

Col. Anthony Aguilar: US Dilemma: Back Israel or Save the Deal?

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#Nima

Tony, when you talk about Iran putting pressure on the United States using the Strait of Hormuz, do you think that somehow is working on the Trump administration? That's the reason that you see J.D. Vance and Donald Trump coming out and attacking somehow Benjamin Netanyahu and his administration. We had Israeli attacks on the Trump administration because of the MOU, because they see whatever they see coming out of the MOU as a total defeat for Israel, I would say. And this is, at least in the eyes of Israelis—I'm talking, that's my opinion—in the eyes of Israelis, what they're putting out, they say this is a total defeat. None of our objectives have been considered in this MOU, because they wanted the Iranian nuclear program to be dismantled. They wanted to put restrictions on Iranian ballistic missiles.

They wanted Iran to stop supporting the, as they call it, Iranian proxies, basically talking about the acts of resistance. And they wanted to diminish Iran geopolitically and militarily in the region, to be more under the dominance of Israel in the region. So none of those objectives have, you know, been achieved in the eyes of Israelis. So when they're attacking the United States, and you talk about the United States, Iran can use the Strait of Hormuz to put pressure on the United States, considering what is going on between the two administrations. Do you think that's going to be possible for Iran to use the Strait of Hormuz to make some sort of leverage on Israel? And what would be the outcome for the Trump administration going after the Israeli agenda or Netanyahu's agenda?

#Anthony

Well, you know, neither Netanyahu, Iranian leadership, nor American leadership, or the United States of America's leadership, have a crystal ball to look and say, this is exactly what's going to happen. So everything is a matter of speculation, hypothesis, attempts, leverage. When I look at this, I think that the Donald Trump administration, the U.S. administration, is very concerned about the implications that are coming to the U.S. economy based on the preceding days of the Strait of

Hormuz being shut down. That backlash, so to speak, you know, like a whip—the crack of the whip doesn't come at the movement of the wrist. The crack of that whip at the long end of that economic chain has not hit the United States yet.

And when it does... if the Strait of Hormuz is still under the control of Iran, at least in a military sense, what we're seeing now with a blockade, so to speak, or an actual restriction of who can use it, the perception of the American people is that, well, that's a direct correlation to loss or failure against Iran. Get into a deal. Get the Strait of Hormuz open. As the implications of rising costs start to hit the United States. And right now, I think most Americans look, price of oil went down. It's a little bit cheaper at the gas pump today. You know, I just filled up on gas on my way home from the airport. It's a little bit cheaper. Okay. Donald Trump ended the war. Prices are cheaper at the pump. That's temporary, and that's fabricated.

That's manufactured. The true implication of the total weight of the economic implications from the Strait of Hormuz in terms of agriculture, refinement, fuel, etc. — we have not felt it yet, and we're going to feel it. So, Iran understands that. Donald Trump understands that. Israel understands that. But Israel does not care about America. Israel does not care about the Americans at home or the average American, nor do they care about America. So for Israel, it doesn't matter. For the U.S., it obviously does matter. And for Iran, it's a very clear leverage. Is it the only thing? If Iran looks at this and says, oh, look, the Strait of Hormuz — on, off, on, off. We want America to do something, turn it on. We want America to do that, turn it off.

No, but it is a lever in the choice of options, the full range of strategic options of which Iran can respond or continue on in these negotiations. And like I've always thought in looking at the 14 points of the Memorandum of Understanding, point two through point 14, those 13, those are all negotiable. There's space, there's trade space on the table. This much gets released, these sanctions at this time, what's the toll on the Strait of Hormuz going to be? How do we craft that narrative so it doesn't look like we just gave it up, but it's more of an administrative—like all of those things, there's room on the table to negotiate with those. But point number one, there's no gray space. There's no wiggle room. There's no maybe some of this or maybe some of that. It's very clear. Stop this before any of this ever becomes a reality.

And if you don't stop it, then we're not proceeding with these things. Iran has shown that you don't go ugly early, right? You don't go all in right off your first step. So Iran is looking at it like, okay, we're not going to Switzerland, we're out now. Strait of Hormuz — we're gonna implement, we're gonna control that again. What does the United States control? The United States can then respond and say, we're not gonna lift sanctions, and you're not gonna get your frozen assets back. And if you're Iran, you look at that and you say, we've been fine without it for a decade, so it doesn't really impact us immediately. Checks in the mail, fine. Strait of Hormuz is real and current. So the U.S. isn't really dealing with any leverage that can influence the immediate situation. Iran can.

Back to the question of Israel and that. Should the question be, can the United States stop Israel? Well, Israel is a sovereign nation. Israel doesn't have to listen to the United States. I think it's clearly showing that they aren't a good ally. But then now the United States is going to have to make a decision in how that's going to be conveyed to Iran. Iran, United States here — sorry about our asshole ally. We're cutting ties. We do not want to be linked to them in this deal anymore. And therefore, anything that you want to do, Iran, to respond to what they're doing, have at it. Have at it. We're not going to respond. We're not going to provide them with the assets.

We're not gonna provide them with the defenses. They are on their own. Let's negotiate this. Then there's the option where the Trump administration can look at it and say, we're choosing our old bedfellow and we're going with Israel, or excuse me, with Israel, and we're going to back them in however Iran may respond, because more response is coming. Or the United States can say, Israel is the problem. We will have to take some type of action against Israel to compel them to stop if we ever want to see this memorandum of understanding see the light of day and become a real thing. Now, does that mean sending in the 82nd Airborne into southern Lebanon to push the IDF out?

No. But could there be sanctions? Could there be other levers? Because there's a lot that we give Israel that isn't always seen in terms of direct, normal diplomatic channels. Are there levers? There are. So when I look at that, I think of it in terms of... What can the United States do and what can the United States not do? What can Iran do and what can Iran not do? Iran cannot compel the United States to release sanctions or release frozen assets. But Iran can inflict political and economic pressure with the Strait of Hormuz. The United States cannot directly dictate what Israel does as a sovereign nation.

But the United States can clearly signal its support or lack of support, or which side it is going to, through voices like J.D. Vance, the president himself, or actual actions. I think it'd be a great step, a great step to show some initial backbone, some spine, to say, hey, all of those strategic fuelers— gone. We're leaving. You can't use them anymore. Is that going to halt Israel dead in their tracks? No, but it sends a powerful message. So right now, the way I see this is that the United States is still very much trying to play the, hey, there's still a ceasefire, right? Hey, we're still negotiating. These are all little hiccups. It'll buff out.

And I think the United States is missing the forest through the trees here and realizes that this is only going to escalate to a point where we might be at full-scale conflict again, depending on how the United States chooses to stand its ground. And to side with Israel would be putting America last. We need... As much as it sounds counterintuitive, this deal as it stands right now is in America's interest to close and to finalize and to move on with the normalization of relations in the region without trying to be a hegemon or a military occupying power. And if Israel is the thing that's preventing us from doing that, well then... we need to make that clear and do something about it. I don't think this administration has the spine to do it, but we'll see.

#Nima

Tony, when they're talking, Israelis are talking about, "We are a sovereign nation, a sovereign country." But what J.D. Vance said is proving totally the opposite of what they're talking about. Two-thirds of what they have been using militarily is coming from the United States. I know no country that is that dependent on the United States, not even Europeans. That's why when you're talking about, "You gave us all of these weapons, missiles, and everything, but you don't decide how we can use them," this is not.

#Anthony

That's the Israel-U.S. paradox. We're a sovereign nation. Well, you wouldn't be a sovereign nation if we didn't give you all of the stuff to be a sovereign nation. Like a minor child still living in their parents' home: "I'm my own person." Yeah, you are, but you still have to follow our rules if you're going to live under our roof, because we pay the mortgage and we pay this and we pay that. You want to be your own person and not listen to what we say? Well, there's the door, right? There it is. "Well, I can't get a job. I can't buy my own food. I can't pay for a mortgage. I don't have a car." Well, I guess you're going to have to listen to what we tell you. So with Israel, it's very much the same, to where Israel is saying, "We're our own nation. We're our sovereign nation." You hear Ben-Gvir, and how disgusting is Ben-Gvir.

And I hope more Americans are waking up to the reality and seeing this man who just yesterday, in front of the Knesset, said, "Burn Lebanon, burn it to the ground." He said the same thing about Gaza. And then he also said, "We don't listen to Donald Trump." I mean, the audacity of a nation to take, take, take, take, take, and then to come back with, "We don't have to listen to you." If the U.S. administration had a spine, they would stand up and say, "OK, fine, you don't have to listen to us. That \$3.9 billion we give you every year from taxpayers' dollars—you're not getting it anymore. All of those bombs and munitions and weapons and ammunition and technology and radar and F-35s that we give you cheaper than we give to anybody else, and we let you modify them—you're not getting them anymore."

And this NDAA that you want to go into to stabilize future relations between the United States and Israel—we're not doing it. Consequences. The United States has so many consequences, so many sticks to carrots. There's like a bushel of carrots and a cord of sticks. We've got carrots and sticks all day long with Israel, and we choose not to use them. This conflict and this MOU are going to force a decision one way or another, because the United States cannot afford to continue down a path of being in conflict with Iran. The United States can survive politically, economically, diplomatically, militarily without Israel. The United States cannot continue down a path of being in conflict with Iran, where at any moment it could escalate and bring in other powers like China and Russia. Is China or Russia ever going to come to the white knight to defend Israel? No.

But if we continue this—because that's the thing with the Strait of Hormuz, I've called it this before—it is the albatross around Donald Trump's neck because it is key terrain. Geographically, it's key terrain. Politically, it's a center of gravity. Economically, it's a critical factor that doesn't just impact the U.S. or Iran, but others. So, the way I see it, if you're the United States, you're looking at hard decisions now. It's either this—Israel—or this: peace with Iran moving forward. It looks to me now, I certainly think you could have both. Israel is not allowing it.

Under Israel's actions and Israel's continued actions and what their leadership has said, there cannot be an existence of peace, relations with Israel, and a peaceful settlement moving forward in normalization with Iran. Both cannot exist unless Israel changes its ways. So the United States is going to have to make that choice. And if the United States doesn't make a clear choice, this will continue not to the benefit of the United States, because if Americans think that we've already felt the pain, that we're over the hump of the impact of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz during the period that it was, we haven't even felt it yet. That wave of impact hasn't even reached our shores yet. And when it does, it's going to be painful.

#Nima

Tony, from the military point of view, when you look at the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, is there any way politically for Israel to stay in Lebanon without having any sort of conflict or war?

#Anthony

No.

#Nima

Is there anybody telling that to the United States, to Donald Trump and J.D. Vance, that it is impossible to have an occupation and have any sort of mutual understanding between these two sides to back down? Because that's a crucial point.

#Anthony

Yeah. I would say, hey, Donald Trump. Hey, Pete Hegseth. Hey, Trump. J.D. Vance, let's have Tony story time. You can sit on my lap and I will read you a book. It's called Iraq. It's called Afghanistan. It's called The Last 50 Years of Occupation in Lebanon by Israel. And let's see what the likelihood is of occupying and not having resistance. Show me anywhere in the world where that has ever been the case. Ever. Ever. To include the creation of our own country. Hey, we want to stay in your sovereign land and continue to occupy your sovereign territory, and we expect you to not resist. Don't resist our occupation and then everything will be great. Do what we want you to do without resistance and everything will be great. Who would ever expect that any nation would ever exist

under those conditions or terms? Hezbollah is the only means of resistance in Lebanon right now. The fight is in the south, and that is where Hezbollah is defending. Is the Lebanese army doing their part in the south?

#Nima

No.

#Anthony

Is the government of Lebanon doing its part in the south?

#Nima

No.

#Anthony

So the government of Lebanon can thank Hezbollah for preventing everything south of the Litani River from becoming northern Israel. So can a reality exist where a nation can occupy another against its will and expect no resistance? I've never seen that in our history of humankind. So I don't think it's going to happen now, nor should it. What? Who would live that way? Ask the average American that if Mexico invaded southern Texas and took land all the way up to the Medina River in south Texas and said, this is ours now. You think Texans would just be, well, guess we'll just learn Spanish? No, they would resist.

Think of that in terms of the occupation of southern Lebanon and this whole idea of, well, it's because of Hezbollah. It's like, okay, well, Hezbollah didn't exist until the massacres in Lebanon by the Israelis in the '80s. So you can't claim that. I think it's clear, and it's becoming more clear to the world as they ask these questions. Hey, Israel, maybe Donald Trump should just ask if he doesn't know, hey, why are you in southern Lebanon? The United Nations has dictated through General Assembly resolutions that they recertify, if you will, or they vote it every year. It's symbolic. Every year in the UN General Assembly, there are resolutions for Israel to leave occupied territories. So why does Israel stay?

Because there's no consequences. Or there's no consequences that are severe enough. Because Israel, they get to have their cake and eat it too. Because we give it to them. We give them the cake. We cut the cake. We put it on the plate. We feed it to them. And then we say, happy birthday, Bibi. It's time for that to stop. And if it doesn't, then conflict with Iran will continue. And it will continue to impact the United States directly and indirectly. And now is the time for choosing. That is what I fear most in this, that the current administration of the United States doesn't have the spine to make that decision. Or they can't because they're compromised to a degree where they just can't.

Like, if Donald Trump puts his foot down and says that whatever compromise there is in our government, whether it's financial or moral and ethical or whatever's in files or videos or whatever, is so bad that it will— I think it was Marjorie Taylor Greene that said it, right? No, no, it was Pam Bondi. Pam Bondi said it. If all this is released and we go after the people in the Epstein files, the whole thing will come crashing down. What? So, to me, it's so clear right now that the fog and friction of war has been cleared. We now see the critical component for what it is. And it is, we are at a time of choosing. And that battleground, the front line of that, is southern Lebanon. And Iran has made it clear, we're not going to your negotiations in Switzerland.

Oh, it's continuing? We're closing the Strait of Hormuz again. What after that? I think we're going to see kinetic strikes. This has the potential to go far, far out to left field and be so much worse than it was. But the United States can prevent it. So I really don't... At this point, I don't know who is advising the president. We haven't heard a peep from Hegseth. We haven't heard a peep from Rubio. We've heard from J.D. Vance. And if J.D. Vance's communication, what he is speaking, is what the president feels, well, then put your money where your mouth is. Let's see some consequences. So I think that's where we stand right now. And to be quite honest and frank, I am not surprised, not shocked. Disappointed, incredibly disappointed, but not at all surprised.