

# David Pyne: Fragile Truce: Is Peace Just a Pause?

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## #Nima

Latest on what's going on in the recent 12 or 24 hours, we have, you know, some sort of huge conflict in the southern part of Lebanon. The war is going on between Israel and Lebanon, and they tried last night to capture one of those castles, which is so important for Hezbollah, but it failed. This is the sixth time, you know, I think they tried it before five times, and this was the sixth, and it has failed to capture that castle. It's so important for the region, for Nabatieh and the southern part of Lebanon. Then the attacks—Iran is putting pressure on the United States. And moments ago, before coming to this live, we've learned the IRGC in Iran reported that they have closed the Strait of Hormuz officially. They have closed it.

And the two delegations, the U.S. delegation and the Iranian delegation, are going to Switzerland, and they're going to talk. From what we've seen so far, the news that came out is that J.D. Vance is going to be the head of the delegation in Switzerland. On the part of the Iranians, it's going to be the head of the Iranian parliament, Qalibaf. Basically, looking at the two delegations, they're the same as they were before during the Islamabad talks, that discussion—direct talks between the United States and Iran. The two sides are so prepared. I would say on the part of the Iranians, they have the head of the Iranian Central Bank, the Iranian foreign minister, the head of the Iranian parliament, and one from the National Security Council of Iran. On the part of the United States: J.D. Vance, Jared Kushner, Steve Witkoff.

We have the two mediators, Qatari and Pakistani mediators, in that meeting. IAEA, we've learned, it's going to be Grossi or the guy from the IAEA representing them in the negotiations. This is what's going on tomorrow. They're going to meet in Switzerland. And as time goes by with the conflict, as I've mentioned, in Lebanon, Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz because the first line, the first point in the MOU, is not being respected by the Israelis. And here is what's going on. And when it comes to the meeting between the two sides in the European Union, what is so important and what would be the main objective? I would say on the part of the Iranians, they basically want to talk about the situation in Lebanon, as we've seen with the case of the Strait of Hormuz. But how do you see the perspective? How do you see the view of J.D. Vance and his delegation?

## #David

Well, first of all, thank you again for having me on the show. This has been a momentous week in U.S. foreign policy and at least foreign relations. President Trump made the decision to sign that MOU that I'm calling a 60-day armistice agreement with Iran. And it's a sweeping victory for the Islamic Republic of Iran. It has very few concessions to the United States, but quite a few concessions by Iran. And I've described it as, since it was signed by President Trump in the Palace of Versailles and it had 14 points, I've been calling it Trump's Treaty of Versailles with Iran, because essentially we had a conditional surrender to the Iranians.

Maybe that's played up a little bit too much, but I think that's essentially what it was. And it's what I predicted it would be at the onset of the war, that this war would continue until President Trump accepted Iran's terms. And I said that within the first five days of the war, essentially. I said it would be a strategic defeat for the U.S. Actually, before the war even began, I said it would be a defeat for the U.S. inevitably. And my predictions have been proven correct, unfortunately. I would have loved to have been proven wrong in this instance. But President Trump's war against Iran has strengthened the regime. It's strengthened Iran. It's made Iran into a regional hegemon.

And we've seen, as you mentioned this morning, that the IRGC is able to act with impunity to reclose the straits in response to ongoing egregious Israeli violations of the agreement. Now, of course, Israel has rightly stated that it is not bound by this agreement because it was not a part of the agreement. But the U.S. has guaranteed essentially that Israeli troops would be, you know, at least there would be a ceasefire in place. And reportedly, President Trump also assured Iran that there would be a full Israeli military withdrawal from southern Lebanon. And unfortunately, Prime Minister Netanyahu has essentially been giving Trump the middle finger and saying, we're not only going to, you know, not continue, we're going to continue fighting.

We're going to, you know, start a massive ground offensive and air offensive to show you that we don't care what you think. And we've seen tremendous, you know, what I love about President Trump and Vance this week, Vice President Vance, is that they have been very critical of Israel to an extent that we have not seen in a U.S. presidential administration probably before. And that is a tremendously positive development because it is Israel that has played the part of the spoiler that's caused us to embroil ourselves in these wars. Now, with regard to your specific question about what each side's objectives are, you're absolutely right.

Iran's objectives in these negotiations that are hopefully going to occur tomorrow are to bring about an end to the war in Lebanon, to try to enforce point one of the armistice agreement, and also to obtain full sanctions relief of all U.S. primary and secondary sanctions on Iran. Vance, of course, his top objective is to constrain Iran's nuclear weapons program to the maximum extent possible. Both Trump and Vance have claimed that Iran's nuclear program has been destroyed. In fact, the reports

that I've seen are that their nuclear weapons program is largely untouched. It was hardly even targeted during Operation Epic Fury. And so, uh, they have all 1,000 pounds of their highly enriched uranium still available.

The same amount that they had before Operation Midnight Fury, or the 12-Day War, back in June of 2025. And, um, I think the best we can do is essentially freeze Iran's program. I think that it would be a great victory if we could essentially have the JCPOA re-implemented with stronger verification measures. And that is essentially what Iran was offering before the war. They had a very comprehensive deal to avoid war with the United States. They provided it to U.S. negotiators on February 27th. On the following day, Israel assassinated their Supreme Leader with full U.S. support. In fact, Trump has claimed credit for killing the Supreme Leader and members of the First Family of Iran, very disgracefully.

But I want to give President Trump credit where credit is due, in that he's turning the page in Iranian and Israeli relations in a very positive way — what I would construe as a very America-first way. You know, realistically treating Iran not as some kind of crazy, suicidal rogue regime, but as a reasonable and rational actor in international affairs, which is what they are, because they had the ability to escalate in five different ways that I've explained in, I think, our previous interviews — including nuclear, super-EMP, cyberattacks on the U.S. homeland, hypersonic and supersonic anti-ship missile strikes that could have sunk U.S. Navy ships in the Gulf region, and then, of course, Hezbollah terrorist cells that are in the U.S. itself. And they chose not to do any of those things. So I'm not saying that Iran is a peace-loving regime, but they certainly have prioritized peace with the U.S. and Israel, and they were not the ones that started this war.

## **#Nima**

Do you think that—you mentioned how J.D. Vance was somehow responding to the Israeli attack on Donald Trump, because they were somehow—it's not about Israel, but the media in the United States who are cooperating with Israelis—they were attacking Donald Trump because of his position, his new position. He says that I may get something out of it. And the MOU, by the way, David, I think it's some sort of document to deescalate. It's not any sort of agreement. That's why I don't see—maybe your understanding is that Iran is winning with the MOU—but nothing is out so far. It's some sort of de-escalatory process for the two sides to come together after many, many years to talk at least, to see what's going on between the two countries. But Israel doesn't want that. The agenda on the part of Israel is the continuation of the war. The continuation of the war is not going to benefit anybody.

I'm talking about on the part of Iran and the part of the United States. And nobody in the region or outside of the region—in Europe, go farther, Japan and Korea—no one is going to benefit from the continuation of the conflict. But the Israelis are pushing for that. And J.D. Vance is coming and responding to their sort of attack on the administration. Do you think that's going to lead the United States to take some sort of serious measures toward Israel regarding the occupation? Because as

long as they're in Lebanon, in the southern part of Lebanon—just yesterday they said, "We are advancing in the southern part of Lebanon. If Hezbollah attacks us, we're going to retaliate." This is the recipe for endless war in the southern part of Lebanon. There has to be some sort of serious push, serious pressure on the Israelis. Is that going to happen? Yeah.

## **#David**

I think it will. Yeah, I really—I've never been more optimistic that, you know, Trump and Vance are, you know, moving U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East in the right direction since the war began, since well before the war began. Because, you know, of course, I predicted that the war would break out in the first place. I didn't predict the first war, the 12-day war. I thought Trump would be smart enough to avoid that. But I predicted this one would happen. But yeah, J.D. Vance has pointed out rightly that the U.S. and Israel have very different foreign policy objectives with regards to Iran.

Trump's policy is to restore peace, essentially to restore the status quo ante, which, of course, would mean that, you know, Iran doesn't control the Strait, that the U.S. and Iran are at peace and that they're not bombing each other. And unfortunately, there's nothing the U.S. can do militarily or diplomatically to reverse Iranian control of the Persian Gulf. Iran, you know, had the ability, of course, to control the Persian Gulf and control the Strait of Hormuz. And they chose not to do that because they were trying, you know, very, very hard, you know, passionately, to avoid war with the U.S. because they understandably did fear President Trump, and they were contained.

They were not conducting any attacks, proxy attacks against U.S. troops or bases. And they never would have if President Trump hadn't joined this war. All he had to do when Israel started the war was say, you know, transmit to Iran that the U.S. would stay out of the war, would remain neutral. And if they didn't attack U.S. military bases, we would never attack them. Instead, he decided, you know, President Trump went to war to try to save U.S. military bases from being attacked by Iran, but essentially guaranteed that they would be destroyed by Iran by doing so. So that was a very self-defeating action.

You know, Iranian control of the Strait is, you know, that means they essentially control 20 percent of all, you know, oil reserves in the world in terms of, you know, transporting it out. And, you know, friends of mine have said, well, this war wasn't really about Iran. It was really about China and trying to limit Chinese oil supplies. Well, you know, Chinese oil supplies have increased, really not even been interdicted at all, because it was, you know, some of my friends call it, it was a leaky blockade. You know, the U.S. essentially looked the other way as Chinese tankers, you know, left the Gulf from Iran to China almost the entire time.

That was essentially the deal that President Xi Jinping and President Trump agreed to at the Beijing summit where, you know, again, the U.S. gave the concessions and China really gave no concessions. So we're seeing a pattern here where, you know, President Trump has acted like we're

the biggest superpower, but he's the one making all the concessions and our enemies are not. So who really has the power here? As I mentioned, as I wrote on my Real War Substack on March 5th, you know, this war would transform not just the regional order, but also the global balance of power against the United States. And I think that that's exactly what we've seen happen.

## **#Nima**

I think what has happened with the case of China, you see China even being more prepared than the United States for the war. You know, look at the oil reserves, look at all they had before this war started, as though China was planning for the war, not the United States. That was somehow amazing, because Donald Trump, before the announcement of the signing of the MOU, he said, we are poor people. We are four weeks away from the oil reserves being totally depleted. So how is that going to be?

That's why you see how China, I think the way that China diversified its sort of importation of oil and gas, it's just amazing. I think many people should look at that. Coming back to the situation, we had J.D. Vance last night talking to one of these podcasters. He said Israel needs to understand they are allies of the United States, as the United Kingdom and France are. But Israel doesn't feel this way. I think for many Israelis who are hearing what J.D. Vance is talking about, they say this is a total betrayal of Israel because they don't feel that way. They want the United States to consider them as the most important ally, not just France. France is nothing in their opinion. That's why they're attacking the Trump administration. But is that going to be forced, this sort of idea on Israelis to understand their position, to put them at least in their logical and, you know, in their rational place? Because it's not rational to feel that you are one of the states, you know, the 51st state maybe, of the United States. Maybe they feel themselves as Washington, D.C. So the United States has to react. What is your understanding of that, and how far would the Trump administration go to make them understand the new equation of the region?

## **#David**

Well, I think the problem is President Trump made a pact with Israeli-American Miriam Adelson and others that if they would finance his presidential campaign and help him get reelected and avoid further prosecution, then he would be the most pro-Israel president in U.S. history. And essentially that's what he ended up doing up until this point. He's been slavish in his devotion to doing whatever Netanyahu wanted him to do. And I've jokingly described him as Israel's puppet president. I think maybe that's a little bit too far. Basically, he's been dog-walked by Benjamin Netanyahu into a war that was fought in complete opposition to U.S. national security interests.

And it's done great damage to our national security. But it can still be used to reset U.S. foreign policy in an America-first direction because, you know, we've proven that these endless wars in the Middle East have great costs, great risks to the U.S., and no benefits. So, yeah, to answer your question, I think what needs to happen is, number one, President Trump needs to have direct talks

with Netanyahu's opposition leaders that are running against him for prime minister, and basically say, hey, whichever one of you guys is willing to commit to align yourselves with U.S. foreign policy, which is a full Israeli military withdrawal from Lebanon, I'll endorse you and I'll support you against Netanyahu.

And I will call for Netanyahu's ouster because essentially Netanyahu—the key issue that needs to happen for this armistice agreement, which I think is very comprehensive and really could be extended indefinitely as essentially a permanent peace agreement—is regime change in Israel. It's the Netanyahu regime that's the rogue state. They're behaving like a rogue regime. And that's really the key to achieving lasting peace with Iran. There are other things we can do as well. We can cut off, threaten to cut off, all U.S. security assistance to Israel until they withdraw the last IDF soldier from southern Lebanon. I think that would be a really good step in the right direction.

And lastly, I think, you know, there are six sections in the National Defense Authorization Act, including Section 219, which used to be Section 294 or 224. And that would essentially, you know, merge the U.S. and Israeli defense industrial base and technological base with Israel's, as well as basically have a kind of Five Eyes merger of U.S. intelligence with the Mossad. And I think Trump should immediately say he will veto that bill if even one of those six provisions is in it. And those three measures, I can guarantee you, will compel Netanyahu to, you know, run it, pull out of Lebanon. You know, the U.S. has tremendous diplomatic heft. We have a tremendous ability to influence Israel. But we have behaved, mainly with President Trump, as an Israeli vassal state. It's not that Israel is the 51st state of America. It's that we're the United States of Israel, and that needs to end.