

Amb. Chas Freeman: US-Israel Alliance CRACKS: Is Iran Winning?

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What's going on in Lebanon? As we know, last night there were many attacks, by the way, from the Israelis on Lebanese people. Four Israeli soldiers were killed yesterday, and then we had an attack, an escalation in the southern part of Lebanon. They have killed, so far, based on the recent information, 47 people, and 97 people were injured during this. And the fight is going on, because in the last two hours they were talking about a ceasefire coming, but there is no ceasefire. Various Israeli officials talking to Channel 12, Channel 15, are giving different sorts of ideas about the ceasefire.

But after all, the reality is that the ceasefire, as you mentioned every time, is with Israeli characteristics. They don't care about a ceasefire, and this is the reality of what's going on. What was so disturbing just today was this post by Ben Gvir. And in this post, he says that for every tear of an Israeli mother, a thousand Lebanese mothers must weep. All of Lebanon must burn. With all due respect to Americans, Israel must make it clear to the entire world that the blood of our sons and the security of our citizens are not forfeit. All of Lebanon must burn. Our supreme duty is to protect the citizens of Israel and the soldiers of the IDF. And this commitment takes... yeah.

#Chas

It's over every other consideration.

#Nima

Over the other considerations. I told the Prime Minister, even in our private meeting, for every tear of an Israeli mother, a thousand Lebanese mothers must weep. Enough with the ping-pong in the Middle East. You don't win with measured responses and restraint. You need to go berserk, to obliterate, to crush the terror. It's unbelievable, the level and the language he's using, and he's an official in Israel, and with the ongoing war. And how can we understand what's going on, Ambassador? We have an MOU, the two sides are trying to make some sort of move, and you see what Israel is doing in Lebanon.

#Chas

Well, I think Ben-Gvir's language sounds very much like something the Nazis would have said in response to resistance to their aggression in Eastern Europe, against the Soviet Union and France. And it's a measure of how low Israel has fallen that a cabinet minister would feel free to make that kind of horrifying remark. On the other hand, I suspect that there are people in Iran who feel exactly the same way about how to respond to Israeli violations of any effort to make peace in the region. After all, if a thousand Lebanese mothers must weep, then I suppose there are people who will argue that Israelis need more punishment.

What is going on is entirely predictable, however. That is, the Israelis have never agreed to be bound by any American agreement with Iran. They got the United States into this war. They subcontracted the United States to do what they could not do. When it proved impossible to do it, they wanted to continue. They want the United States to continue doing it. And they have made it very clear that they are prepared to wreck any peace agreement with Iran. They demand the destruction of Iran. And we now see a level of vituperation in American-Israeli dialogue which we've never seen before.

Israel Hayom, which is the newspaper that the Adelsons fund—Miriam Adelson—a propaganda tool for Benjamin Netanyahu, has condemned President Trump as having betrayed Israel. This is his largest donor in the United States. She is an Israeli citizen. And so it's very clear that the Zionists are breaking with the Trump administration. What is not clear is whether Trump has been prepared to break with Israel, because, in effect, the sort of statement that you just posted by Ben-Gvir and other statements by Israeli spokespeople invite the president to pull the plug on Israel, to stop the support of Israel.

These people have had the impression that they are entitled to American support no matter what they do. And they are entitled to violate American interests on behalf of their own misguided view of their interests. So I think Donald Trump now faces a terrible dilemma. His plutocrat Zionist donors have turned against him. The Israeli establishment is against him. Weisselberg and Kushner, who have bungled every negotiation they've attempted, are now being condemned by the Israelis as having betrayed their Zionist connections. They're being derided in the United States, I think correctly, for having no idea of how to close a deal internationally. War and peace are not real estate deals, it turns out.

So in the meantime, of course, Donald Trump faces the continuation, the acceleration of price rises for oil and gas—oil in particular—gasoline at the pump at filling stations in the United States, because although the Central Command has announced an end to the American blockade, it is not easy to get the ships that have been stuck in the Persian Gulf going again. Their engines need to be

started carefully after four months of lying idle. The oil in the tankers has probably deteriorated as a result of the hot, humid weather in the Gulf. It will have to be tested and maybe blended to be acceptable to buyers.

The buyers themselves have to have access through ports, which are already scheduled. So there may not be berths available for these ships if they can move themselves. There are mines, presumably, to be removed from the Strait of Hormuz by Iran. This is not a simple task. You either have to detonate the mines, or divers have to deactivate them and pull the fuse on them. The hulls of the ships, by the way, are undoubtedly fouled with barnacles and seaweed and everything else, and their speed will be even less. It will take them five to six weeks, if they can get out of the Gulf, to actually deliver the oil aboard the boats that they've been holding in their tanks.

So what this means is that somewhere around two to three weeks from now, when the United States' supply of stored oil is gone, and the cushion that the global oil market had with a surplus of oil has been exhausted, there is going to be a huge spike in oil prices and gasoline, which is disastrous for Donald Trump politically in the United States. So he's really in trouble. He's lost his main base of Zionist political support. He's, in a sense, rhetorically at war, at least with Israel. He faces a political humiliation. And people are correctly saying that the, I don't know, you know, it's called a truce or a ceasefire.

It's really just another de-escalation of the fighting between Iran and the United States, and an attempted de-escalation with Israel. This goes on, so it's not over. And we face now what I would call the war after the war, which is a negotiation. The negotiations in Geneva have been postponed as a result of the continuation of the fighting in Lebanon, contrary to the agreement that the United States made with Israel. Is the United States going to enforce that agreement against Israel? That is the question. And we don't know the answer. But I think Donald Trump deserves a little bit of pity for the position he's put himself in.

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We had Israeli Channel 15. It says, if Hezbollah tries to confront Israeli advances in southern Lebanon, we will defend ourselves and retaliate. This is the equation that they have created for themselves, because basically what they're telling us is, they say we are defending ourselves. They're attacking us, we are defending ourselves. But what is the location in which they're defending themselves? Is it occupied Lebanon?

#Chas

No, it's not even occupied. I mean, they are actively trying to advance against resistance, and then they're saying the resistance is criminal. And the fact that people are resisting authorizes them to kill civilians. The numbers you gave—so this is, you know, very much what is called chutzpah. It's very much like the classic story of the boy who kills his parents and then tells the court, "You should be

lenient because now I'm an orphan. So be kind to me. I'm now an orphan. You have to be kind to me." This is the same kind of reasoning Israel is applying, and it just doesn't work.

And I think J.D. Vance has correctly said that by attacking Donald Trump in the way that they have, the Israelis are running the risk of losing the last friend they have internationally. Because Israel is now a pariah state. It is the proverbial skunk at the garden party. Nobody wants a garden party with Israel present. So I think the amount of arrogance, the hubris that people like Ben-Gurion demonstrate is astonishing. And it's a reminder that Greek tragedy is always—tragedies are always caused by hubris: excessive pride, blindness to your own faults. And Israel is demonstrating the validity of that Greek thesis.

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In Iran, there are people who are criticizing the MOU because they feel if they lose their dominance or their sort of control of the Strait of Hormuz, there would be no leverage on the United States to put an end to the war between Israel and Lebanon. Because the only reason that the United States is negotiating with Iran or trying to do something is because of this sort of pressure that the Strait of Hormuz is putting on the global economy and the oil reserves of the United States. And later on, you see the Trump administration—you know, you've been watching Donald Trump and his administration.

This is new. What is happening right now is new. Donald Trump attacking Benjamin Netanyahu. You see J.D. Vance coming out last night, yesterday, saying that Israelis must be rational. They have to wake up and smell the situation they're in. This is the last moment for them. He said that the United States is giving them two-thirds of the weapons they're using, and they have used in the war against Lebanon. This is the reality. I don't see Europeans being willing to participate in any sort of direct war with Iranians.

#Chas

No, I don't think the Europeans will step up to this at all. And, of course, it's interesting—more than interesting, it's very telling that when the United States called for help with the Strait of Hormuz situation and the attack on Iran, nobody came. Nobody answered that call. Not one country. Israel was the only partner the United States had, and it really wasn't a partner because it was mainly taking advantage of the assault on Iran to expand its territory into Lebanon and Syria. And so I think the Israelis really do need to wake up and recognize that they lost the war. And the United States, their partner in the war, lost the war.

And I can't imagine—I went through the fall of Saigon, the end of the Vietnam War. What leverage did the United States then have with the Vietnamese government? None. So basically, if you lose a war, you can expect to have to face an adjustment in your policies and relationships that reflects the damage you've done. And this war has been a disaster from every single point of view. I don't know

any benefit it has brought to anyone. It's been disastrous for Iran in terms of the number of civilian deaths and the amount of damage it's done. It was catastrophic for the Iranian leadership at all levels. Yes, there was huge, huge damage done.

But it has been disastrous for the Gulf Arabs because of their association with the United States. And in the case of the UAE and Bahrain, their association with Israel. They are on notice that if these associations continue, Iran reserves the right to attack them. Iran has agreed not to attack anybody for 60 days, provided there is a ceasefire in Lebanon. That is explicit in the agreement. Israel is deliberately preventing the implementation of the terms of this MOU. Maybe it really should be called a memorandum of misunderstanding, an MOM instead of understanding, because it's pretty clear that there isn't any real understanding underneath it. But I come back to the point that you made.

Two-thirds of Israeli weaponry is American-sourced. Its interception capability for missiles—Iron Dome, Arrow, David's Sling—three systems were all paid for and co-developed by the United States with Israel. They're not products of the Israeli economy alone. They are gifts of the American people. Taxpayers paid for them. And they can be cut off. And I think Israel is about to discover that it is not entitled to a blank check from the United States. The United States is not willing to do that anymore, given the disaster that Israel has led us into—first in support of the genocide in Gaza, now in support of violence in Lebanon, and, of course, the disastrous war with Iran, which has ended with many benefits for Iran.

People say, well, if this were a football match, Iran one, U.S. zero. If we were honest, we would say Iran came out of this with new advantages, new leverage. The Strait of Hormuz—it has suspended any nuclear adjustment, any policy adjustment on the nuclear side for 60 days. But after 60 days, if there's no agreement, is Iran going to be bound by a pledge not to build nuclear weapons? What would be the basis for that? There would be no basis. So Iran has lots of leverage over these 60 days. And there's no way around that. And Israel can say all the bad things it wants to say about the Trump administration and the United States, but there is no way around the fact that it is at the mercy of the United States. And the United States, in many ways, is at the mercy of Iran.

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I think the options for Donald Trump are so... there is no good option for him right now. On one side, those people who supported him—the Zionists, you mentioned the Adelson family and those people in the... the Zionists or the supporters of Israel, pro-Israelis—they have invested a lot in his campaign, and they were part of the administration. Rubio came out of that sort of support from Adelson. And then you see, this is one side. On the other hand, the United States has to sacrifice everything to support Israel—everything. You know, going after all of the allies in West Asia, outside of West Asia—Japan, South Korea, GCC countries, Europeans are suffering a lot. You see the situation in, I would say, in Africa is not good at all as time goes by, with the case of the Strait of Hormuz.

You see, nowhere is feeling good. The United States, the economy, Iran—the economy of Iran is not doing great. The United States is the same way. In four weeks, all the oil reserves in the United States will be depleted—totally in four weeks. These are huge problems. And on the other hand, the political system in the United States—we're going to have midterm elections, and then right after the midterm elections, we're going to have the 2028 presidential election. These are important issues for Donald Trump, but nobody seems to care in Israel. All they want is the continuation of the war, the occupation in Lebanon, and they don't care about the Trump administration and the difficulties they're facing.

#Chas

Well, I think Donald Trump really resembles the Israelis in many ways. I mean, he puts his own ego and his own self-advantage before the advantage of his country. And the Israelis clearly imagine that everybody owes them something, and I think people don't accept that anymore. And, you know, speaking as an American, there is a clear line of deterioration in our constitutional system and our freedoms that can be traced back to our unhealthy connection to Israel. You know, now people are beginning to talk openly about the USS Liberty, where a large number of American sailors were deliberately murdered by the Israelis, who tried very hard to sink the ship with unmarked aircraft. They knew very well what it was. And now people are talking openly about that.

We may even have a discussion of 9/11, which, you know, the reaction of the United States was guided in large measure by Israeli Hasbara, the Israeli propaganda of exculpation. The 9/11 attacks were a direct result of American policies toward Palestine and Muslims generally that were derived from Israeli policies. And that began the process of the erosion of our Bill of Rights and the security mania that took place in the United States. And now we have this. And we had protests against genocide, which were condemned as, you know, as anti-Semitism, as though in order to be favorable to Jews, you had to be in favor of genocide. I mean, if there's any group in the world who should be sensitive to the need to oppose genocide, it should be Jews, wherever they are. And to their credit, many American Jews indeed are adamantly against Israeli policy.

But, you know, the break has been building, or the basis for a falling out between the United States and Israel has been building now for quite a long time, a quarter century really, and at least maybe more than that. And, you know, Israel is taking a huge risk — exactly what happened to the Crusader kingdoms in the 11th and 12th centuries. They collapsed when foreign support for them went away. Israel's playing games that could cost it its existence. And who is responsible for this? You could line up the Israeli cabinet under Netanyahu and find a basis for finding all of them guilty of the disaster they have brought to their country. So I think Donald Trump is concerned only about his own well-being and not that of the United States or Israel. Israel is concerned only about its well-being and not that of anyone else. And this is not a basis for sustained support from anyone.