not to occupy Lebanon or the Golan or things like that. The interest of Israel is to be at peace with its neighbors. That should be the ultimate aim for all those who support Israel—that Israel could live in peace with its neighbors. That should be the ultimate goal. And for that reason, they should also struggle against those in Israel who use the military of their country for their own profit.

That's exactly what Netanyahu is doing. He's not doing that in favor of Israel. He's doing that for his own purpose, for his own benefit, because he wants to stay in place and because he cannot afford to leave power. You know, this is a very strange situation. And that's also this whole very peculiar relationship that Israel has with the West, and also the peculiar relationship the West has with Israel. It's also part of this degrading image of Israel in the West. As you said, we have seen now that Israel is trying to interfere with elections everywhere—in France, in the UK, things like that.

I mean, in France, a recent report just underlines that before, they used to say it was Russia who was interfering. And now you have reports from the same institution that come and say, well, in fact, it was Israel who tried to interfere. So all that contributes to the poor image that Israel has. And, you know, the reaction of Israel, instead of reconsidering their own foreign policy and their

security policy, they doubled down. And if you see recently, Israel has increased their budget for communication—I mean, public relations and things like that—from, I think, \$250 million to \$750 million. That means it's almost \$1 billion used just for communication.

And that reflects the need for Israel to restore its image. The problem is, if it misbehaves, it may spend billions on communication that will not improve anything. The only way to improve things is now to understand that their benefit is not to continue making war, but probably to align itself with other nations of the United Nations under international law. That's the only way for Israel to have a durable peace, a sustainable presence in the Middle East, and a harmonious development with the countries of the region. As long as they don't understand that, they will be at war. And the problem is that now we see that some countries, namely Iran at this stage, have the power to destroy Israel with a snap of a finger.

#Nima

Israel.

#Guest

Israel, sorry, with a snap of a finger. And that is eventually what may happen if Israel doesn't get this particular point.

#Nima

Carl, I think the basic problem for the West is that they have created this sort of image of Israel as a democracy, the only democracy in the Middle East. They're so advanced, their technology is the best, their society is the best, and they're the most powerful country in the region. Each and every one of those arguments is just falling apart as time goes by. Israel is not the sole superpower in the Middle East. Israel is not the best economy. The stock market is doing great because they're somehow the tail of the stock market of the United States. That's the only reason, in my opinion. But when it comes to the battlefield, they cannot produce missiles or interceptors. They produce, you know, some sort of spy devices and some sort of surveillance equipment. That's the whole thing with the military-industrial complex of Israel. They produce, you know, something like that.

#Guest

Don't be fooled. I used to work in procurement, and we considered many times Israeli equipment at that time, even if I can say that was in the mid-early 90s. I was in charge of a procurement entity within the Israel Defense, and at that time already, I had people saying, I mean, my superiors, people above me, who said, well, we consider Israel just to assess what they can do technically, but

there is no way we'll do business with a country that has institutionalized torture. That was 30 years ago. But the thing is that we tried to assess some equipment. We were looking for demining equipment and things like that.

And they had interesting solutions, but it's not as promising as they say. You have much better equipment, more expensive also. They are very cheap, and that's probably the biggest advantage they had at that time. And they have good equipment, but it's not as good as what you have in the West. Don't get fooled by that. And we have seen, for instance, with the Arrow system or the Iron Dome system, that it's not performing as it should. In fact, the Iron Dome, which is widely acclaimed and things like that, in reality, since it has been introduced, you have constantly, in Israel itself, a lot of criticism against the system because it was failing.

It was not even effective against those Hezbollah—no, not Hezbollah, sorry. I mean, probably Hezbollah as well, but mostly the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the PIJ, and the Al-Aqsa Brigade, who started using rockets against some settlements in the south of Israel. And the Iron Dome was not very effective against that. So from the very beginning, although it seems to be widely acclaimed, in reality it's not as effective as it seems or as it's claimed. And we have seen that exactly with the different strikes done by Iran. In fact, most of what the Iranians had intercepted by Israel were exactly those systems that were designed to be intercepted in the Iranian strategy.

They sent that equipment in order to attract those Iron Dome missiles, to saturate them. And then, once all these missiles were depleted, the Iranians came with the real missiles they wanted to send. So that means that all this equipment, from the tactical use—the way that we use it operationally, if you want—but also technically, was not suited for this kind of conflict. So, meaning that we don't overestimate the Israelis. The Merkava, for instance, which was in its period in the late '70s, was also acclaimed as a new concept for tanks because it has the engine forward, and that adds some protection for the crew. But that also has a lot of drawbacks.

For instance, because the engine is at the front, you have thermal interference or thermal effects that interfere with the thermal imaging of the gunners. So, meaning that that was okay in the '70s, when probably we were not using thermal imaging as we do today, but today it has become a drawback, and so on and so forth. So the concept of the Merkava was probably fine for a very specific situation, namely the use of tanks in the Golan Heights. And tanks are not designed to fight in mountainous areas, but that was the purpose of the Merkava, and that was probably fine for this. But it proved to be disastrous against Gaza, and it proved also disastrous in southern Lebanon.

And we see the number of Merkavas that have been destroyed by Hezbollah drones shows that this kind of equipment was designed for a very specific purpose and is not designed for marginal use or other kinds of combat situations. So don't overestimate the capability of Israel. That's also something that in the West we say together with democracy, high tech, and the startup nation or

whatever. But it's not exactly that. They attract a lot of funds from the U.S., and that allowed them to develop some probably sometimes interesting equipment and things like that. But we could do much better in the West if we wanted to.

And you see, if you look at what's happening today in Russia, you see that the Russians do even better and much cheaper than what the Israelis do. And Iran is a very good example. Iran has been under sanctions for something like 50 years or so. They managed to have their own military-industrial complex. They were able to develop equipment that is up to international standards. And look at the success of the Shahed drone system that today everybody is copying. The Russians, obviously, are producing their own variants of the Shahed at large scale. Now the Americans have produced their own copy of the Shahed as the Lucas system.

#Nima

The American one is almost identical.

#Guest

Yeah, exactly. It's a copy. It's just a stupid copy of the first variant of the Shahed, by the way, because in the meantime, the Shahed has evolved. It has much more capabilities and things like this. Okay. But essentially, the Americans just copied exactly the same design. And you have also other countries who have started to initiate some kind of copies of the Shahed. So meaning that, and it's very simple technology, by the way, it's not, but it's suited for the purpose. You see, if you have a suicide drone, it's completely stupid to produce a drone that will cost billions because you will lose it anyway.

So the design is where you can combine the function, the cost, and the fitness for the purpose. And that's exactly the combination that Iran managed to achieve. So, you know, it's not about making the most sophisticated or the most expensive drone. It just needs to be fit for the purpose, that's it. And it must be affordable for that. And that's what the Iranians achieved. And we see exactly the same thing with hypersonic missiles, by the way, a technology that the Americans still don't have under total control, and obviously not the Israelis. So that shows that this idea that Israel is highly sophisticated, technologically superior to anyone, is largely overstated.

It's not the case. They have capabilities like other countries. I think my country, for instance, Switzerland, also has some capabilities, but definitely not what is sufficient to sustain a security policy based on military confrontation. And that's exactly the problem of Israel. So there is a need, I think, both in Israel but also within the West, I mean among the friends of Israel, to reassess the whole relation between Israel and its neighbors. And I think Israel is probably not mature enough to understand that, because Israel, Netanyahu, is so obsessed with Iran and things like this and Hezbollah that there is no chance they will achieve that by themselves.

But we, I think the Western countries, if they are well advised, should help Israel to understand this position. Instead of encouraging military solutions in Israel, they should encourage Israel to have a real security policy based on cooperation with its neighbors. You know, we were talking and we started this discussion—I mean, we started not the whole discussion, but just your question based on this security zone. The rationale for Hezbollah to exist is precisely because Israel is on Lebanese territory. So you can make this kind of buffer zone on Lebanese territory. That will be a further justification for Hezbollah to keep existing.

So if Israel were wise, they would establish their buffer zone outside of Lebanese territory and have this buffer zone along the green border, the green line. This is de facto—it's not de jure, but a de facto border. That's the line of armistice of 1949. And along this border, they would establish a buffer zone with all the equipment that you may want to have, but leave the Lebanese territory free. And that would be the first condition to have Hezbollah reducing its force. As long as you have one Israeli on one square foot of Lebanon, Hezbollah will maintain its presence.

It has been clearly said, I mentioned many times on your channel, that in the Taif Agreement of 1989, it was stated that Hezbollah is allowed to exist as long as you have the threat of an external enemy. I mean, at that time, they also thought that Syria might become a threat. But today this is probably no longer the case. In any case, this external threat today is composed essentially of Israel. Were this threat to disappear, Hezbollah would have no rationale to exist. So you see, Israel is creating its own threats. Factually. Factually. It's not an interpretation. They are factually creating their own threat. Because now Hezbollah is the main threat to its security, allegedly. But were Israel to leave Lebanese territory completely, the problem would be solved.

#Nima

Yeah. Exactly. Thank you. Thank you so much, Karol, for being with us today. A great pleasure, as always.

#Guest

That was my pleasure. Thank you for inviting me. Thank you.