

Less bread, more circuses - The Grayzone live

Max Blumenthal and Aaron Mate discuss the Memorandum of Understanding between the US and Iran signed on Trump's 80th birthday, as the president hosted a festival of low brow, late Rome-style propaganda on the White House lawn in the form of UFC 250. How will Israel attempt to disrupt a deal between Washington and Tehran? Does anyone know what's in the deal? And is a doddering, paid-off Trump even capable of enforcing it?

#Max

Hey, what's up, everybody? Welcome back to The Grayzone here with Aaron Maté. As usual, sorry to get started a little bit late. I actually had Aaron's other co-host, Katie Halper, over here, and she borrowed my studio, and for some reason, one of the lights doesn't work now. So maybe her star power is just burning so bright. But I was trying to fix that for the last five minutes. And, yeah, we're back. Aaron, you're back from the NBA Finals.

#Aaron Mate

I was at the NBA Finals. Yes, I was. And contrary to some... there are some conspiracy theories about that. You think I would pay for an NBA Final? Come on, people. I was lucky enough to get free tickets. I seized the opportunity to see, for the first and last time in my life, an NBA Finals game. I was there. I was a witness to a historic night. But to be honest with you... listen, I'm just a fan of basketball. I've never been a fan of any particular team unless it's the British Columbia Lions of the Canadian Football League, which is a throwback. But I wanted the series to go longer because I think it's just a great series and the Spurs are an exciting team. But hey, it was the Nuggets' time, and it was an amazing performance, and I got to witness it. So you're not a member of the Epstein class. I'm not a member of the Epstein class.

#Max

No, no, no, no. Yeah. I mean, I thought, you know, I had no—I wasn't like a fan of either team, but I figured, you know, 53 years, the Knicks should win. And then I started watching MSG and seeing pretty much like the guest list of Zorro Ranch and Epstein Island appear courtside, along with some of the most odious bandwagon characters like Taylor Swift and the Haim Sisters. It really kind of curdled the whole experience. And I think for a lot of people, you know, it kind of made people sour on the whole Knicks Cinderella rise to championship status. Jerry Seinfeld then declaring that it doesn't exist. Yeah. Yeah. Howard Lutnick being on the floor. And of course, Trump—the one—DJ Khaled—they're like, him and DJ Khaled signaling to each other. Yeah, and Trump.

#Aaron Mate

Yeah, yeah. Well, listen, it's exciting. Living in New York, it is pretty exciting to see. And they're such a likable team. So I'm definitely on the bandwagon. I am on the bandwagon. But I have to say also, being in San Antonio—a working-class military town—I think more than half the arena were like obnoxious Knicks fans, and there was something I thought really unfair about that too. Like, people in their own city can't afford to go, and this gentrified fan base comes in and takes over the arena. It was quite something. But, um, yeah, anyway, plenty more sporting action this summer with the World Cup going on too, and Trump making sure to politicize that by making the Iranian team not even stay in the country when they're playing games—they have to leave as soon as they're done playing. Yeah.

#Max

The Iranian team has to cross the border every day from Tijuana to San Diego or El Centro. And then, uh, they have to play in L.A., which is the base of the monarchist lunatics who are out there heckling them and waving Israeli flags at their bus. It feels deliberate. It's like making the Cuban national team play in Miami.

#Aaron Mate

Yeah, yeah. I hope Iran inserted something about that into the memorandum of understanding that they just signed with Trump, like for him to lay off the Iranian national team. It's ridiculous. Talk about, like, if you're trying to establish diplomatic ties during the biggest sporting event in the world, you're going to force the Iranian team to leave the country because their government is one you're trying to overthrow. So maybe the Trump administration will be walking that one back. And if they're not, that will speak to how unserious they are about a peace deal with Iran, which they're now claiming to be entering into.

#Max

Yeah, 15 members of the team, the training staff, were denied visas. There were efforts to recruit the Iranian women's team in the past, and other Iranian teams have been kind of manipulated and messed with. I think there were strange interrogations of the Iranian women's soccer team in Iran, in the Women's World Cup. So there's no way to remove politics from FIFA. And then you have, what's his name, Gianni Infantino, the head of FIFA, one of the most corrupt organizations in the world, is a member of Trump's Board of Peace, which is an obvious Trump corruption racket, in which FIFA paid a billion dollars to be a part of it and signed off on the destruction or the continued ethnic cleansing and genocide in Gaza after over 200 Palestinian athletes were killed in Gaza, including many footballers deliberately targeted.

So the corruption is so extreme, it's really... it's hard to enjoy. I want to talk later about UFC, but not because I want to talk about the sport, but because it was such a significant event on Trump's 80th birthday and really provided a perfect microcosm of what MAGA has become at this point. But I think since you brought up the Iran deal, to the extent it's even a deal — right now it's a memorandum of understanding, which is a very odd way of striking a ceasefire or moving towards a ceasefire — we should talk about that. So what's your initial reaction, given that we know very little about the contents of the deal and are getting different narratives about its contents from the Iranian and U.S. sides?

#Aaron Mate

I think the only significance is that Trump is admitting that he lost his regime change war. This is him putting that in writing, essentially, because the war was launched in late February with Trump claiming that when we're done here, to the people of Iran, you know, you will take over. And so he was calling for regime change, and that failed. And when the kinetic part of the war failed, he then tried this oil blockade to prevent Iran from exporting any oil. And I think he was trying to wait out to see if Iran's economy would collapse under the combination of his blockade, the damage from his bombing, and, of course, his crippling sanctions.

And that didn't work. And Iran's leverage over the Strait of Hormuz proved to be just too strong, along with its striking of U.S. military assets in the region and the threat it posed to Trump's Gulf allies, because he basically put them on the front lines of his regime change war strategy alongside Israel. So he failed. And this memorandum of understanding essentially restores the status quo from before he started bombing. So essentially he's admitting defeat of the regime change war, but is he opening a new chapter in U.S.-Iran relations?

Is he going to lift these crippling sanctions that are designed to destabilize Iran or not? No, and I think that's pretty clear even from listening to J.D. Vance today, who is inside the cabinet, inside Trump's circle, and is widely considered to be the most anti-interventionist. But the way he's talking... the policy has not changed. While Iran has been willing to accept limits on its nuclear program for a long time, the U.S. won't accept Iran's resistance to Israeli dominance. And because Iran refuses to capitulate on that front, Iran will continue to be targeted for regime change. And so I just don't think that aspect is changing. So it's a pause to Trump's war, Trump's regime change campaign, and it's an admission of defeat, but it's not peace.

#Max

Yeah, it kind of reminds me of the Korean War armistice, which was, what, '53, '54? Which didn't end the war. The war still—there has been no peace, no actual cessation of hostilities between the South and the North. Actually, Trump attempted to end that, and that was sabotaged as well by the same elements that will seek to sabotage an actual ceasefire with Iran and actual durable peace with Iran—many of the same elements at least—and they were less powerful than the Israel lobby

and the Zionist movement is. So we're sort of in a frozen conflict, and it's very obvious who opposes this deal in the West, and particularly in the United States. Sorry.

The same elements that brought Trump into this war. The same elements that sat Trump down in the Situation Room and told him how this war was going to begin and lied to him, this doddering, kind of bought-off figure, on how the war would be won instantly in a kind of Venezuela-style triumph through decapitation strikes, which within two to four days would end the so-called regime and bring about mass opposition and the Iranian public rising up, along with possibly the Kurdish proxies, in order to basically dissolve the Islamic Republic of Iran. That was Benjamin Netanyahu and his proxies. Benjamin Netanyahu came here to D.C. in February and told Trump how it was going to be.

Trump went along with it. No one within his cabinet or among his military intelligence principals actually stood up to him other than, I think, General Dan Cain, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, who was leaking his opposition to the press and knew that they would blow through interceptor stocks, THAADs. They'd have to reposition THAADs from South Korea, which South Korea got at great cost to its relations with China, which cost it economically. THAADs and Patriot batteries, PAC-3s, would have to go over from Ukraine to defend Israel. And it was all, I said it at the beginning, it was a Zionist war. And it was going to fail.

Everything that took place could have easily been predicted. And so this sort of consolidates the failure of Operation Epstein-Fury. And now it's very clear, once again, who was responsible for this war. When you see Mark Levin fulminating, when you see Marc Thiessen fulminating, when you see Mark Dubowitz fulminating, these Marks — what, I don't know, which Snoop Dogg might call mark-ass busters — are all out there actually trying to make marks of the American public, but we're not marks anymore. Or vics. Everyone can see that this was a failed and very economically destructive Zionist war, and there should be recriminations and repercussions and retribution against these characters. That's what we would like to see. Unfortunately, I don't think Trump is going to be able to do that.

If I were Trump and I were in the war room right now — I don't even know if he has an actual war room that's based around his own thinking — I would be using every element in the media to humiliate these characters, denounce them, and I would even be launching investigations into FDD, the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, which was the main Israeli think tank planted in Washington that devised this entire war from start to finish, starting with the decapitation strikes and moving into the so-called naval siege. They even, through Jared Kushner, had one of their staff members, Nick... what's his name? I'll think of it in a second — Nick Stewart — placed on the negotiation team to oversee the naval siege, which was deepening this neo-Suez crisis.

So you really want to punish these elements if you're Trump, but I think these elements will eventually, along with figures in the Senate like Roger Wicker, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who had been pushing for a renewed Epstein-Fury 2.0 as late as June 9th, the Wall

Street Journal's editorial board, even elements in Fox News, obviously Mark Levin — they're going to come for Trump along with the Democrats and call him, the Democrats will be calling him "taco," you know, "Trump always chickens out," trying to paint him as weak for making this deal. And I don't think Trump will be strong enough to stand up against that or to do anything about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which is ongoing and has been used as a lever to sabotage this deal.

#Aaron Mate

Well, I just wonder if we even get to a point where there'll be anything for neocons to push back on, because Trump says that this is a nuclear deal, but really it's the same thing. If you listen to JD Vance today, he made what I think is a contradictory statement, talking about the conditions under which the U.S. would lift sanctions on Iran, which for Iran is the biggest issue. For the U.S., the biggest issue is supposedly Iran's nuclear program.

But we know Iran's already accepted constraints on that repeatedly under the JCPOA and the talks that were brokered by Oman before the war and the proposals since. So that part can be addressed. The issue for Iran is, will the U.S. lift sanctions? It's crippling sanctions that are designed to prevent Iran from having a functioning economy. And if you listen to J.D. Vance today, he's already offered contradictory conditions in terms of what Iran would have to do. So first, this is Vance speaking — I think this is his first interview he did with CBS News.

#CBS

We're going to get \$24 billion in frozen funds if they hit certain benchmarks. Is that true?

#JD Vance

Well, again, Ed, we're open to a lot of things that are on the table, but that \$24 billion just doesn't appear anywhere in any of the texts that we've talked about with the Iranians. What we have said is that we're willing to talk about unfreezing assets, but a much, much bigger deal is unsanctioning their economy so long as they make the long-term commitments on the nuclear program. So, you know, again, one of the things these hardliner elements in their country are going to do is misrepresent the deal so that they can sell it to certain elements of their domestic audience. But I think, again, the text is very clear. There's nothing about \$24 billion. What there is clarity about, though, Ed, is that Iran gives up their nuclear program for the long haul. They allow a real inspections regime. And then, of course, we want them to have a lot of benefits. The president has said we want them to be a successful country. Right. We want to turn over a new leaf with Iran, but that requires them to meet us in the middle.

#Aaron Mate

All right, so first of all, when he talks about \$24 billion, what's not mentioned in these discussions is that \$24 billion is Iranian money. It's not as if Iran's being given anything by the U.S. It's Iran's own stolen money that the U.S. has held for decades. But note there, the crucial thing he said is—the main condition, the condition for sanctions relief from the U.S., is Iran concerning its nuclear weapons program. But Iran did that already under the JCPOA. But Trump broke that. But why did Trump break that? Because he wanted regime change. He wanted regime change because Iran resists U.S.-Israeli hegemony. And so he's been demanding Iran surrender on that front as well, that Iran stop supporting groups that resist U.S.-Israeli hegemony, namely Hezbollah. And Iran hasn't budged on that. And here's J.D. Vance, after just saying to CBS News that the only condition for sanctions relief is Iran's nuclear program, he then adds a second condition.

#JD Vance

Fundamentally, sanctions relief. We're not giving them American money. Not a single dollar of American money will go to Iran. But what we are saying, George, is we're willing to give significant sanctions relief if the Iranians make the kind of long-term commitments that are necessary to be a normal country—to give up their nuclear weapons program, to stop funding terrorist activities all over the Middle East. And one of the really interesting things in the agreement, but we'll be...

#Aaron Mate

So there you go. You heard it there. In the second clip, he adds a second condition. It's not just about the nuclear program. So if that's the case, forget it. There's not going to be a deal. All this is—and this is what I think—this is what ultimately will blow up the peace talks. Trump will insist on this, that Iran cut ties to Hezbollah. Iran won't, and so everyone will just walk away. What we'll have is a status quo ante. Hooray for Trump. The Strait of Hormuz has been reopened. Maybe in the process, there'll be some limited sanctions relief on, like, the export of some Iranian products, maybe a token amount of unstolen assets. But in terms of an actual deal, if this is the condition, as Vance just put it, and it's not just about nuclear, but it's also about Iran supporting its allies who resist U.S.-Israeli hegemony, then there's no peace deal.

#Max

Yeah, and this is in the tradition of Steve Witkoff, the envoy, constantly shifting the goalposts. He would go to Iran or go to Oman, they'd have good talks, and then he would go back to Washington and say something entirely different—for example, about Iran's alliances or ballistic missiles. And he would say, I remember Steve Witkoff said early on in the war, "They're closing the Gulf of Hormuz. They can't do that." He didn't even know what the Strait of Hormuz was. There's a lack of understanding of the Iranian perspective and just the basic facts about Iran—the technical side of Iran's nuclear program or about the region.

And J.D. Vance is supposed to be the restrainer here who is in favor of the deal, and he can't seem to articulate any clear conditions. Everything's based on benchmarks. Reminds me of the Oslo Accords, where nothing was set in stone. There were no borders. Everything is contingent on further talks. Then you have the fact that insurance companies aren't going to back shipping for the next six to twelve months unless there is stability, which means this deal has to be enforced by the U.S. in Lebanon and elsewhere in order to open up the Strait of Hormuz and provide long-term stability. The U.S. is making everything contingent on Iran. It's actually contingent on the U.S. and U.S. leadership.

And the U.S. has obviously been completely compromised by its relationship with Israel. So there's another reason to believe this won't actually open up the strait or provide economic relief. But obviously Trump is in panic mode. He's becoming panicked because the midterms are coming up. The bottom has dropped out of his base. Young men are turning on Trump in record numbers. There's a new New York Times poll showing he's lost 10% of young white male voters in the last month or so. The numbers are horrible on this war. So he has good reason to want a deal. But he's not going to be able—I don't think he's going to be able—to enforce it.

And there will be some—I mean, I think we're looking at a frozen conflict. At the same time, those who got Trump into this war, as I said, they're not happy about what's going on. Mark Dubowitz—you know, if you're suffering economically in any way, you know, it costs too much to fill up your tank and you drive for a living, you drive Uber, deliver food, whatever, or you have a long commute, if you're a farmer and fertilizer costs are through the roof and you're at risk of losing your farm—any working-class American should thank Mark Dubowitz for that, because there's no figure who is more influential outside of government than Mark Dubowitz in pushing for this war.

At the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, which was launched as an Israel lobbying outfit—look at the original foundation logo. Documents signed by Clifford May show that it was inaugurated to advance Israel's interests in Washington. And here's Dubowitz freaking out: refuel energy markets, rest and rearm the military, develop a plan to support Iranians to cripple the regime, enforce sanctions with relentless pressure, don't get played at the negotiating table, test Tehran early, give little, demand results, walk away fast, hit harder. These are all like orders he's giving to Trump.

#Aaron Mate

And daily mantras that he says to himself to keep his spirits up in the threat of a truce. I don't want to say peace because, again, they're just pausing a war to rebuild. So I think Mark Dubowitz will actually get a lot of what he wants. They're going to just go back to the drawing board and figure out a new way to destroy Iran, including maybe trying to increase the chances of a civil war because a military campaign from afar didn't work.

And going back to Wyckoff for a second, just before I forget, he really illustrates how completely captive this administration is to the establishment war lobby, where initially he was talking about accepting the enrichment levels of the JCPOA, which were like 3.67%. He accepted that publicly. And then all it took was like a one-day freakout from the Israel lobby and other neocons, and he backtracked immediately and was then claiming zero enrichment. So that's how easily this administration caves to the slightest pressure from the war lobby. And there's no indication that, despite all the marks having their freakouts, much has changed.

#Max

Yeah, I was watching him on Mario Nawfal, and he kept interrupting. He was like all geeked out. It was wild to watch Dubowitz in the—sort of like Hitler in his bunker. He really sees this as an apocalyptic moment. But really what it just means is it's—what it is for the Israel First lobby is a setback, a major setback, and there's going to be a recalibration of the U.S.-Israel relationship. There will have to be because of this, because of the deep unpopularity of themselves and of Israel in the United States. They're going to have to bury it behind opaque cooperation initiatives, which we'll talk about later. But I do not see this deal holding. Now, at the same time, I don't see, in the near term, a major conflict restarting, but who's to say—it would be too politically crippling for Trump.

#Aaron Mate

Yeah, right. Because, because what about Lebanon?

#Max

Yeah.

#Aaron Mate

You know, Israel will do—like, now the question is, what does the deal say about Lebanon? We've heard leaks from the Iranian side that it calls on Israel to withdraw. I personally doubt that Trump will agree to that. But there must be something in there, some language addressing Lebanon, because Iran would not make a deal without including Lebanon. And Israel now, their path to blowing up peace and restarting war is through Lebanon, where they have this goal of wiping out Hezbollah and its base of support, which is a lot of people. That's why they've displaced more than 1.5 million people and killed more than 3,000 since March, because they're trying to destroy Hezbollah—the popular base for Hezbollah. And so that's the question that I have this week, is like, what does the memorandum of understanding, if anything, say about Lebanon? And will Trump finally restrain Israel from its aggression there?

#Max

Here's UN Ambassador and longtime Israel lobby plant Mike Waltz on Lebanon, kind of setting the stage for what you're describing.

#Fox News 1

Is so critical for future generations and for global stability.

#Fox News 2

Ambassador, what do you want to say about this most recent and biggest concern now—that Lebanon could become the spoiler to this broader agreement between the U.S. and Iranian diplomatic efforts? We know that Hezbollah launched projectiles and drone attacks into northern Israel over the weekend. Israel responded with its own strikes in southern Lebanon and Beirut. Where do we stand here?

#Fox News 1

Well, I think two things, Maria. Number one, we will always support Israel's right to defend itself. And Hezbollah continues to attack neighborhoods, schools, and to launch rockets indiscriminately into Israel. But importantly, for the first time, and again under this president, his leadership, the Lebanese government is sitting down in the room with the Israelis and really taking important steps to finally rid Lebanon of the cancer that is Hezbollah. The Iranians are trying to link the two. We are delinking the two and doing everything we can to support Israel's right to defend itself, but also move forward with a diplomatic process so that we can hopefully see peace in the region. And, oh, by the way, Syria is an incredibly important component of this as well. And Iran is now out of Syria, too.

#Aaron Mate

That's right, because al-Qaeda is in, which you helped install with your regime change war. But, you know, there are some amazing comments in there. First of all, he says, we're trying to de-link Lebanon from the Iran deal. Well, you're the ones who've been insisting forever that Iran surrender by giving up its support for Hezbollah. So now, because Iran insists on Israel stopping attacks on Lebanon, all of a sudden Lebanon and Iran have to be de-linked, when you're the ones who've been insisting that Iran can't support Hezbollah. So Iran can't support Hezbollah, but also, by contrast, you have every right to support Israel destroying Lebanon, where Hezbollah is.

I mean, you think Iran or Hezbollah are going to go for that? It's the peak of hypocrisy. And then, of course, he refers to Hezbollah as a cancer. So what is he saying there? He's not just talking about a group of people with weapons. He's talking about a political movement that is part of the largest

political bloc in the Lebanese parliament. Hezbollah is a member of that coalition that has, I don't know, 61 seats or something, 62 seats, maybe even more. They'd have more if the Lebanese vote properly reflected the population. But regardless, he's calling a huge portion of the country—half of it, I don't know, maybe less than half, maybe more than half—a cancer. You're muted, Max.

#Max

And that's to reinforce the Israeli policy, which is ethnic cleansing—to remove one million Shia Lebanese citizens from the south, which is what they've been attempting to do all since the ceasefire of 2024. This has always left out over 1,000 ceasefire violations by Israel before Hezbollah entered the fight after the start of Operation Iron Swords, attacking Iran. And then Israel's proceeding to impose a yellow line, the same yellow line that it has imposed in the Gaza Strip, where it has seized 60% of the entire Gaza Strip. And what does it do behind the yellow line? First of all, no one's allowed to cross the yellow line—you get shot if you try to go back to your home. Then they bring in D9 operators to demolish the homes.

Each D9 operator gets paid per demolished home. They blow up entire villages. And so large parts of southern Lebanon, which are the sites of so much human civilizational heritage, are being subjected to mass demolition. The city of Tyre, which is a biblical-era city, is being bombarded and destroyed as we speak. Twenty, thirty Lebanese people are killed every day. And the point is to uproot Shia Lebanese citizens just as Palestinians have been uprooted in Gaza and have been uprooted since the Nakba. That's why Waltz is referring to them as a cancer, and it is an attack on civilians because Israel cannot defeat Hezbollah on the battlefield and is suffering its own losses day after day, which are becoming a huge political problem for Netanyahu, but he has nothing else but this war.

Here's the other issue. Netanyahu cannot allow peace to take place because of his own legal problems. And if peace—I wouldn't call it peace—but if there's sort of an interregnum between wars, because Israel is always in a state of permanent war, Netanyahu loses and he will ultimately be unseated. His coalition will come apart. The country will start to focus on issues like the Haredi draft bill to draft the ultra-Orthodox. As before October 7th, Israel was in a sort of political civil war, and it'll go back to that state. And Netanyahu will be unseated. Netanyahu also has this problem where he needs Trump. He desperately needs Trump because of his own prosecution.

Remember, Trump sent Mike Huckabee to sit in the witness gallery supporting Benjamin Netanyahu when he was going to testify in one of his corruption trials. Trump has been putting pressure on the Israeli president, Isaac Herzog, to pardon Netanyahu, which he refuses to do to this point. And so Netanyahu needs Trump, and if Netanyahu defies Trump too strongly, that's his ass. So the war is what is postponing the inevitable for Netanyahu, and he needs this war. In Lebanon, just as in Israel, the whole Israeli military intelligence apparatus is in support of this war. And they believe they need to establish what they call a buffer zone, which is an ethnic cleansing zone, a kill zone. And here's one of the important linchpins of Netanyahu's coalition, Itamar Ben-Gvir, on the deal.

#Speaker 1

He's saying, he's addressing Netanyahu and saying, you know, the fighting is over.

#Max

Not in Gaza, not in Lebanon, not from Iran.

#Speaker 1

The fighting is not over.

#Max

And he demands that Netanyahu allow Israeli soldiers to continue defending themselves in the state of Israel. We must continue to demolish homes in southern Lebanon. I'm glad he admits it.

#Speaker 1

We have to continue to displace residents in southern Lebanon.

#Max

Again, I appreciate the candor.

#Speaker 1

And then we have to kill Hezbollah.

#Max

So Netanyahu is under, even if he wanted to abide by Trump's deal, he's under so much pressure from his own right, figures who are in his coalition from a party, Otzma Yehudit, which is gaining strength among Jewish-Israeli youth because they get more fascist with the passing of time.

#Aaron Mate

One of the rare countries, if not the only country in the world, where the younger generation gets more extreme than the older ones. It's uniquely Israeli.

#Max

And so that's, I mean, I think that's the direction we're going to continue to go in — the clash between the Israeli policy of desperately trying to establish itself as a regional hegemon by pushing regime change in Iran and waging war in the region, and the American public. The gulf is going to continue to grow. And it's not just the fascists like Itamar Ben-Gvir, it's also the Israeli Zionist left. This is Yair Golan. He comes out of the old Labor Party, and he calls the deal, the memorandum of understanding, a tough morning for Israel. Israeli citizens are waking up to an agreement between the U.S. and Iran made over Israel's head. Well, how else are you going to make a deal? And he's saying all of our achievements have been wiped out by this deal.

And then he, of course, proceeds to blame Netanyahu. Netanyahu is good for Hamas. Netanyahu is good for Iran. Netanyahu is good for Hezbollah. Netanyahu is not good for Israel. So Netanyahu is also being pushed from the Zionist left. They're calling him weak for making this deal and presenting themselves as the stronger, more militaristic, actually more fascistic, leaders of a future Israeli coalition. And it's the same thing we're going to see from Schumer and the Democrats, or a similar thing, where they're going to accuse Trump of chickening out and then making a deal that's worse than the JCPOA, at least from an Israeli perspective. Because, I mean, it will release lots of assets if it goes through.

#Aaron Mate

It's just mind-boggling. The Democrats in the Senate are led by a guy, Chuck Schumer, who opposed Iran's JCPOA and has lobbied against diplomacy with Iran ever since. And yeah, that was his main thing. Remember, he made that video of Trump, you know, "tough guy Trump" outside deals with Iran, you know, as if he thought the American public would join him in being outraged at the prospect of diplomacy with Iran because people really want to ensure that Israel has the right to go kill as many people in the region as it wants to. They would join Chuck Schumer in outrage about that. Chuck Schumer recently marched with—who was it—Smotrich, who was that?

#Max

Yeah, I mean, I don't think he knew he was going to be marching with them, but that's what you get when you go to the Israel Day Parade, which Mamdani boycotted. It wasn't just him. It was also Bezalel Smotrich, the heritage minister, who called for nuking Gaza and blowing up the Al-Aqsa compound, was marching. I mean... I lost track of all the fascists who were marching, but it's like, what do you think you're going to get at the Israel Day Parade? It's like if I went to a Pride parade and I was suddenly outraged that there were, like, out and proud gay men dancing on floats to techno music. Like, I condemn this. I condemn the rampant display of homosexuality at Pride. And then, you know, all the Democrats come out and condemn Smotrich.

It's like, what do you think this is? You're celebrating an ethno-supremacist project and you don't want racist mass murderers there who are wanted by the ICC? I condemn women taking off their

tops at Mardi Gras with beads around their necks. This is not what I expected. So, yeah. I'm glad you brought that up. That was like a big win for Mamdani, even though he let the parade take place. I would just have the whole parade lead to a giant series of paddy wagons—or police wagons, I should say. No offense to my Irish friends. Police wagons, and everyone just gets shepherded in and taken off to The Hague. But... that's—I'm not in charge, and I don't have to answer to Jessica Tisch. I don't know what that's like.

It's like Kennedy and J. Edgar Hoover. It's like Mamdani and Tisch. But back to the lecture at hand—Lebanon, just before, I think, we move on. What's happening in Lebanon, I mean, it's horrific. I was just in Dearborn, Michigan, which, as everyone knows, is a sort of center of Arab-American life and civic culture just outside Detroit. And I gave a talk at a fundraiser for an independent media outlet called TMJ, which some young people are starting there. And I got to meet a lot of the local Lebanese-American population. And what they would tell me was that there were memorials happening every day in Dearborn, or at least every week, for families—entire families—that have been killed.

Ten people killed in one strike. Twelve people. A couple that was giving me a ride to the banquet hall, or the event hall—I mentioned this to them, that I heard there were a lot of memorials. And the wife said to me, yeah, my cousin was just killed by Israel while he was farming his land. They're just killing people. No one is unscathed by Israel's campaign of mass murder and ethnic cleansing in Lebanon, in that community. And what Israel's doing is actually attacking the people that are closest to the land, which means they're attacking farmers, they're attacking conservationists, they're killing, and they're spraying farms with glyphosate. This is—Steve Sweeney, who's a reporter on the ground in southern Lebanon—Lebanon files a UN Security Council complaint accusing Israel of violating the Chemical Weapons Convention in the south.

Lab tests from Aita al-Shab, Naqoura, and Dhayra confirmed catastrophic levels of glyphosate, a cancer-linked chemical produced by Monsanto—you know, Roundup—in agricultural soil. Basically like spraying Agent Orange. Normal farming levels would show 0.5—well, you get the point. They were spraying, and they were doing this in Gaza prior to October 7th with all the farmers in the so-called buffer zone. Another horrible thing they've done—as I said, they're actually deliberately attacking conservationists. This is someone named Mona Khalil, who's been protecting sea turtles at a conservation center she established called the Orange House just south of Tyre. Here she is. And Israel, last week—a week and a half ago—bombed the Orange House. Deliberate strike. Badly burning Mona Khalil.

She's, last I heard, in a hospital in Beirut. This is deliberate. They want the people off the land. I remember in northern Gaza, to prevent people from being able to feed themselves, Israel would deliberately assassinate small farmers who were trying to feed people during the genocide by teaching them to grow their own food. These are some of the baby sea turtles released by Mona Khalil in 2018 to crawl into the sea in southern Lebanon. This is deliberate. There's no question about this. And it's not really, of course, being covered adequately by our media, which consistently

reports that Israel has struck Hezbollah targets. BBC, New York Times, they refer to Hezbollah targets. CBS, of course. The Hezbollah targets are an entire community, specifically Lebanese Shias, who are being subjected to ethnic cleansing. And that's what's happening in Lebanon.

#Aaron Mate

And in the West Bank too, we've got to mention what has just happened recently, which everyone just continues to ignore because, you know, the Iran aspect just takes over everything else—in Lebanon too. But what happened in the West Bank—was it last week? I've lost track—but Israeli settlers set fire to a mostly Christian village town of Taybeh. Yeah, set it ablaze. And then when Palestinians tried to put the fire out, they shot at the firefighters. And this is, you know, this is a major village, like a major Christian village in the West Bank. And, you know, these types of attacks on the land in the West Bank happen every single day within this partnership between Israeli settlers and the Israeli military—the occupying Israeli military.

#Max

Yeah. More double-tap strikes, double-tap, triple-tap strikes on rescuers, firefighters. And also, while I was in Dearborn—I'll put up video of this later today or tomorrow—I visited the Wall of Tears, which is, I think, the first memorial in the United States for the children who were murdered by Israel during the Gaza genocide between October 7th and July 2025. And it's four long panels with just names, some photos of all the children that have been killed. It's really shocking to see it. It's a Holocaust memorial. It's at least 20,000 children, if I remember right. On this list, it's 18,500, but the list has grown since July 2025. It's violating the ceasefire in Gaza day after day after day with no pushback from this administration.

The Board of Peace has done nothing except work to set up a joint U.S.-Israeli military base in Kiryat Gat, near the frontiers of Gaza, to administer the concentration camp. They're even building a giant tower overlooking Gaza, like the towers that overlooked concentration camps and various other internment centers throughout history. The MOU with Iran—I know it doesn't include any provisions about Gaza. It says nothing about Gaza, which is very unfortunate given how important Palestine is to Iran throughout the history of the Islamic Republic and to its base of support, which is partly why there are protests actually against the MOU in Iran, in Tehran, for the past several days—people chanting against Aragchi, the foreign minister, and Mohammad Ghalibaf. And one reason is they feel Palestine has been left out, and another reason is they don't trust the United States—and why should they? So,

#Max

Gaza and Lebanon remain theaters of conflict. Iran looks like a frozen conflict, and I think there could be a momentary cessation. I don't know if the World Cup is a factor there, that Trump wants to let the World Cup play out. He doesn't really seem to care how the U.S. is perceived within the

theater of the World Cup, given how many deportations—the deportation of the Somali referee, who is the African League's referee of the year—and so many other players kind of being mistreated. But maybe it's a factor. At this point, it's just a 60-day freeze in hostilities. The Iran memorandum of understanding—the memorandum of understanding between the U.S. and Iran—was signed on Trump's 80th birthday, which also brought Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Ghalibaf under some criticism in Iran for basically giving Trump a political win on his birthday.

But I think it was an opportune moment because Israel had struck the Dahiya district that day or the day before. And it irritated and rankled Trump and his team sufficiently enough to see Netanyahu attempting to undermine a potential diplomatic achievement for Trump on the world stage that this moment may not have returned. And there was enough momentum there to get this deal that they wanted. And let's not forget that Iran is under significant economic pressure, not just because of the U.S. naval siege, but because of the destruction of its productive base during Operation Epstein Fury. So Trump was celebrating this at his 80th birthday on the White House lawn for Freedom 250, which was the closest thing I've seen to the realization of the scenes from the movie **Idiocracy** in my lifetime.

And it all culminated with the UFC mixed martial arts fight in the octagon on the White House lawn. And I think that this spectacle provides the perfect microcosm for what MAGA actually is at this point, which is that there's no movement left. The entire thing is astroturfed and desperate, enforced, and catering to billionaires at the expense of the American public. And of course, there is an element of crass Zionism embedded in the entire scenario, along with the cheapening of all of the symbols of what was once thought of as an American republic, and is now sort of like a late Roman Empire carcass.

#Max

4,000 tickets being given out to basically Trump cronies, including David Ellison, who owns Paramount, which was broadcasting the whole spectacle. Mark Zuckerberg, who's been supporting Trump to get out of an SEC investigation. Yeah. Melania, Mike Johnson, all of these figures by the ringside, very few actual fight fans, and then soldiers brought in as props, given free tickets to make the spectacle seem patriotic at a time when Trump has lost the support of mostly young white men. And there was one incident—there are several incidents—that just say so much about where MAGA is and also provide us with some insight into what's been happening throughout the Iran war.

One was Daniel Cormier, who was once a UFC champion and is now always ringside as the color commentator with Joe Rogan. He's under contract to appear at all these events, exposing Eric Trump for apparent insider trading. I don't know if you saw this, but this is kind of like how the sausage is made. It looks like Daniel Cormier posted this and then immediately deleted it, and there are records of his posting and deletion, like video records online. I think it's undeniable that he posted this. And he said, I refuse to stay silent. Shame on anyone trying to ruin this beautiful event.

And he refers to insider trading. He gets a DM from Eric Trump out of nowhere saying, Hey, Daniel, I'm going to be attending UFC. And he greets him.

Anything you can tell me about the fighters tomorrow? Who you got winning? And then he says, I'd like to see Bo Nickal fight, but I want to stay unbiased. You can see Cormier is starting to get a little uncomfortable. "You placing any bets?" Eric Trump asks. "No, I'm not allowed to bet on anything," he says. "Are any of the fighters injured that you know of? This is insider trading stuff. I'm not sure why you're asking me this, but I think they're all in good shape." "I'll just cut to the chase. Are any of the fights tomorrow rigged? I'll be eyeing the Lopez fight, and I think an upset wouldn't be too unrealistic. Money, money." "No, none of our fights are rigged, and honestly, I am appalled that you would even ask me something like that."

#Aaron Mate

Max, I'm sorry to be a wet blanket, but this looks fake to me. Like, you know, okay, yeah, I'm gonna, I'm gonna—I think it's too good to be true. I mean, listen, we have the brazen corruption out in the open from the Trump family, including—I know that, like, their cryptocurrency was a sponsor of the event and, like, fighters were paid—but yeah, sorry, this, um, I think this sounds too good to—it's too on the nose. It's too, it's too on the nose, him writing, like, you know, "Are any fights rigged?" in a DM. I think it's too on the nose.

#Max

Daniel Cormier has said he was hacked.

#Aaron Mate

Is that what he said?

#Max

Yeah, he said, "I was hacked." Here we go. And Eric Trump got community-noted for saying that this was fake.

#Speaker 2

I can't believe you guys believe that. Everyone said it was posted on your account. Who believes stuff like that? That's crazy. So you didn't post it? Why would I do that?

#Speaker 3

So he says he was hacked. Eric Trump said that...

#Max

I'm trying to find the community note for Eric Trump because I don't have it up right now. Where is it? I'm looking at Eric Trump's account. He may have deleted it. It looks like he deleted the post where he said he's aware of AI images, and he gets community-noted with evidence that he posted it. Sean O'Malley, who's a UFC fighter, even posted this. And he posts this.

#Aaron Mate

I'm sorry to be a wet blanket, but again, here's Eric Trump saying, "This is completely fake. I've never reached out to Daniel."

#Max

This is on Cormier's account, and then this is it being deleted. So, you know, correct me if I'm wrong, but it's either true.

#Aaron Mate

It's the Daniel Cormier account that did post this. He says he was hacked, and Eric Trump says this is fake.

#Max

So where's the Eric Trump statement saying it's fake?

#Aaron Mate

I just put it up here. I'll put it up again. Um, here it is. If you just go to—yeah, I was—I'm sorry to be a wet blanket, and not to, like, question the notion of the Trump family being corrupt, because of course it's all... "Eric Trump: This is completely fake. I never reached out to Daniel." In fact, this is scary. If he was going to try to bet on a rigged match and do it over a Twitter DM... I don't think he's that dumb. I don't think he's that brazen with their corruption. There's got to be a little bit more sophistication to the corruption than a Twitter guy.

#Max

I don't think there is, but maybe I was wrong. Here's some more data: the deleted post URL, the root post.

#Max

Um, you know, readers are adding a lot of context to demonstrate that this did happen.

#Aaron Mate

He's saying he was hacked though. Like, yeah, his account definitely was.

#Max

Why would you say you were hacked if this never happened?

#Aaron Mate

He's saying someone hacked his account and posted those.

#Max

How would someone hack your— I just don't get it. Like, when people say they were hacked, it reminds me of Anthony Weiner.

#Aaron Mate

People's accounts get hacked. I don't know about you, but I'm getting DMs from people saying, "Please vote for me in this podcast competition," which is like a bot thing. Again, I'm sorry to be a wet blanket. This is not to say there's no corruption going on because, again, their own cryptocurrency was sponsoring this White House event.

#Max

Here are some community notes on Eric Trump and Daniel Cormier, and the post he's referring to, which he seemingly is claiming is fake, was in fact a real post he made that he deleted soon after. And we all know UFC is a corrupt sport, but we also know that when Trump would leak to Barak Ravid at Axios that a deal was close, it would always be followed or it would be preceded by millions and millions of dollars of oil shorts from people who were somehow in the know and had connections with Donald Trump and were in his inner circle.

#Aaron Mate

And let me make one point, just to be fair to the narrative that you're putting forth, which is that if you are hacked, to then get control of your account back very quickly, that is a little fishy. That doesn't happen so often. So maybe, you know, again, I want to be fair here, but that means that is a data point in your favor there. But still, I don't know. It's just, it's hard to believe Eric Trump would be that dumb.

#Max

Okay. Well, let's just leave that aside, you know, with an abundance of caution. You are the anti-conspiracy theory balance that we need for The Grayzone. You've got to stick to conspiracy facts. It seems like something that would completely be within the wheelhouse of the Trump mafia and helps provide insight into their Iran insider trading. I don't know how Barron Trump got to be worth \$220 million. His father says he's a genius because he can turn his laptop on and off. He doesn't demonstrate any other skills. Eric Trump helped take public Parous Drones, which is a company that's been testing. Parous is a defense tech company that's been testing anti-drone technology in Iran. They're heavily invested in all these conflicts, and Dana White, who was the CEO of UFC, donated a million dollars to Donald Trump.

Dana White would be someone who would, if this happened, tell Daniel Cormier to delete that post and shut up and pretend the whole thing didn't happen. And then behind him is Ari Emanuel. You can't really go against this program. There's no room for an independent voice in this program outside of Trump world. And that's what Sean Strickland found out when he issued some crude attacks on the U.S.-Israeli relationship. Sean Strickland is the reigning UFC champion who has beaten fighters that many thought were... And Sean Strickland, of course, this was a staged PR stunt, but it was to make a point, which is that he would be arrested — the reigning champion would be arrested for showing up because of what he has said about Israel.

#Speaker 2

And so this is... we're going to go right to the stage, and we're going to just fucking rally this motherfucker.

#Speaker 3

Relax, relax.

#Max

This is, you know, outside the White House.

#Max

U.S. Park Police. This is federal police. You know, this is SWAT. Like when there's a SWAT raid in D. C. or they do a no-knock raid and bring in helicopters, the Park Police come.

#Max

So he just gets, like, he gets, like, a SWAT team — a champion — because he criticized Israel. And, like, millions and millions of young guys across America are seeing this.

#Speaker 2

What are they supposed to think?

#Max

And, like, the Park Police are acting like Dana White's Praetorian Guard. It's an incredible scene.

#Aaron Mate

Remember when there was a controversy because Obama built, like, a basketball court at the White House?

#Max

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, if Biden had won or whatever, if Kamala had won and she built a basketball court, Trump and the Republicans would have been freaking out. They would have been having a meltdown.

#Aaron Mate

The desecration of the White House. And then they put on—I mean, it's pretty entertaining. Yeah, it's pretty entertaining, and it's pretty funny, but, you know, especially with the corruption on display, the crypto—Trump's cryptocurrency—being used to pay the fighters, like being paid for the winner, the Ellisons, the presence of the Ellisons there, this being shown on their network.

#Max

Yeah.

#Aaron Mate

Yeah.

#Max

Uh, we'll talk about the merger in a second, but I mean, Sean Strickland is like—he's milking this. I mean, he's mocking Trump and he's milking this. This is his tweet: "Who did it better?" He's mocking the whole wall-kissing ritual that presidential hopefuls have to undergo. And I guess, like, you know, mocking what has become of Judaism against the backdrop of the Gaza genocide and the Iran war. And that's what, you know, that's what we get, I guess, after he got arrested for criticizing Israel. This is a guy, by the way, who had said after October 7th, he supported Israel, but he kind of understands which way the wind is blowing. This is a disaster for Trump and Netanyahu. And if

you're not paying attention to the culture, then you don't understand how big the backlash is going to be.

World Liberty Financial is another major Trump corruption conduit. It's run by the Witkoff sons and the Trump sons, Alex Witkoff and Zach Witkoff, and much of the money is coming from the Gulf through crypto. It's through crypto stablecoin. Then you also have Howard Lutnick and his son running with a major stake in Tether, which is the other stablecoin that they use for all of their... And they're operating an office out of Bukele's El Salvador. So World Liberty Financial turns out to have played a major role in this money-laundering event. I don't know if we're allowed to show this. We may get demonetized. Paramount is removing all kinds of footage of this event. They don't want you to see what happened.

#Speaker 4

So the players are being paid performance bonuses through World Liberty Financial.

#Aaron Mate

Which is probably coming from, like, the UAE. Exactly, because they're the major stakeholder in that company. They put in—I forgot the figure—but a lot of money. And right before, I believe, Trump's inauguration, I think after the election is when they made their investment, if I have the timeline right. And now they get to pay off, you know, the UFC fighters taking part in Trump's 80th birthday spectacle. Really, as you said, out of idiocracy.

#Max

Yeah, that fighter coming out with a 100-year-old Medal of Honor award winner from the Korean War, and Marines saluting the fighter in his spandex shorts, is a perfect symbol of the desecration of these American symbols. This is all happening on the White House lawn, and it's really just what MAGA is, and the whole thing is fake. It's astroturfed, and it's highly significant to have David Ellison on hand at this moment as the main conduit for this propaganda. If you watched it, by the way, every ad had Dana White in it. Every single ad was promoting Dana White, who was one of the top donors to the Trump super PAC and has a role in the Trump administration. But then you have here David Ellison in the front row.

Who's David Ellison? The son of Larry Ellison, who is a top Trump donor and a close friend of Benjamin Netanyahu. Oracle data centers are seizing water and farmland across America. David Ellison oversaw the Skydance purchase of Paramount, which was engineered by the Trump administration to give itself more power over the media. And this is 48 hours after the Department of Justice Antitrust Division—I mean, just saying that should make you laugh, that there is an Antitrust Division at the DOJ, which functions as Trump's personal law firm—approved the merger of Paramount with Warner Brothers. Oh, there's Zuckerberg. There's Zuck. He was under all sorts of

investigations before Trump got into office. Then remember, he changed his style. He was wearing a baggy t-shirt with a medallion. They're there for a reason.

It's important to mention, Trump is a major shareholder in Paramount, just to understand how corrupt this is. Of course, the DOJ is going to approve the merger. It's going to make money for Trump and his family. And what does the merger mean? I mean, we can just look at any mainstream media outlet. This is Politico: it paves the way for Paramount to combine with the entertainment and media company behind a vast film and television studio, CNN, and the HBO Max streaming service, which would be combined with Paramount Plus to create a new offering boasting about 200 million subscribers. This would upend the Hollywood ecosystem by combining two historic rival studios, and the entertainment industry is opposed because they're all going to lose their jobs—mass layoffs and whatever. But it looks like it's going to be rammed through.

#Aaron Mate

What are your thoughts? It's hard to imagine CNN, which hosts former AIPAC lobbyist Wolf Blitzer, open Israel-first advocates Jake Tapper and Dana Bash as anchors, which reported on the air that Hamas beheaded babies on October 7th, and their only source was the Israeli government telling them that. It's hard to imagine CNN becoming even more Zionist, but yet that's what we're about to see with the Ellisons taking it over. Are they going to let Bari Weiss run CNN too? There were some reports last week saying yes. Then there was some pushback to that because Bari Weiss has become so embarrassing for them that... and maybe they won't be so shameless as to do that. But regardless, whether it's Bari Weiss or not, it will get even more Zionist. And CNN, you know, for all their Israel-first activism from their anchors, they have had some reporters doing some good stuff, like when it comes to Gaza. I've seen it.

#Max

CNN International will.

#Aaron Mate

There has been some decent stuff, and I think if the Ellisons are now in control, can we really expect any of that to be allowed on air? I strongly doubt it.

#Max

Yeah. Dana Bash, Jake Tapper — those figures will be elevated at CNN. That's what will happen.

#Aaron Mate

They already tried that. They tried to give Jake Tapper a primetime show. It was a disaster. He was gone within a couple of weeks. So good luck with that, elevating your roster of Israel-firsters to even bigger heights. Unfortunately, there's still a thing called ratings and an audience. And being an open advocate for Israel on a cable news network that's supposed to be fair and balanced just doesn't land.

#Max

Well, it really just shows how ideological the entire project of corporate media always was. They're lifting the mask. That's sort of the thesis of Michael Parenti's **Inventing Reality**. And, you know, Henry Luce, who kind of created American corporate media, was so ideological that he supported fascism. He was an admirer of Mussolini. But he would try to conceal the ideology behind control by upholding reality and advancing the American century. And now we see it's not about ratings. They don't even necessarily care about ratings. There may not even be necessarily a profit motive in bringing Bari Weiss in. CBS is tanking. CBS is losing ratings. It's in the basement. Who's that guy, Tony Dokoupil, the guy who got circumcised at 40 so he could marry his Israeli wife? That's the anchor. He's like the least popular anchor.

He's anathema to American viewers. He's also extremely untalented. She brought in this guy, Nick Bilton, to run 60 Minutes. Bari Weiss did. He's unheard of, has no news experience. He was basically like a product and marketing manager. I actually know someone who knew him in media and said he was just like this middling kind of product manager who would organize sort of corporate partnerships for media outlets. He comes in there and then he fires Scott Pelley, who was the biggest CIA tool at 60 Minutes. He's done like five pieces promoting Havana Syndrome in the past two years and only one on Gaza. And what are they going to replace him with, like Olivia Reingold or someone from The Free Press? It's not like I'm gonna miss Scott Pelley with his fake little square-jawed "I care about my country" performance.

I love Zelensky. I anointed the sores on Zelensky's feet, Mr. Trump. What did you do? But, you know, I'm not going to miss him. And in some ways, it's good. Let's show the American public how ideological and militantly Zionist the corporate media is. Let's really just show them that it's an enemy of the people and bring in these talentless, rabid fanatics. And show them the door. They will turn to independent media or alternative sources. So I'm here for Bari Weiss taking over.

#Aaron Mate

I had to stay quiet during the whole Scott Pelley thing because it was like, you know, all the outrage was directed at Bari Weiss and the Ellisons, and for good reason. But to elevate Scott Pelley as an example of journalistic integrity, when, as you said, every time there's a State Department or CIA propaganda campaign, he's been there to promote it. Everything, like all the things we cover, he's been pushing the propaganda that we debunk every single time. It's just a reflection of what a bad

manager and how ideological Bari Weiss is. It even alienated Scott Pelley, who stood up and did lose his job, I think deliberately. I do respect him for doing that, but I had to stay quiet as everybody was praising him, knowing his actual journalistic record. It's nothing to applaud.

#Max

Everything he did was CIA-approved. He had three interviews with Zelensky that played out in four parts. And the whole point of these interviews was just to convince Americans to support sending more billions of dollars to Ukraine, to shovel more men into the meat grinder, to continue this war that continues now. I found part of this interview that he did with—what's that lady's name? Lulu Navarro. And there's such a revealing—I think I got the right part bookmarked here—but there's such a revealing exchange about how the establishment sees journalism and what we're losing with Bari Weiss taking over 60 Minutes and starting to impose her agenda. At Bari Weiss.

#Speaker 5

Did you talk to Anderson about why he didn't renew his contract?

#Max

Sorry, I think it's maybe at this point.

#Speaker 2

Just stay and do exactly that.

#Speaker 5

Do you think, though, they can trust those assurances?

#Max

No. All right, I'm not finding it, so sorry for... The part where he fake cries is what I'm trying to find. And she asks him—was it Tanya?—was like, all right, whatever. There's a part where she asks, it says, "Trump says you hate America and that you're surrounded by a bunch of talentless, stupid clowns." And, you know, I'll try to reenact it as well as possible. He goes, "Lulu, I can accept being called stupid and a clown. All that, all of the above may be true."

#Speaker 2

But one thing I cannot countenance is being told I don't love my country. While I may not have worn the uniform, I sat there in the trenches in Iraq and Afghanistan with our soldiers. And I did that because I love my country. And I don't know if the president has done anything like that.

#Max

You get into journalism because you love your country and because you believe in freedom of speech. That's why I did it. And it's, like, so performative. But that just says it all to me about how they think—like how that class of people that's being pushed out the door at 60 Minutes thinks—which is that they actually think they're serving their country, like they're practically in uniform by embedding with the military and presenting the Pentagon's narrative of these evil imperialist invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq, because they're risking their lives maybe by being in a tank. And that you go into journalism because you love your country. Like, no, that's actually not why you're supposed to go into journalism. And that's why everybody hates you and nobody trusts you. You go into journalism because you want to expose your country's corrupt elite. In some ways, you're at war with the forces in control of your country.

#Aaron Mate

Or even just more modestly, if you love facts, if you want to give people the truth, if you believe in fact-gathering. I mean, you know, that's the most basic thing. You just like the truth. And that's not his first priority. It's to a nationalist ideal, not to a factual one.

#Max

And so now we're entering a new era, you know, against the backdrop of the UFC idiocracy on the White House lawn, where those who are elevated to these places in the pantheon of journalistic institutions like 60 Minutes or CBS, CNN, will be promoting a mafia—a very sectarian, partisan mafia. I guess Scott Pelley represents the old mafia of, like, John McCain as the Republican and Obama as the Democrat, the post–World War II order.

And this is like the late Roman Trump-Zionist mafia that hates Islam, which is why this guy from Sky News, whose name I'm now forgetting, was just promoted by Bari Weiss, just because he was a Black British anchor who denounced Muslims every day. That's pretty much all he had to do to get that job. And so they're just promoting—shamelessly, nakedly promoting—a deeply unpopular ideological and political point of view at these institutions that used to pose as objective. And I'm glad that the mask is off and that anyone with any critical faculties will now see that this is not objective and these aren't just the facts, ma'am.

#Aaron Mate

Yeah, you know, I'm not an accelerationist when it comes to politics, but I think in media, actually, I think what you're saying does make sense — that Bari Weiss does fully lift the mask off, and everyone now can see what ideological system we're living under when it comes to our media. And so, as bad as I feel for all the employees who have to work under her reign — I mean, imagine

being a professional journalist trying to take your job seriously, and all of a sudden your new boss is a Zionist activist with no real journalism experience, who was an op-ed columnist who spent her life trying to get Palestinian voices canceled — I mean, I feel bad for them. But if we're going to live under this corporate-controlled ideological system, then I guess the most brazen, extreme, incompetent elements — I guess there's some utility in having them at the helm, because it shows us what we're really living under.

#Max

Yeah, I mean, it's agonizing, and it will be agonizing to watch what they do.

#Aaron Mate

It's brutal.

#Max

But it's not going to fall on fertile soil. I mean, you just look at the Zionist influencers on X or Instagram. Are any of them remotely appealing or convincing? They just produce anger and division and make everybody want to vomit. Maybe the last one who had any credibility was Jerry Seinfeld, and he's destroying his image. He could have just been like George Costanza, or whatever, Jason Alexander. He was always out there promoting a two-state solution. But Jerry can't resist being like, "Go IDF!"

#Speaker 2

Palestine doesn't exist. What is the deal with Palestinian civilians? Why do they run toward the bombs?

#Max

So it's just agonizing. It will be horrendous to watch, but more and more people will turn to independent media. And I think there's going to be a greater push to censor these platforms that disseminate our work, as we saw during the Biden era. And I made comments earlier about this yellow line that was imposed in Gaza to prevent people from returning to their homes, and the yellow line that's being imposed by Israel in Lebanon. Like, we know where the yellow line starts, but we don't know where it stops. And the yellow line is expanding into our own society. It's kind of like an invisible yellow line that delineates what's acceptable and what's not acceptable.

And it's encircling now corporate media in a way that's undeniable. I mean, obviously, corporate media was always pro-Israel. But now it's just being clearly delineated by Israel-first billionaires like David Ellison and their minions. And we're just here to cross the yellow line. That's why independent

media should exist. I mean, when someone says they're independent, they have to stand against that program. Independent doesn't just mean you're not sponsored by a state or a corporation. It means you stand against it, you're presenting an alternative to that program. And by the way, going back to... I thought I put it aside, but I couldn't resist. I mean, this is more Danny Cormier posting. Whoops, he deleted it.

#Max

And then he said he was hacked and then got control of his account back right away. It just doesn't make sense. So I hope we get some clarity so we can update on our next stream about what really happened. Because I think that was such an important—I mean, it deserves real coverage—that Danny Cormier tweet about Eric Trump. And going forward, if we had a real government after Trump, they would investigate all this insider trading and prosecute them. It's like, we're not going to get that, Obama. It's going to be like Obama not prosecuting one single banker after the financial crash.

#Aaron Mate

I mean, they were willing to investigate Trump for all these fake things like Russian ties, which was a complete hoax. They did, and then they were willing to go after January 6th because January 6th was an assault on the Capitol. But yeah, insider trading, it's such a clear case for them to do. They should take that up. And politically, I think that would even be popular because people want to see corruption held to account.

#Max

Uh, but, um, except with Nancy Pelosi, right? That's true, that's true. Yeah, exactly. There's so much insider trading in Congress, it's kind of like—but it doesn't compare to what the Trumps are doing. So, I got, like, a hard stop in 15 minutes. Do you want to cover the integration of the militaries? Or I told that to you—I mean, that's a huge topic that I think our audience would love to hear about how, uh...

#Aaron Mate

If you thought we were super tied to Israel at the hip, well, wait till you hear what people in Congress are trying to do to make us even more immersed.

#Max

And this is Tom Cotton's initiative. Tom Cotton being our AIPAC, but he's also from Arkansas, a state that isn't one of the biggest job producers, has a large, not very wealthy rural population, and he wants to basically bring Israel into the American defense production base, which would create jobs

in Arkansas and make Israel and the U.S.—the relationship—even more inextricable than it currently is, because it would mean denying jobs to people who need them in Arkansas. It's even more dangerous, possibly, than the \$300 billion of aid or so that's been sent to Israel since 1948. Responsible Statecraft has some of the best coverage of this initiative, which is under the NDAA and is known as Section 224. The House NDAA passed without this being stripped out. The AIPAC faction defeated an effort to strip it out, which I think Ro Khanna was leading.

Buried in the House's version of the 2027 National Defense Authorization Act is the U.S.-Israel Defense Technology Cooperation Initiative. It lays the groundwork for bilateral research and development, co-production of weapons, joint ventures, licensing agreements, and seemingly every manner of U.S.-Israeli military-industrial complex cooperation. Moving ahead, if fully enacted, this proposal would provide a higher level of military-industrial integration than the U.S. has with any other country in the world. It would fuse the U.S. and Israeli defense sectors in multiple areas vital to battlefields of the future, like autonomous systems and cyber. It would bring extraordinary Israeli influence to the U.S. beyond what it already has through the Israel lobby and its robust network of social media influencers.

It would give the Israeli government the opportunity to greatly expand one of the most powerful levers of influence in U.S. politics—jobs in the U.S. By expanding or starting new co-production facilities like it has in Mississippi and Arkansas, the Israeli government could boast of providing jobs on U.S. soil, thereby securing allies among members of Congress who represent the districts where those jobs lie. And also, it's completely opaque. I mean, it exists outside the realm of transparency. It can be concealed. All these deals can be concealed behind national security initiatives. But I think the key point is jobs will be contingent on cooperation with Israel, and suspending weapons to Israel or pulling back from the special relationship will then be tantamount to denying thousands and thousands of Americans jobs, especially in poor red states—which is the whole point. That's the point.

#Aaron Mate

It's basically taking U.S. workers and their livelihoods hostage, saying that if you want to have a district that survives economically, you have to be Israel-first. And it's a recognition that they've lost full public support. So the only way to keep U.S. assistance to Israel going, to keep Israel's death machine running, is to tie it to the livelihoods of American workers. I guess this was inevitable. And it also means that whereas now there are some performative votes every year, you know, where Israel can only get assistance if it's meeting U.S. obligations and U.S. human rights laws—now, forget it. That won't even be necessary anymore, because Israel will basically be an official appendage of the U.S. government.

#Max

I mean, there's been this debate over the years—who controls who? And I think since October 7th, it's increasingly clear that it's Israel and its various cutouts and proxies in the U.S. that are, in so many ways, occupying the U.S. government and U.S. institutions. But I'm increasingly of the mind that you can't separate the two, that they've been integrated. The power elite that controls the United States has been sort of integrated into this system of Zionist hegemony. And now this will be formalized through the NDAA in 2027, through Section 224 and another section which hasn't been given the same level of scrutiny, which is Section 662. Again, this is Responsible Statecraft.

The bill—this is Section 662 of the NDAA—put forward by Tom Cotton, you know, recipient of massive donations from Miriam Adelson, Paul Singer, and the usual suspects, who's also the chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, would prohibit any suspension, reduction, or limitation of such sharing except on the basis of a specific and identifiable national security concern determined by the president. Any such exception would require a report to Congress within 50 days detailing not only the reason for the change, but also the categories of information involved. The same report would require an assessment of the anticipated impact on regional security and various other matters. So it's sort of like impossible to suspend the sharing of U.S. intelligence with Israel.

This proposal is one of several recent moves by those in Washington who carry the Israeli government's water to keep the U.S. tied to Israel despite plummeting support. The most salient form of U.S. support has been more than \$300 billion in U.S. aid. But Netanyahu is trying to get ahead of the declining public support and avoid embarrassing losses by suggesting it would be fine with him to phase out the military aid. And Aaron, you've been hearing likely Democratic presidential candidates like Rahm Emanuel or Josh Shapiro, who are very closely tied to Israel, saying, yeah, we should stop directly giving aid to Israel to make it seem like they're actually taking a sensible, more critical view, at least of Netanyahu.

#Aaron Mate

Yeah, well, it didn't help their case to pretend that they're distancing themselves from Israel when Netanyahu said that this was his idea. That's what he called Major Garrett, or like, what did Anya call him? Major Goyet? Major Goyet. Major Goyet. And in the 60 Minutes interview where Netanyahu handpicked Major to interview him, Netanyahu said, yeah, this is great. I don't want U.S. assistance. This is actually my idea. So, yeah, good luck marketing that as some break from Israel when even Netanyahu is taking credit for it.

#Max

So the intelligence-sharing bill is being introduced at a time when U.S. intelligence, especially military intelligence—the DIA, Defense Intelligence Agency—but also various other three-letter agencies and U.S. officials are running to the media, U.S. officials in the White House are running to the media, complaining that Israeli spying on U.S. officials and U.S. troops and on the American public as a

whole is at a critical level, and that they're unhinged, according to language used by one source to the New York Times: "Pentagon sees growing espionage threat from Israel."

The Defense Department has increased the counterintelligence threat assessment to its highest level, and Israel is believed to have eavesdropped on American negotiations with Iran. Steve Witkoff, Michael D'Andrea, who's one of the key White House advisors on Iran, and Elbridge Colby, at the NSC, are some of the figures that Israel has targeted. It's said that Israel has planted surveillance, I guess malware like Pegasus, in their phones to eavesdrop on them. And it's also reported that Israel has been eavesdropping on American troops who are stationed in Israel.

#Max

Two senior U.S. military officials said that American personnel, particularly those serving in Israel or with Israeli counterparts, were well aware of the counterintelligence risks before the new report. The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal assessments, said U.S. personnel employ a range of security measures to counter the threat of spying inside Israel. Cooperation between the two militaries is very close, but each side also needs to keep its most sensitive information secret. So as the U.S. deepens its military footprint in Israel—as I said earlier—they're building a joint base in Kiryat Gat, and they operate on separate floors because of the fear of spying. Israel's stepping up its spying. The U.S. is basically just handing Israel control of the military's sensitive data by bringing so many soldiers there to defend the apartheid colony.

#Aaron Mate

Max, the biggest takeaway for me from that story is it underscores to me how terrible you are at self-promotion. Because you haven't mentioned yet that that story confirms something you put up on The Grayzone a long time ago, right? Which was that Israel was caught putting surveillance devices on, like, a Secret Service vehicle. Didn't you have that a long time ago?

#Max

You know, I buried that in one of my Charlie Kirk reports because there was just so much there at that time that I was getting from White House sources. I had to get it all out there, but I highlighted it in my interview with Tim Dillon in September 2025, which was right after Charlie Kirk was assassinated. And I mentioned that a White House source told me that it was, I think, during one of Netanyahu's many visits to Washington that Shin Bet agents placed a tracking device on a Secret Service emergency vehicle, which happened to be the vehicle that would have responded to an emergency involving the president, including a potential assassination attempt, an attempt on his life. Why would they do that? Well, also, I think maybe people dismissed me for saying that or called me a conspiracy theorist or something. The New York Times explicitly confirmed that report.

#Aaron Mate

Yeah, yeah.

#Max

Which is shocking. I mean, why are they trying to track the vehicle that would respond to an assassination attempt? Why are they interested in, you know, attempts on the president's life or emergencies around the White House?

#Aaron Mate

Yeah, the Times did confirm exactly what you reported a while ago, of course, without acknowledging your reporting. But, you know, you're not doing yourself any favors by even forgetting. But that just speaks to how you're focused on the actual work of journalism itself and not promoting it. But congrats on that, because that's—I mean, yeah, I remember when you came out with that, I would see people dismissing it, but now it's even confirmed by the New York Times, although many months later.

#Max

Yeah, and I wonder... I was always wondering who else knew about that, but it looks like Trump knew at the time, which would color Trump's thinking on his relations with Israel. And one thing the source told me is that Trump is actually concerned about threats to his physical security, which could even come from elements in the Israel First world. That's something he thinks about. But of course, Mike Waltz, who we played a clip of earlier, the UN ambassador, when he was in the House on the committee to investigate the Butler shooting, where supposedly a shooter nicked Trump's ear with a bullet and nearly ended his life and campaign.

Mike Waltz was attempting to push Trump into believing that the IRGC, Iranian intelligence, was behind Butler. So those are the forces that have really been working on Trump psychologically. And at the same time, we have a report going back to, I think, 2018 from Politico. Three former senior U. S. officials say Israel has planted Stingray surveillance devices throughout the White House to spy on the president and his advisors. That was in the first Trump term. How'd they get in the White House? Who can get into the White House?

#Aaron Mate

Meanwhile, what was actually happening in terms of the public conversation and Democrats is they were freaking out because there was this fake Russiagate thing about Russia planting surveillance devices in Vodafone or something like that. Remember, it was a big Russiagate thing. The Mueller team even investigated it. Just one more example of all this hysteria over fictional Russian

surveillance and Russian interference was happening just as actual Israeli surveillance, Israeli influence was going on, and nobody cared because that infiltration, that influence is supported on a bipartisan basis.

#Max

Definitely. And, I mean, the scandal—I think the scandal is titanic. If you actually entertain my question to its logical conclusion: how did they get into the White House? You have to assume that it was an Israeli who had come into the White House to meet with Donald Trump or his team that planted those devices. How else can you get in? It's not like you're throwing them over the fence. You wouldn't even get away with that. So that could potentially be Netanyahu, who was caught by former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson planting a listening device in his personal toilet at his home.

Boris Johnson wrote about that in his memoir. So Netanyahu, it seems, is directing the spying on Donald Trump, if not planting devices. And that's something that, if these reporters have access to all of these figures in the White House and the DIA—it's definitely harder for me to get sources these days—but if they have access, they should be asking these questions about Netanyahu's personal role. And with that, I think we've got to wrap. I don't know if there's anything you want to add.

#Aaron Mate

No, that's all I've got.

#Max

Well, call your—light up those switchboards, folks, against Section 224, against integrating our country's military with Israel's. Can you believe it? Uh, also thank you to Jaime Francis, who's been a generous supporter through super chats of this show over the weeks. And to all of you who've supported us, uh, you know, we continue to grow and expand our coverage. Uh, Wyatt Reed's still covering the situation in southern Lebanon and Beirut. And we'll be back soon. Like this stream, subscribe to us on YouTube, and sign up on Substack if you haven't done so yet to get everything we publish free in your inbox, or support us on Patreon. I put up some exclusive stuff there. And we will be back with you real soon. For now, we're out. Thanks a lot, Aaron, and peace, everybody.