

# Anthony Aguilar: How Beirut Strikes Broke the US-Iran Deal

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## #Nima

What madness today, what has happened. You remember last time Israel attacked Beirut in Dahia. Again, today they attacked Beirut in Dahia. And the outcome, the same thing. Last time they attacked, they were supposed to assassinate some Hezbollah forces, which failed, totally failed. Today, the same thing. They have failed to assassinate Hezbollah forces or commanders, but they killed civilians, ordinary people. Again, at least one or two were killed, and four of them were injured by the attack. It was huge. By the way, I don't know if you watched the footage of that bombing. It was a huge bombing, and you see the explosion coming into the street and destroying the building.

And then... what was happening in Iran, we had battery delegations in Iran trying to bring the two sides together, final negotiations, details being discussed in Iran. And right after the attack, Iran said, we're going to respond, we're going to respond hard. And the United States, Donald Trump said he had a phone call. He had two phone calls today. One of them, in the initial hours right after the attack, he said, we were supposed to sign the agreement this morning. Then Israel carried out that effing attack in Beirut. I couldn't believe it. Bibi has no effing judgment. I told him I was very unhappy. Then later on, he said he talked with the Iranians.

He said, don't attack Israel because you're going to ruin everything. And then... we know at the same time there are various talks between the two sides through Qatari delegations, because the Qataris are there in Tehran as we speak, trying to do their best to bridge the gap between the two sides. But the problem is, so far, whatever Donald Trump tried to do, he said, I'm going to lift the blockade unilaterally. I'm going to pay you \$12 billion not to attack, just to avoid the attack on Israel. I don't know why he's so concerned about Israel, because if he sees how Israel is trying to destroy everything, if he's honest in the way that he's negotiating, he's talking about the deal between the two sides.

So if Iran punishes Israel, that would help him, because Israel has to learn. If the United States is achieving—he said the same morning that he wants to sign the agreement—Israel attacks Lebanon to destroy everything, basically. And then he tried to offer Iran, we're going to do this, we're going to give you the frozen assets. Iran said, no, our allies are not for sale. And from the head of the

Iranian National Security Council, he said that we're going to respond because Lebanon is our soul, and violating Iran's red line will not be tolerated. I think in the coming hours, we're going to see huge, massive attacks on Israel. It seems that it's going to be in the northern part of Israel. But looking at what's going on, what is your understanding of that?

## **#Anthony**

Well, there's quite a bit to unpack, not only in what we're seeing unfold right now, but how it unfolded and what we knew and know preceding the attacks on Lebanon yet again. So, looking at the peace agreement first, um, I don't think that there was any reality to the agreement being signed this morning. The signaling from Tehran, from the leadership within Iran, was that the excitement of a negotiation or a deal or the MOU—which really is a memorandum of understanding—is really just that. It's a memorandum that lays out understanding between the two parties of this is how we are going to proceed. There's no guarantees, there's no obligations, there's no commitments. It's just an understanding. It's still very fragile.

And even in that, we weren't even close enough to signing yet in terms of, yes, there was a date to sign, we were going to meet at a certain location, we were going to sign this, there'd be some ceremonial agreement to mark the seriousness of this. None of that was happening. So for Donald Trump to respond to Israel with the, "Hey, we were going to sign this this morning, you know, you ruined it, we were so close," that's not true. Now, whatever deal was happening in terms of going towards an MOU, did Israel's actions today in striking the southern suburbs of Beirut cause that to derail? Absolutely. But I still don't think that we were as close to a final MOU as Donald Trump was suggesting, because of the very issue of Lebanon, in that the issue had not been addressed.

And as I've continued to say from weeks and weeks ago, when there was any inclination of how an agreement may come to an end or bring this conflict to an end, was that a lot of things on both sides of this are negotiable, fungible, flexible—things that can be offered in place of other things, where you still achieve the same intent or the same objective, just through different means, like the Strait of Hormuz. Does anyone think that if the United States were to get everything it wanted regarding the Strait of Hormuz, or that Iran would get everything it wanted regarding the Strait of Hormuz, that that would be a negotiation? No. The only way one warring side gets everything it wants is if there's a military victory that draws to complete capitulation of the other party. That hasn't happened. So there is no realism in thinking that either side is going to get everything they want.

So in each of those instances—sanctions, frozen assets, the Strait of Hormuz, even discussion of a nuclear program or lack thereof—all of those things, there's the ability to discuss around the fringes to get to some type of agreement. But when it comes to the issue of Lebanon, not because it's Israel, but because it is Israel attacking Lebanon, and that Israel has given every indication that they're never going to leave Lebanon unless they are forced to do so by either military force or diplomatic pressure. Diplomatic pressure—it doesn't matter where it comes from. If the United

States isn't backing that diplomatic pressure with a strong position and action, then Israel's never going to do it.

I think now we've seen the point where even if the United States does stand against Israel politically, Israel still is not going to cease its operations in southern Lebanon. And for people that would think that, well, Israel can restrain itself to south of the Litani, southern Lebanon, where the actual fighting is going on, we see yet again that that is not possible. So that's kind of the position I would say this deal is in now. Particularly with this strike today and the strike that we saw last week, Israel does possess the capability to conduct very precise strikes—very precise, without-collateral-damage strikes. If they were truly intending to strike a high-value target or assassinate a Hezbollah leader, they have the ability, even with kinetic strikes, to conduct very precise kinetic engagements.

The fact is that what we've seen from this recent strike and last week is that they choose to be unrestrained. They choose to create maximum collateral damage within the aspect of whatever strike they're conducting. They choose to be destructive in their kinetic engagements. And that should be obvious to everyone. So when you look at the timing of the strikes in the suburbs of southern Beirut—the type of strikes, the collateral damage of the strikes, the complete disregard for the civilian population, the complete disregard for any type of negotiated settlements or peace deals being brought between Iran and the United States, especially involving the very issue of Lebanon.

It's clear to me that once again, Israel is the spoiler of any type of peace negotiation, if there were any real serious peace negotiations actually happening. I think the Trump administration was pushing with a lot of pressure—get it done, get it done, get it done. "Hey, did you get the latest copy? Hey, Iran, did you get the latest copy? Have you signed it yet? Why haven't you signed it yet? When are we going to do this?" Like this pressure, pressure, pressure—this almost manic pressure to get this done, to where from Iran's position, they're like, "Hey, you know, we want to reach a peace agreement, or at least an understanding towards a peace agreement, but we're not going to rush into something that's going to end up putting us in a weaker position because we don't trust you, America."

We were not coming to the table with any sense of trust on either side. And when you look at how Israel continues to interact and continues to interject and, quite frankly, ruin any type of setting of the table—you know, you set the table for talks and Israel keeps coming in and just flipping the table over and ruining any true sense of, can we get from point A to point B with any sense of genuine negotiation. So I agree with you that we are very likely going to see a response from Iran. And I think that in that response from Iran, Iran will be very strategic. Iran will signal to China and Russia prior to that.

Because I think when you look at China and Russia looking at this from the outside as kind of a big brother—not necessarily a big brother, but another strategic interest in this that actually has a lot of power—they're looking at this and saying, like, hey, Iran, we support you, but don't get crazy. Don't go, you know, throwing our support for you around in vain, thinking that we're just going to support

you in anything you do. Don't get crazy. So I think that when you look at how Iran would respond to Israel in this approach, there's going to be signaling prior to it with China and Russia from Iran that says, hey, this was a red line in our negotiation.

And we were negotiating in good faith. They did this. We cannot sit back and do nothing. We have to do something. And here's what we're going to do. And they're going to signal that to China and Russia so that China and Russia are assured that Iran is not taking their support for granted. And then Iran, probably through Pakistan, will have some type of messaging to the United States along the lines of, you know, hey, this is why we don't trust you. This is why any type of negotiation you bring to us that you are in a hurry to sign, we take our time in looking at it, because we don't trust you.

Because we also do not trust Israel, and your two interests are intrinsically linked. So these strikes that we're going to counterstrike in northern Israel, maybe even some hits in Tel Aviv to take out some Israeli leadership. At a certain point, Iran is going to take the gloves off again and strike Ben Gurion Airport. It's a shock to me that they've demonstrated this much restraint thus far. But, you know, I think, will they strike northern Israel? Yes. Is it possible that there could be some strategic targets in Tel Aviv where we could see strikes in Tel Aviv as well? Potentially.

## **#Nima**

He said just moments ago what Donald Trump told the Wall Street Journal, that he plans to soon announce that the United States has reached a deal with Iran through Tehran. You know, by the way, Saran is emphasizing in this report from the Wall Street Journal that Iran has not yet confirmed acceptance of the agreement. Donald Trump wants to announce it. I don't know what that means so far. But Bibi, we have the second phone call today with Bibi. And again, Bibi trying to explain what's going on, why did Israel try to attack Iran, and what was the meaning of that. But after all, Donald Trump says Bibi's okay in this report from the Wall Street Journal, that Bibi's okay with the deal between Iran and the United States. So if he's okay with the deal, why does he need to attack Dahia? First question. Second question.

He said today, he said Israel is not going to withdraw from Lebanon, which is part of the deal. Israel has to withdraw totally from Lebanon. These are huge issues for the Trump administration. Do you see any sort of move or any sort of leverage at this particular moment that Donald Trump would be able to use to convince Benjamin Netanyahu to withdraw from Lebanon while he's attacking Lebanon? Today he was attacking the southern part of Lebanon. He was attacking Gazans, Palestinians, the West Bank, and Dahia in Beirut. Just imagine what the Israeli government is doing. Looking at the scene, it's just all about madness with the administration, with the Netanyahu administration. And how can you convince such a guy, such an administration, to stop everything—not only stopping the war, but withdrawing from Lebanon?

## **#Anthony**

Well, I think it's very clear over not only recent events, but in the time since the U.N. mandates for Israel to leave Lebanon, that Israel isn't going to leave Lebanon—not then, not now, not in the future—unless forced to through some type of military means. Political and diplomatic means will not be the ticket to Israel leaving Lebanon or leaving Shebaa Farms of the Golan Heights or leaving occupied areas of the West Bank or leaving Gaza, or at least returning to the positions within Gaza that were agreed upon in this agreement, the ceasefire deal of U.N. Resolution 2803 months ago, that we've all long since forgotten because the ceasefire in Gaza is such a lie and never existed.

So when you look at Israel's intent to actually withdraw or to cease operations in Lebanon in the south, but also we've seen that they'll, at a whim, strike in the north, that's not a genuine negotiation position. And Iran sees that. And I'm quite certain that the United States sees that when the United States is going into this round of negotiation with Iran. The United States has a position where Donald Trump wants out of this conflict. And when I say that, some people say, no, he doesn't. Look at how he continues the war. Donald Trump wants out, whether the way out is to fight his way out, to get a military capitulation from Iran, or to make a deal.

And he's tried both. But the bottom line is he doesn't want to continue this to try to get more of a negotiation or leverage. He wants out. And this deal was the most likely and closest to a way for Donald Trump to punch his ticket and get out. Would it be a lasting negotiation? No. Would it bring actual peace to the region in terms of what we see between Israel and Lebanon or Iran and Israel with the aspects of the resistance? No. But it was surely a way for Donald Trump to punch his ticket to at least get out and say, hey, we did our part, we're out. Whatever else happens, that's between y'all. And, you know, we'll figure out our position with Israel going forward.

But in terms of the greater war, not our problem anymore. Israel is not going to allow that to happen. Israel is not going to allow the United States to tiptoe its way out of this without putting skin in the game and a commitment to either continue backing Israel or make it very clear that they are not. Donald Trump's not going to be able to gray area or walk on eggshells out of this. Iran will not, or excuse me, Israel will not allow it. And Iran is not going to allow Israel to get away with it. So as much as Donald Trump wants to wish this away, now he's at the threshold of a deal. And again, you see it almost, I would call it desperation.

The desperate approach of Donald Trump in, we're there. We're there. I mean, last Thursday, right? Thursday evening of last week. So four days ago. Hey, breakthrough, big news, the deal's done. Everybody's agreed. All we're waiting for now is for the Sharpie pens to be delivered so we can all sign it. This is a done deal. And then we go into Friday. Hey, it's still a done deal. We're still working out some pieces, but hey, this thing is all but signed. This thing is good to go. And then later on Friday morning, Donald Trump is then responding with, Iran is—they're liars, they're not good negotiators.

They negotiate in bad faith. They don't mean it; they don't want this to end. And then by Friday lunchtime, everything's good again. Oh, we're back on track. We're going to sign the deal. And then by Friday evening, we're going to close this thing up by Saturday. We're definitely going to sign it Sunday. And here we are, Sunday, and we are nowhere closer to this thing being signed than we were Thursday. And in fact, I would argue that based on what we've seen this morning with the strikes yet again in southern Beirut, we're now even further away from this memorandum of understanding being agreed upon.

And signed. Because now the intent of Israel to continue strikes in southern Lebanon last week is an indicator of, okay, that's concerning. But they've done it again. So now they've established a clear pattern. And the United States is going to have to decide, are we just going to continue into this escalation, de-escalation, tit-for-tat war until one or the other side has capitulated militarily to where there's just a total surrender, which isn't going to happen, or are we going to pick the side of diplomacy and make a deal, which involves having to put Israel, you know, kind of in their place.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. Here is just breaking. Here is Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. He says that a deal has been reached between the United States and Iran, that the official signing will be on Friday, June 19. It's going to be on Friday in Switzerland. He says both sides have declared immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including Lebanon. The problem is, as the Wall Street Journal just moments ago reported, that the Iran deal is expected to include a ceasefire for Lebanon that gives Israel the right to respond when attacked. This is the problem.

I think the basic problem is here: when attacked, what does that mean? Is it gonna be an attack on Israel? Is it gonna be an attack on Israeli forces in the southern part of Lebanon? Because as long as the occupation is going on, Hezbollah is not gonna back down. They're gonna attack Israelis. They're gonna attack Merkava tanks. They're gonna attack air defense batteries. Israeli soldiers—that's going to go on and on. And today we had various reports that Hezbollah is capable of shooting down Israeli drones, and their drones are getting through the air defense system.

Their air defense system is not capable of recognizing them because, I don't know, because of the size of the drone, because of the altitude of the drone, the way that they're flying over and hitting the targets and Israeli soldiers. We had two Merkava tanks at least yesterday being destroyed because there was an attack on a group of Merkava tanks in the southern part of Lebanon. Two of them were destroyed. This is the reality. So if you want to support Israel in their occupation of Lebanon, and then you say if they're attacked, they're going to respond, this is the recipe for continuous war. And you cannot put an end to any sort of war in southern Lebanon. You're understanding of that.

## **#Anthony**

Yeah, the aspect of Lebanon and Israel's responses is always a great question. And it should be a question on all sides. I know that Iran is certainly questioning the genuineness of what Israel is saying. Iran doesn't trust Israel. Israel doesn't trust Iran. Iran doesn't trust the United States. The United States doesn't trust Iran. The United States doesn't trust Israel. Israel doesn't even trust Israel. So when you look at all of the aspects of this mistrust, how do you go and do a negotiation based on trust when there's no aspect of trust?

You have to have guarantees—show me the money, show me the proof—before we go forward with any type of agreement. For example, if between now and Friday, you know, and this is such a, what, you know, anyone should now look at this and see, like, come on now, this is ridiculous. Thursday, we're signing the deal. Friday, Friday, we're signing the deal. Saturday, Saturday, it's for sure. On Sunday, it's a done deal. You know, pop the champagne, this is a done deal. And now we're saying it's going to be Friday the 19th. Like, when? Like, there is no deal there. There is a continuation of wanting a deal. You don't have a deal when the main aspects of a deal are not yet negotiated. You have discussions.

You have talks. That's not it. If you sit down to buy a house and you're going to sign the closing documents, and it's the day to close on your new house, and you don't yet know a percentage rate or a monthly payment, or are you doing a 30-year, are you doing a 15-year? If none of that has been negotiated, you're not sitting down to close on a house. It's just not true. So when you look at this, where we stand now, now it's going to be next Friday. OK, a lot can happen between now and next Friday. And if you're trusting Israel to show restraint, then next Friday will never come. This is completely ludicrous in terms of no one in the world should be thinking that this is serious in any way.

And I know that Iran is not taking it seriously in terms of an actual intent to negotiate and agree. We're seeing the United States once again being played by Israel and used as a tactic to buy time. Even if the United States, Donald Trump, is genuinely pursuing some type of agreement, he is not restraining Israel in this, so there won't be, and therefore Donald Trump's efforts should not be taken as serious or genuine. And if, you know, between now and Friday, we were to see some concrete evidence of things to where, you know, across the board for everybody in play between now and Friday—OK, by this date and by this time, Iran must release or uncontrol militarily aspects of the Strait of Hormuz—and we need to see some flow of cargo without impediment.

And the United States is going to release frozen funds, not through a cutout, not through a fake process, but actually genuine and official. And Israel is going to—well, begin actually leaving Lebanon. Like, show me evidence that Israeli forces are actually leaving, not establishing a buffer zone or not just that they stop shooting for a while, but that they're actually leaving. And that's a first step. Let's say that happens by Tuesday. And then by Thursday, you have the Strait of Hormuz

free-flowing. The Iranian and Omani administrative control is transparent to the rest of the world, other than some upkeep fees. More certain sanctions have been lifted. And Israel has completely withdrawn from Lebanon, completely.

Then I would say, okay, well, now there's the possibility of some signing on the dotted line to happen by Friday. But if we're just going to continue to talk, talk, talk, talk, talk about what we should do, about what we could do, but nothing actually physically happens in an environment of zero trust between the negotiation parties, nothing's going to happen by Friday. We're just going to continue kicking the can down the road. And at any given time, Israel will do something to derail this entirely. And, you know, again, I don't think from what we saw today—I think that there will be an Iranian response. And from that Iranian response, the United States will attempt to blame Iran, saying, hey, you know, they did this strike.

But we agreed that we were all just going to not respond, not shoot back, not do this, not do that. Iran is breaking the deal. And if you're Iran, you say, well, an inherent and intrinsic part of this deal was that Israel would not do that. And they did it even amidst the negotiations that we're having about that very topic. So yeah, this is not a good faith deal. So I think that we're going to see Iran respond to these strikes immediately. And I think that the United States is immediately going to take on a position of, oh, look, Iran is trying to ruin the deal. When in reality, Israel has and is and will continue to undermine any negotiation that in some way may force Israel, at least diplomatically, politically, to leave Lebanon. I don't think Israel intends to, nor will they.