

Scott Ritter: 'They Tried to K*LL ME!' US Defeat in Iran & Ukraine

Former UN Weapons Inspector & US Marine Corps Intel Officer Scott Ritter discusses being targeted by drones on recent travel to Russia, the state of the two biggest wars in the world at this moment, and why defeat in both is irreversable for Trump & Washington. <https://scottritter.substack.com/> LIKE the video and Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong> Telegram: <https://t.me/DannyHaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritho> #iran #iranwar #trump

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's Danny Haiphong here. As you can see, I am joined by a friend of the show, former UN weapons inspector and U.S. Marine Corps intel officer, now geopolitical analyst, commentator, journalist, Scott Ritter, back from Russia. Scott, good to see you again.

#Scott Ritter

Good to see you. Good to be back.

#Danny

Yeah, it's great to have you back on the show. Everyone, hit the like button, of course. That helps boost the show in the algorithm. First question, though, Scott, right away. I've heard you on other programs. I heard you on Judge Napolitano and others talk about your trip to Russia. And the thing that stuck out for me was that you said you were targeted. I mean, we talked before your trip. You said that there was heavy security that was needed and that you were targeted by drones, Ukrainian drones. Talk about that experience and the trip in general, and what you might have learned about the conflict given this experience and the totality of the experience.

#Scott Ritter

Well, the trip started off actually by going to St. Petersburg. I was honored with an invitation to speak on a pretty distinguished panel at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. The panel

was on the future of diplomacy, moderated by a professor of international relations from MGIMO, the premier Russian international relations university affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It trains all of its diplomats. There was the rector of MGIMO, meaning the guy who runs the whole show, there on the panel. There was a deputy foreign minister there, another professor from MGIMO, a distinguished analyst from England, France, and Italy, and little old me on that stage. I was told at the time that it was an opportunity for me to present my more diplomatic side, that many in Russia were somewhat intimidated by my, I guess, my aggressive posturing sometimes when I speak.

And so I had prepared a nice little presentation that would emphasize diplomacy. Unfortunately for me, I didn't come first. I listened to others, including the Deputy Foreign Minister, who I respect greatly, but I was just becoming more and more frustrated with the fact that diplomacy wasn't working, and yet the Russians were continuing to delude themselves that the United States and Europe were going to be reasonable diplomatic partners. Let's just say that my speech went to hell in a handbasket from the start and became more and more impassioned—the very emotions that I was supposed to suppress. In the end, I was going to conclude by talking about the inherent nihilism of Europe.

And I had spent a lot of time reading up on Friedrich Nietzsche and, you know, was able to quote extensively. But John Laughland, a very distinguished British analyst, geopolitical expert, spoke before me, and he stole my line. He spoke about nihilism and the West. And so I was, uh, my brain was desperately scrambling to come up with some sort of equivalent analogy. And, um, I basically reverted to my standard **To Kill a Mockingbird** quote, where I talk about Atticus Finch, of course, the lawyer, the man who believes in the rule of law—sort of a fitting parallel to the diplomats who believe in diplomacy, that international law is paramount. And it is, of course, in normal society, normal civil society.

But when a rabid dog is running through the town, they turn to Atticus Finch to kill it, not because he was, you know, the practiced lawyer, but because he was the best shot in his unit during World War I. He killed more Germans than anybody, and they knew that when the time came, he would pull the trigger and kill the dog. And I said, Europe is a rabid dog, and Russia needs to shoot the dog. Needless to say, it was well received by the audience, but the panel, especially the distinguished Russian diplomats, were taken aback by this. And I thought that I had blown it. On the way into the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum the next day, I was scheduled to work with Rick Sanchez, who is with RT now. He's one of their top, you know, hosts.

And we were going to watch Vladimir Putin's plenary presentation, and then we would provide sort of live analysis of it. But the phone rang, and Alexandra, who's my right-hand person—I can't say right-hand man, I can say right-hand lady—she picked up the phone, and it was from the organizers. Apparently, my presentation had caught the attention of people, and I was suddenly invited to attend Vladimir Putin's presentation at the plenary. I had to go take a PCR test. But it wasn't just any seat—I was sitting in the second row, surrounded by heads of state and others. To give you an

example, Candace Owens, who was also invited, was all the way in the back. So it was a pretty big deal. But I got to watch the speech live.

And, you know, the same day that I arrived in St. Petersburg, of course, Ukraine launched a drone strike against St. Petersburg. The sky was blackened by smoke coming out of Kronstadt. And I was expecting Vladimir Putin to talk about this and, of course, talk about the murder of 21 people, you know, innocent teenagers at Starobelsk University, a teacher's college in Lugansk, by Ukrainian drone strikes on May 22nd. Instead, he focused on the economy, and basically that he wasn't going to let the war in Russia, he wasn't going to let other people dictate outcomes, that he was in charge, and that his focus was bringing about stability and investment. Eighty-four billion dollars' worth of investments were signed—contracts were signed—at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

So it was a success in that regard. I was almost disappointed hearing this. I mean, I understood the gravity of what he was saying. I understood this. But, you know, drones struck St. Petersburg on the opening day. I mean, how can this be left unanswered? But then during the question and answer, Vladimir Putin addressed this issue, and he gave a very strong response. First of all, denazification is a thing. People need to understand what denazification means. If you don't understand it, there will be an upcoming episode of The Russia House where I talk with a former Ukrainian intelligence officer who will tell you what's required for denazification. And it doesn't happen through negotiations.

It happens through unconditional surrender, which tells you the direction Russia is going. But then he looked into the camera and he gave an order to the Russian military—an order about continuing the mission. But he finished it as only Vladimir Putin can, quoting a Dagestani police officer who was captured by terrorists a couple of years ago and murdered on camera. When asked what his last words were, he said, "Keep working, brothers." And Vladimir Putin looked into the camera and said to the soldiers, "Keep working, brothers." This war is finished on the battlefield. That was the big lesson. So that was St. Petersburg. Then I went to the war zone. I traveled there. We had to keep it secret.

#Danny

Scott, before you get to the war zone, I'm wondering if you might be able to go to settings. It sounds like there's something going on with your microphone, and I don't want it to continue. I was trying to see if it was going to correct itself, but maybe go to settings and go to your audio and see if you can connect to a different microphone, because it sounds a little muffled. I just wanted to make sure that everyone would be able to hear this part especially. Well, I just did it. Is this better? Yes, I think that is much better. Continue.

#Scott Ritter

That's a different microphone. Hey, what do I know? Okay, so hopefully everybody understood St. Petersburg, and I'm not going to... uh, somebody asked, is this a White Claw? No, it's a Monster. Um, I ran out of Coke, so I'm drinking Monster right now. Um, but it's probably good because, um, you know, I'm very tired from this trip, but, um, as you know, I couldn't talk about what I was going to do after the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. I basically said that I'm going to stay in Russia and continue working. And I spent three days in Moscow doing interviews and preparing for this trip. But we went to Lugansk, Donetsk, Zaporozhye. I was supposed to go to Kherson, then on to Crimea.

It was supposed to be the grand tour of 14 days in the war zone. And the main purpose of this trip was to learn about drone warfare. And, um, I was able to have fantastic interviews with frontline units, uh, units that are responsible for engaging the Ukrainians in combat, um, units that do, uh, anti-drone defense work, units that, um, develop drones. Uh, I was honored by the opportunity to tour the, uh, Archangels, um, drone center in Zaporozhye, where, uh, you know, they develop tactics, they train the drone operators. They're certified to, uh, train Russian military drone operators in a four-week course. Um, got to look at that training, uh, got to fly a drone on a simulator and crash it.

It's not as easy as it looks, guys. It's pretty tough, unless you're a gamer. But I'm 64, coming on 65, and my hand-eye coordination isn't what it used to be. And just look at the whole technology of drones, which in large part drives the tactics. There's a fascinating insight into drones, um, the complexity of drone warfare. And you know, that was the job, but you know, the job was also to see the impact of the war on the people. So I toured Star Bells College, got to meet the head of the university, got to talk to people about what happened that night, see firsthand the destruction, and understand how this was murder — literal murder — by the Ukrainians. I interviewed the governor of Lugansk.

I, um, interviewed a number of other people. Uh, I visited the Burevestnik drone unit, which is a frontline combat unit. I went to their training center and got to see how they do things, you know, and again, work with their drones. Then we went to Donetsk and again toured there, got to visit a frontline combat unit, their drone company, and then see them in operation. I got to go to the town of Gorlovka, which is located to the west of Donetsk. It used to be a frontline town, still is under heavy attack, but to see the experience and just the resilience of the people of the Donbass, who live every day under fire.

I mean, I have this shirt, and I'm wearing it in honor. It's, you know, made under fire. That's Donbass people. These people live every day under fire, artillery fire, drone attacks, and they're proud of the fact that they just continue to do their job, to live. They're never quitting, these people, not at all. The mayor of Gorlovka is a combat veteran. He's a frontline leader. He has to deal with drone attacks every day, and he's one of the toughest guys, one of the kindest guys. He cares about his people, and the people of Gorlovka aren't going to quit, and the people of Donetsk aren't going to quit. I got to go to Mariupol and see, you know, the rebuilt theater.

Remember, the theater was blown up by Azov trying to blame it on a Russian air attack. The theater has been completely rebuilt with the help of St. Petersburg, and it's performing *The Master and Margarita* as we speak. So, you know, Bulgakov—I think it's Bulgakov. So, you know, these are... I got to go to a refugee center where I got to interview the people that were rescued by the Russian army from the frontline villages, the people that the Ukrainians derisively called Zhdun, the waiters. And to have a 68-year-old lady tell you about how the other Ukrainians, which she refused to evacuate, kept her in a basement along with children and other civilians, shelled them mercilessly.

When they ran out of water and people went outside to get water, they were murdered by them. The Russians finally came in, and the Russian soldiers rescued them. The Russian soldiers kept them in place because the situation was too dangerous to evacuate, so they brought them food and water and medical care. When it came time to evacuate, the Russian soldiers surrounded them with their own bodies. When the Ukrainians started attacking them, the Russians would lay on them with their bodies, surround them with their bodies. Russian soldiers were wounded and killed evacuating these people. These people understand this. They understand the sacrifice that the Russians made to save them.

They love Russia. You know, but there are still children trapped on the front lines. It's a very tragic situation, you know, as Russia liberates Russian territory from illegitimate, illegal Western Ukrainian nationalist occupiers, because that's what this is. This war isn't about Russian invasion and occupation. This is about Russia liberating villages where, you know, the people who live there are Russians, consider themselves Russians, and legally today, because of the referendum, are part of Russia. Um, and I was supposed to go on to, uh, I went to Melitopol, um, the acting capital of, uh, Zaporozhye.

I was supposed to go to the nuclear power plant, but the Ukrainian drone attacks had accelerated to the point where it was impossible to make that trip. So I did the interviews there online, which was interesting because internet connectivity, given the relationship between internet and drone operations, is very problematic and haphazard. But then, you know, Melitopol was attacked every day that I was there. The electricity was out, water was out. But these people just soldier on and continue. I was supposed to go on to Kherson, but the highway between Melitopol and Kherson, the Chonghar Bridge that connects Kherson with Crimea, is called the Highway of Death for a reason.

If you go on it, you're going to get attacked. And if you get attacked, there's a good chance you're going to die. And so the security people, who were doing an outstanding job, later realized that I shouldn't have gone to Melitopol, that that was just a little too hot. But we went, we experienced it, but we couldn't go on to Kherson anymore. It's not just about me. It's also about Alexandra, for instance, my assistant. I was responsible for her. While I'm willing to take certain risks, it would be just grossly irresponsible to say, hey, come along and film me dying and die with me in the process.

Also, my security team, they're there to protect me, but they're not there to commit suicide. This isn't a game of Russian roulette. It is for every other person living there, but we had to be responsible. So the decision was made to curtail the trip. The last four days were basically terminated, and we had to leave Melitopol under attack. The convoy that we ended up joining was attacked by Hornet drones. These were drones built by a company funded by Eric Schmidt, the head of Google. They use Starlink technology, you know, and so I take sort of personal umbrage against Eric Schmidt. If I meet him, I'll physically remind him just how much umbrage I take.

He tried to kill me, literally. He built these drones. He gave them the AI that's used to target these convoys. But it was interesting to watch, you know, the people of Zaporozhye under attack, you know, because when the drone was spotted, the civilian cars—there's a little warning. They have an app on the phone, and it lets you know what's happening. And you just saw the cars peel off the highway, and the people bail out of the cars and run and hide in the ditches. But they weren't panicked and screaming. The thing that sticks with me was the husband-and-wife team that left a small sedan. And they were in the ditch, and he just basically was sitting there smoking a cigarette, and the wife was behind him. And they were looking, but no panic. I mean, of course, they left their vehicle.

They're not committing suicide. But there's no screaming, no running around. It was just people who—this wasn't their first rodeo. They had done this before. They're going to do it again. And it's just everyday life for them. Watching the Russian military respond—you know, we were right behind a gun truck. They had, you know, three machine guns on it, dormant, not doing anything. The Russian soldiers were sitting there smoking cigarettes, and suddenly one of them gets a call on his radio, and boom, they're in action—up, scanning, scanning, then focusing. Everybody's focused on the direction of the drone attack. It ended up being shot down by another gun truck up in front and crashed 50 yards off the road. And we drove by it. It started a fire in the field.

And, uh, you know, the Russian first responders were coming in to, you know, A, put out the fire, but also B, collect, uh, the evidence. Um, they, you know, the Russians collected debris from these drones, and they learn more about how the Ukrainians are operating. They understand that these drones, you know, to give you an example, the Hornet drone uses Starlink connectivity, uh, D2C, uh, technology, which is basically, um, it's using cell phone technology. So the Ukrainians have a ground station that they communicate to up to satellites, a network of satellites, and the satellites sit there and communicate with each other until one satellite can find connectivity to the receiver on the ground, which is sort of a—it's supposed to be like a cell phone, but it's attached to the drone, and they communicate that way, D2C. It's very difficult to jam.

Then they operate. The other thing that they incorporate is using Palantir-type AI technology, where they basically program the drone to be scanning for different kinds of vehicles so that you don't have to have a drone operator controlling it. So if there is a break in connectivity, the drone is there doing its thing. The limitation of the drone is battery life. When the drone runs out of battery, it crashes.

But the thing about what Eric Schmidt and these nefarious assholes at Google have done is that at about the 20% mark, the drone clicks from being AI in terms of looking for specific targets to being AI hitting anything that moves. That means that it's going to hit a civilian target.

And the reason is that the Ukrainians are trying to drive all civilian traffic off the road, so they're literally committing terrorism as they speak. Eric Schmidt is a terrorist. Google is a terrorist company for funding terrorists. Under U.S. law, they should be held accountable for the crimes that they are committing. But, uh, it was an adventurous exit from Militopol, and, uh, you know, we made it safely out. It was, uh, it was interesting though. That night we ended up in Rostov-on-Don, and, um, you know, we, the team, you know, sort of a stressful day. So we took a cruise on the River Don. Rostov is a beautiful city at night—beautiful stadium, Ferris wheel, the whole thing—but it was just surreal to be there in Rostov-on-Don, knowing that just a few hours down the road in Zaporizhia, in Donetsk and Lugansk and Kherson, people are living a totally different life, a completely different life.

This experience woke me up though, because I expected to see people who were intimidated. You know, it's only common sense. These are the most resilient, determined people I've ever met in my life. I'm honored that they allowed me to come and share their lives with them. You know, I started the tour by visiting Starobelsk. We talked about the importance of security. You know, the Ukrainians talk about Zhdun, the waiters, the Russians that wait to be liberated. But the Ukrainians have their own Zhdun that they left behind, and Lugansk is full of them. And what appears to have happened, although I can't get absolute confirmation, while I was walking the grounds of Starobelsk with the Ombudsman of Children's Rights for Lugansk, a very attractive blonde lady, teary-eyed, talking about what happened.

But we're walking, and about a block and a half away, boom, boom. And I'm like, I jump. I'm the Marine. I've been to war. I'm the tough guy. I jumped like a cat. And he just kept walking. I'm like, holy—not a single Ukrainian flinched. And I turned to the security guy, and he goes, oh, that was outgoing. And I'm like, I may be old, it didn't sound like outgoing to me, but that's okay, as long as you're safe. About ten minutes later, I think they realized that it was incoming and that it might have been a directed drone strike against us, because the Zhdun of Starobelsk had found out that I was in the area, and now they were calling in drone attacks.

So we had to leave immediately, you know, rather quickly. But the point is, you know, that's their reality every day. You know, there are gas stations being hit. They play this game of Russian roulette, or, you know, gas stations being targeted. There are gas shortages, there's no doubt about that. So what they've done, the Russians, is they've decommissioned almost all the gas stations so that physically, visually, they look like they're decommissioned, and the pumps have been taken off and there are sandbags in place. So if the Ukrainians are looking for lines of vehicles at an active gas station, you can't get it. And then what happens is you have an app.

And you say, I need gas. And then they will tell you, go to this gas station at this time, and you can get a limited amount of gas. But this avoids lines, which is a signature, etc. Well, the Zhdun find out

about this, and they call in the drone strikes on the gas stations at that time. And this appears to be happening over and over. So there's going to be a big security crackdown as the Russians have to round up these traitors in their midst. These are people who stayed behind, took Russian passports, gave an oath to Russia, but are actually working for Ukraine. It's just part of the reality of war. But it was just a fascinating, necessary trip.

Now I can honestly, you know, when I talk about the conflict, I'm not some guy just sitting on his ass thousands of miles away looking at it remotely. I can actually have, you know, conversations based upon firsthand experience that took me as close to the front as they would allow me to get. But you can't get that close. The other thing I learned about drone warfare is they have this thing called the gray zone. And the gray zone has redefined war. The gray zone is the no man's land between the front lines. It used to be measured one or two kilometers, meaning that, you know, you want to stay a certain distance away so you can't be in the direct line of fire of weapons.

But now, because of drones, the gray zone is 30, 40, 60 kilometers deep. So if you're attacking the Ukrainians, this is a lesson for everybody else going, why are the Russians advancing so slowly? Well, to get to the Ukrainian lines, you've got to go through 60 kilometers of distance — gray zone — where Ukrainian drones are hitting you the entire time. And Ukrainians have masses of drones that are coming in. And so the Russians have to work through this. There are different tactics that they use. Then, when they get to the Ukrainian lines, they have to apply their own drone tactics on the Ukrainian defenses, defeat them, and then advance. So when you hear the Russians advancing one kilometer a day — oh, they only advanced 150 meters today.

Well, actually, they advanced 60 kilometers plus 150 meters through enemy fire, and they beat the enemy, and they took that strong point, and the next day they'll continue to advance until the Ukrainians withdraw, creating more gray zone space. But the Ukrainian maps don't show that gray zone. The Ukrainian maps show the Ukrainians right up with the Russians, so you think that the Ukrainians are holding more territory than they actually do. They don't. The Russians are in control of the battlefield. It is an extremely difficult fight, and it's becoming increasingly bloody. There was a period of time six months ago where the kill ratio was dramatically in favor of Russia. Now the kill ratio has evened out because of the nature of drone warfare. You know, it's about a two-to-three-to-one advantage right now.

So if the Russians are killing 2,000 Ukrainians a day, which they are, you know, the Russians are losing, you know, several hundred Russians a day. That's a lot. To pretend otherwise would be an absolute lie. But they're not losing 35,000 men a month, which is what the Ukrainians claim. But they're losing. I mean, you take 700 and you multiply it by 30. You know, you're looking at a lot of dead Russians, and there's a lot of dead Ukrainians. This is a very, very bloody, hard war. The one thing every Russian soldier I talked to said about this fight is that the Ukrainians are good fighters. And when it comes to drone warfare, they say the Ukrainians are actually better at drone warfare than the Russians because they have better technology.

When you have Elon Musk and you have Eric Schmidt and you have other technology people providing, pushing technology to the Ukrainians with unlimited budgets, the Ukrainians have an advantage. The Russians make up for it with the skill and tenacity and the tactical proficiency of their operators. The Russians are very good at hunting down Ukrainian drone operators. What's happening right now on the front lines is that, you know, the Russians are very good at developing what's called a pattern of life. They'll put up their surveillance drones, and they'll do a pattern of life analysis. They will find where the Ukrainian drone command centers are, and then they will just actively hunt them down and kill them.

Now, the Ukrainians are doing the same thing with the Russians. If the Russians screw up, make a mistake, they get hit too, and they die. But, you know, I spoke with one drone operator that I met. I did three book events while I was in Lugansk, which, in my mind, is just crazy that we did this because it was almost irresponsible, but they succeeded. We held them at universities, you know, like Starobelsk, but not at Starobelsk. But, you know, these university students at the first one I went to, there were 600 students there to hear me talk. And they were in Lugansk knowing that a college had just been hit by the Ukrainians. How brave were these students?

How many American students would say, yeah, let's gather together in a target, in a war zone where the Ukrainians are actively hunting down college students? But they were there, and they asked such great questions. It was an honor and a privilege to talk with them. And then, you know, I did one in Donetsk, and I did one in Zaporozhye as well. But, man, I got so caught up in the courage of these students, I forgot where I was on the drone warfare. But, you know, the Russians have figured out how to take down the Ukrainians. They're controlling the battle that way, but they are suffering casualties. We can't pretend that they're not. I've talked to you about this before, and I talked about the kill ratio and the advantage of the Russians, and that was accurate information at the time.

But again, the importance of going to this region was to update the database, to be able to speak accurately about what ground truth is. When I would speak before, I would talk about data that was based on first-hand observations that were two years old. I was last in the region back in January of 2024. It's now June of 2026. So it's been well over two years, and the war has definitely changed. And so this was an invaluable trip. I'm eternally grateful for this together. And I also want to say I'm eternally grateful to people like you, Danny, and your audience. You guys funded this. You're the ones who provided the donations that made this trip happen. This is a totally self-funded trip. I had help. You know, you have to have help.

You don't get to go to a war zone without help. It's just the way it is. But they did what I wanted. It wasn't as though they led me by the nose and said, okay, Scott, we're here to show you this, that, or the other thing. I set the agenda. I first briefed the agenda to my Russian counterparts in March of this year when I was in Russia before, and we actively worked on it together. And so the agenda that I had in Russia was set by me. You know, they have to, for security reasons, say we're going to do it on this day, or we're going to have to do this instead of this. But they knew what the intent

was, and we did it. This is what independent journalism is all about. And it happened because of you guys. So thank you.

#Danny

Yeah, no, incredible story there, Scott, and I think, you know, you often say on this show, war is hell. War also tends to bring out a lot of courageous people, especially... Well, that's why I just wanted to talk, because you just reminded me.

#Scott Ritter

So this kid was at the Donetsk book thing. He was in uniform, military guy, and he just wouldn't look at me. He was there with three of his counterparts, and they were fully engaged, but he was just making zero eye contact. He's a young kid. He was like in his early 20s, could have been in his late teens, early 20s. I later found out that he's 22 years old, but no contact. And afterwards, I went up and talked to the soldiers and had a good conversation with them. And he just, he was not looking me in the eye, just very cold. And I was like, what the hell? Why is he even here? And then the next day I visited his unit.

He's a drone operator. He's from the Mikhail Kervonis drone unit, which is a unit composed of a battalion, which is a battalion composed of Ukrainians who have left the Ukrainian military and are now organized to fight against Ukrainian nationalists. They're not part of the Russian military. They're an independent battalion. And they seek out on the battlefield wherever Azov is, or Aidar, or wherever the nationalist units are. They find the hottest spot to go in and fight these nationalists. That's their thing. And I talked to somebody afterwards because then I met the kid, and he was hard to reach, tough. I made an effort.

I'm surprised he didn't kill me early on because I just kept harassing him, hitting him on the back, trying to tell jokes with him and stuff like that. I finally broke through and got him to smile. We sat down with the soldiers and we just told lies. I call them lies—they're not lies, but you talk about your background. I talk about my experiences as a Marine and all this stuff. He is 22 years old. He's been at war for two years, and he's been wounded 16 times. He's a drone operator, which shows you the intensity of the conflict. You know, you make a mistake on the front line, the drones hit you. He's been wounded 16 times.

He is a candidate for, you know, PTSD like you wouldn't believe, and that's why it was a distraction. But when I broke through to him and I finally got a smile out of him, you know, when he pulls off his patch and he hands me the patch, which is the ultimate, you know, sign of respect, you know, it came through. But then you just think about it, that this kid is broken—broken for life. And this is the cost of war. War is hell. And it's not just him, but it's everybody who participates in the war,

even the civilians. Could you imagine being a child growing up every day? The courage of the mothers walking with their children in the streets of Donetsk today. You know, the Ukrainians are coming with drones now.

They're dropping bomblets. They're mining the roads. So they watch the pattern of life because, again, remember, everything is watched by the Ukrainian drones, just like the Russians do. The Ukrainians are picking a pattern of life, and they're looking at where civilians go, where they flow, and then overnight they seed that area with mines—little mines. And if you don't look for it, you step on it and blow up. And if a kid runs away from his mom and picks it up thinking it's a toy, it blows up and kills the kid. And this is what the Ukrainians are doing on an active basis to these people. They're targeting them every day. So imagine the courage of a mother to take her child out every day.

You're not cowering in a basement. You're living life. But the fear that has to exist with this—these people are touched by war, and war will forever change you. And it's just something that people need to keep in mind. One day this war will end. And I told this to the Russians. I said, you know, here in the United States, we haven't done a good job with our veterans. We sent people off to the Gulf War in the name of the global war on terrorism, and they come home and they have traumatic brain injuries.

They're broken because they've seen things and done things. They've kicked down doors of houses and killed civilians or seen civilians killed. They've seen their friends die in car bombs, explosions, and stuff. They come here. Many of them are broken. Many of them have their bodies crushed by this and recover, and they get morphine to recover, and then they try to get them off the morphine, so they get on oxycodone, and then they become addicted to that, and then the VA just arbitrarily cuts them off, and they need it. So they try to get oxy on the black market, but they can't, so they get heroin. They get cut off on heroin. I was an ambulance driver here—or not driver, yeah, driver.

My wife was the EMT, and we got called out. We'd find these veterans, we'd have to pick them up, take them to the VA. And at the VA, they're treated, but nobody's there for them. And I told the Russians, I said, you know, you've done this thing, you've gone to war, and you're going to have hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Russian soldiers who will be forever impacted by this war. Don't abandon them. There are 26-plus American veterans who commit suicide a day in the United States because our society has abandoned them. We don't go visit the kid who got engaged, you know, the Marine—"Hey, baby, I'm 19 and I got my dress blues."

Don't I look good? Aren't you horny? Don't you want to go to bed with me? Why don't you marry me? And then, uh, off I go to war, and she's back home thinking now she's pregnant. And so she's thinking that her beautiful little Marine boy toy is going to come home. Um, and he may, but he may come home with no arms, no legs. He may come home with a colostomy bag. He may come home

brain dead. And, um, her, her, her, uh, so she's going to leave him. No one's going to stay with this Marine. And now his parents, who thought they were retired, they have to take care of this Marine. But they grow old. They die. And so now the Marine is abandoned by society.

So how many Americans who have the yellow sticker, "Support Your Troops," on the back of their car go to the VA and sit with the Marine who has to have his colostomy bag changed out while he drools into a cup? And the answer is none. Zero. And I told the Russians, don't do that to your own guys. Your guys are going to come back broken. And you have to be ready for that. And you have to do what you can. This war is going to change—I mean, in Ukraine, too. I mean, the Ukrainians have suffered horrific casualties. You know, people are going to have to take care of them. There are consequences for war. And Europe, Russia, Ukraine—Europe are going to pay the price for this conflict for a long time going forward. So anyways, I wanted to make sure I said that.

#Danny

No, it's very important, Scott. Now, I wanted to talk about—you often have talked about the war, this particular war, as being irreversibly going in the direction of Russian victory. And now we also have another war that is, you know, since you've been gone, a lot has happened in the other war. The quagmire the United States has been in with Iran is now at the stage of this MOU, U.S.-Iran talks.

But there was a story that came out related to drone warfare, because I wanted to also talk to you about the nature of drone warfare, because now there is more information coming out about what happened during the commando rescue of the F-15 pilot that was ejected after the F-15 fighter jet was shot down. Now there is information about this, Scott, about how a "jellyfish formation" of drones may have been responsible for this. According to the testimony of this pilot, multiple drones interconnected and moved as one, with smaller drones below the bigger drones like legs. One of four sources familiar with the pilot's testimony told the outlet it was "real alien s-h-i-t," describing the experience of what happened. So I wanted to, you know, given that drone warfare is so relevant right now when it comes to the conflict with Ukraine—you know, attacks on Moscow, Russian air defenses absolutely putting in crazy work against that—and then, of course, Iran and the United States also engaged in this kind of warfare. What do you make of this story and where it fits into this larger changing war landscape, your reaction to it, and why it's relevant?

#Scott Ritter

Well, I mean, we're all familiar with drone swarms, how, you know, at every Olympics recently, it appears, you know, in China, especially South Korea, you know, at night, part of the show is, you know, the drones come out and you get the walking man and you get the flying birds. And these are basically drones that are, you know, communicating with one another or communicating as part of an overall package and working in concert. So that same concept is applied, therefore, to drone swarms of this nature, except there might be an AI aspect to it. So you're going to have a drone

swarm that's given a patrol area, and it's going to communicate with one another. I don't understand the jellyfish configuration, though.

I understand what he's describing. I can't tell you why it is and why it makes tactical sense. Who knows? But the fact is, Donald Trump is out there saying the Iranians are defeated, the Iranians have no technology. The technology to operate a drone swarm like that in combat conditions is beyond that possessed by the United States. So let's just say right off the bat that the Iranians, if the story is true—and there's no reason to doubt it—are superior to the United States when it comes to advanced drone applications. I don't know how this drone swarm shot down the airplane, or even if it participated in that. You know, the specifics haven't come out. But the man saw this, which means it's a patrol.

And so it seems to me that this drone swarm is actually patrolling an area, you know, and doing reconnaissance. So it's out there looking. Now, what I'll say about a drone swarm, though, is that, you know, what I learned from going to the Donbas is, you know, drones are, um, are prisoners of battery life. You know, they don't last. They just don't sit there and fly forever. They have batteries. Now, you can upgrade the battery pack, put additional battery packs on, but if you're doing a drone swarm, I imagine the drones are, you know, I don't know what size they were, because he, again, he doesn't say, but you're probably talking, you know, seven-inch standard drone. The battery life on it is finite.

And so, you know, it can only patrol a certain area. And, you know, the more active the drone is, the more the drone does things like communicate, it's drawing power. And so the battery life is done. So a drone swarm—it was curious when I saw that because I'm like, what's the sustainability of this drone swarm? Um, how long can it patrol, and what is the purpose of the patrol? And a drone swarm is a lot of effort. That means that a whole bunch of people have gotten out there to set these drones up and launch them and send them out. Now they have to recover them, change the batteries. It's a, you know, physical aspect to this. Um, so it's just, it's fascinating. But the point is, the Iranians are doing things that we're not. And it's not just that.

Remember, the Iranians also—it's not talked about in the West—the Iranian Air Force was destroyed. Well, except for the two F-5 fighters that actually flew, you know, right, you know, 15 meters off the water, made it to Kuwait, and bombed an American facility. They weren't destroyed, right? And nobody wants to talk about that, how they penetrated the best air defense in the world with fighter planes that were built in the 1970s. So, you know, the pilot skill there. The Iranians did things in this war that we don't understand. I think it's going to turn out that the Iranians did a lot of decoy work—that we didn't blow up the things we think we blew up, that we blew up a lot of empty buildings. You know, the Iranians are very confident in their ability to reconstitute not just infrastructure, but capacity.

They use tactics that we still don't understand. We went in to fight one kind of war. Our suppression of enemy air defense is premised on the notion of taking out radars, but when the Iranians shifted

to using IR sensors and electro-optical sensors to track, our tactics were no longer viable, and that's why we had to call them into the war. People need to understand, we're the ones that said stop the war. We said stop the war because what we were doing wasn't working. We ran out of ammunition. Our tactics were no longer effective. Airplanes were being shot down. When we thought that we had suppressed everything, air defense was up and active. We didn't understand what was going on. We lost control of the battlefield. So we had to call timeout.

So anytime you hear Donald Trump say, "Well, I'm going to go back and do this again," it's a lie. He may go bomb a target for a day like he did—limited stuff. But the concept of reengaging the Iranians to the degree that we already engaged them—we don't understand this battlefield. We have lessons that have to be learned. I can guarantee you there are intelligence officers working at various centers around the United States going through the data, trying to figure out what the hell this jellyfish swarm is, why it's there, what its purpose is, how it works, how we can defeat it—things of that nature. We don't know what happened here. What we do know is that we didn't defeat Iran and that Iran was in control of the battlespace when this war ended.

#Danny

Okay. Yeah, and now we're at this MOU, a U.S.-Iran talk stage where there's a lot of doubters. Even the American, the U.S., people in the United States, there are polls coming out, CBS, YouGov, all doubting this process. I mean, having very little trust, obviously, in the Trump administration to come to a deal. But the vast majority of people are now reporting, Scott, that they want to see this work out. They don't want to see a return to war. Now, the way that this is being framed on both sides – and then I want your take on this – is, of course, you have Donald Trump constantly talking about – this is what he put on Truth Social – having Iran on the ropes.

Now, a War Powers Act just went through both chambers—the House and the Senate, both chambers of Congress—and he is poo-pooing it, lambasting it as being a way to prevent him from finishing off Iran, as he often talks about. Well, you have Iran saying that the deal—although actually, it just refreshed, I guess this was a live feed—but how Iran has been framing it is that this is actually a defeat for the United States, the fact that they are talking to Iran on Iran's terms. And then a lot of the terms that are in this MOU are ones that Iran has directly requested and is going to see it through until they get it. What do you make of—see, these are two contending narratives. So what's the reality, and how have you seen this process as you—I know you've been away, but if you've been paying attention to it during that time? Yeah.

#Scott Ritter

Believe it or not, the Russians are actively engaged in these issues, and the Russian people are well-informed. I will admit that while I was in the Donbass region, the internet, of course, was very, very

spotty—deliberately so. My phone had to be actually turned off and put in a Faraday cage to prohibit any signals. I wasn't allowed to take photographs using my phone because of the geolocation aspect of it.

So even if I published the photograph later, you know, it could provide intelligence to Ukraine. So I was in a dark zone from an information standpoint in terms of what was going on in the world. But, you know, because the trip ended early, I ended up back in Moscow and got to spend a couple of days debriefing and also relaxing. I got to tour some museums, but it also gave me time to catch up on the news. So I am pretty well-informed about what's going on. Let me put it this way: the Iranians first presented what is the MOU today back in April. It's the same document. The Iranians haven't budged their position. Donald Trump, of course, refused to sign it back in April and agreed to it because it was, sort of, a surrender document.

The United States was being compelled to accept Iran's terms and conditions. I want to remind people what a surrender looked like. Let's go back to World War II, September, Tokyo Bay, the USS Missouri, where the Japanese had to come and sign a surrender document unconditionally. They didn't get to debate it, negotiate, or otherwise. General Krebs in Berlin went to Chuikov, his Soviet counterpart, and said, I'd like to negotiate the surrender of the German garrison of Berlin. And Chuikov said, there will be no negotiations. You can surrender unconditionally. That's your only option—fight or die. The Germans ended up surrendering unconditionally. And so, you know, here are the Iranians. Trump is trying to make it seem like the Iranians have to bend to his will.

And the Iranians are like, we won the war. Again, I want to remind people, Iran was in control of the battlespace at the end of the war. They had dominated completely. Their air defense had confused the United States to the point that we just couldn't continue to send aircraft over Iran because they were going to get shot down. Even the Israelis were like, it's not the zone that we thought it was. The rear area is no longer safe. Israel had run out of air defense systems to the point where the airfields that their fighters were operating from had become vulnerable because Israel could no longer saturate the skies with air defense. They were just out of it, and the Iranians weren't out of missiles. So this war ended with Iran in the dominant position.

It was the United States and Israel that were seeking an end to the conflict. Iran went along with it because, of course, what country doesn't want to end a war and harm to its people? But Iran didn't lose this war. They won this war. And so Iran had its conditions, and the conditions aren't unreasonable, but they were articulated in April. Trump refused them because it made it look too much like a surrender. The document that Trump signed in Versailles is the same document the Iranians presented back in April. It's a surrender document. This is the reality. Donald Trump surrendered to Iran, but he can't admit it. The other thing, though, is that the document really doesn't talk about much in terms of details because all the important issues are kicked off for 60 days of silence.

The document creates a foundation of behavior that's supposed to be sustainable for 60 days while the fine print is worked out. The United States is incapable of adhering to this document. As Sergey Lavrov, the foreign minister of Russia, has pointed out, the United States is agreement-incapable. And this is the truth. Vladimir Putin now acknowledges that Donald Trump deceived him through the summit in Alaska because the United States can't tell the truth. We never can be honest about what we want. What we want is total victory. And the Iranians aren't going to concede this. This is just the reality of it. You know, the Iranians—one of the clauses of the Memorandum of Understanding is that there can be no threats or coercion. All Donald Trump does is threaten coercion.

Every time he says a threat needs to be brought back—bombing—he's violating the MOU that he himself signed, which means that one violation makes the whole document null and void. The Iranians have already walked out once because of the threats of Donald Trump. And the other thing is that when the Iranians say that Lebanon is part of this agreement, the United States signed to it through the MOU, Donald Trump's signature in Versailles, the Iranians are serious about it. The United States isn't. The United States is like, well, we've got a ceasefire, but hey, let Israel and Lebanon do their own thing. You and I will do our own thing. The Iranians—no, you've got to understand, Lebanon is an extension of this, and it's all or nothing for us.

And now Donald Trump has to accept the reality that he has to bring the Israelis to heel in Lebanon, or else he doesn't have a deal. And for Donald Trump, the only deal he wants right now, the only thing he's focused on, is keeping the Strait of Hormuz open. It's essential for him to have oil flowing through that because, look, the head of Chevron came out with a warning a couple of weeks ago—about a month ago, actually—that said that, you know, the world is going to experience a global energy crisis like it's never experienced before, because you can't deny the global market 22% of its daily flow and not have long-term impact.

And, you know, the bottom line is, you know, there's a lot of oil on ships that can go in, and, you know, we had excess capacity on shipping out there that could buy time, go in there and keep oil going. The Russians were able to send oil, but we're out of that. And so now we're going to run into a period of time—there's nothing that can happen to change this. There's no miracle oil. You're going to have a period where there's going to be no oil, and the world's economy is going to take a hit. Our economy is going to take it. The summer is going to be an interesting summer. Um, Trump needs the Strait of Hormuz to open up so that oil flow begins to, um, you know, hit the American economy around September, where we can get an uptick in economic activity so Trump can go, "See, I'm the greatest president in the world."

Um, I'm the man that improved the American economy. I should be voted for, my party should be voted for. And he's hoping for an outcome in November that's positive. That's what this is all about. Trump can't afford to go back to war against Iran because if Iran shuts down the Strait of Hormuz—remember, every day that it gets shut down and oil isn't going through, that's a day closer to the midterm elections. And even though we're in June, you're going, well, midterm elections aren't until

November. I'm telling you right now that the economy will not turn around until September. If you push it to October, you're getting too damn close to the election. And so Donald Trump knows this.

And this is why you're going to see the United States doing what it can to keep the Strait open. But we're in agreement and capable. We're not going to get a sound negotiation on nuclear or anything because it would require Donald Trump to allow the Iranians things that he said he won't allow, like enrichment. Well, now he's come out and said, well, maybe they can enrich a little bit here. But now, you know, that nuclear dust, you know, the 60% enriched uranium that he claims he blew up to smithereens, that has to be turned over to America. So now that has to be turned over to America and China. The Iranians are saying, no, it's ours, and we'll take care of it.

#Danny

We've been supervised, but you know.

#Scott Ritter

The thing is, Donald Trump's going to get nothing of what he wants, except the opening of those Strait waters. Why? Because it's in the interest of Iran to also be able to get their oil to market, get their economy up and running, and make themselves sanctions-proof. Because basically, the United States is an empty suit at this point in time, a paper tiger. We can't follow through with the threats of Donald Trump, and Iran knows this, so they're going to be busy building economic relationships with Russia, China, India, Asia, the whole world except Europe and the United States, and they're going to thrive.

And then once the midterm elections go through, Donald Trump isn't going to be able to engage because, remember, a key aspect of all Trump's thinking is the security guarantees that the United States can only bring if we're economically engaged. Remember Ukraine? We have to get those, you know, the rare earth minerals, we have to be in there. And the idea is that if we're in there engaged, there can't be a war because we're engaged. Well, Donald Trump, guess who read your little briefing? Russia and China. They're going to be engaged with Iran like you've never seen engagement with Iran before. And at that point in time, it's going to be impossible for the United States to resume the conflict.

So this is what's in it for Iran, because people say, well, why wouldn't Iran just continue to squeeze the Strait of Hormuz? Well, the answer is that if they do that, remember, China is sympathetic to Iran to a point. But I've said this before, and it's become even more important: it's the economy, stupid. That's James Carville's little magic words that he put on a yellow sticky note and put up on a door at the war room of the Clinton campaign in 1992, when Clinton thought that he could engage in geopolitical discussions with George Walker Bush, the victor of Desert Storm. And Carville's like, no, you'll lose. It's the economy, stupid. Focus on that. Clinton did, and he won. You know, China is sympathetic to Iran, but it's the economy, stupid, and Iran knows this.

If Iran does things out of national pride that end up economically hurting China, China isn't going to commit suicide on behalf of Iran. And so Iran knows that it has to engage China constructively, economically, in a sustainable fashion in order for China to, you know, solidly stand beside it. It's the same with Russia. So the Iranians are going to make certain compromises to guarantee that the Hormuz Strait will be open. Technically, they could shut it down with all the violations that take place. But I think that there's an understanding that global economic stability is the goal, is the objective, even if Israel screws it up. Because I think Israel—again, I just remind people that Hezbollah has beaten them before.

People tend to not study history, but in 2000, Hezbollah kicked them out of southern Lebanon. And they're going to do it again. Hezbollah is winning this conflict. Israel is going to lose. Israel will be compelled to leave southern Lebanon. Benjamin Netanyahu will collapse. Israel will eat itself. And so Israel is one of these self-solving problems. And Iran is not going to commit suicide by trying to force an issue that's happening. It's the same thing with, why doesn't Putin attack Europe? Well, I told you I gave a speech called "Shoot the Dog." And you're going to say, well, Scott, you said shoot the dog. Putin agrees with me—shoot the dog. But he doesn't have to shoot the dog. What happens if you can get the dog to shoot itself? Which is what's happening. The rabid dog called Europe is killing itself.

Look at Keir Starmer, one of the ultimate rabid dogs. He's not going to be prime minister. He resigned. Why? Collapsing. Britain is doing to itself what Russia would want to happen if there was a war—economic collapse, political collapse, societal collapse. Russia doesn't have to do a damn thing. Britain is killing itself. They're shooting themselves. Germany, with the Chancellor, shooting himself. Macron, shooting himself. "Shoot the dog" is the solution. Europe is a rabid dog. But we're just blessed with the fact that the dog is shooting itself. Russia doesn't need to attack Europe and change the dynamic. Russia is winning this war. Don't let the Ukrainian drone strikes divert you.

This is one great big distraction. Five hundred drones were sent against Moscow. Eight got through. That means the Russian air defense is working, but you can oversaturate it. But when they got through, what did they get? They got a sound and light show. Boom! You know, and the flipping lid, and then the Ukrainian defense minister can show his little video of all the chortling little German weasels looking at it going, boom. And then what? The fire went out. Moscow doesn't care. I was in Moscow when this happened. I'm telling you right now, the people of Moscow— I made a sarcastic video, put it on my Telegram channel about people running in the streets. There's no fear in Moscow. Boom. Okay. And there's no follow-up. It's not existential.

When Russia makes things go boom in Kiev, the whole damn city knows about it, and it's existential in nature. The way social media portrays this conflict is just lunacy, and the way that the mainstream media portrays this conflict is lunacy. Are the Ukrainians having an impact on Russia? Yeah, of course they are. You don't flood the zone with that many drones and not have an impact. Is Russia feeling pain? Yes, of course it is. But it's not existential pain. It's like a hangnail. It hurts.

When you take a step, it's like, damn, that hurt. But I'm not amputating the foot, let alone the leg, let alone checking into the hospital and being euthanized. I'm continuing with my life, functioning and thriving. And that's what Russia is doing, functioning and thriving.

#Danny

I think those are really good points, Scott. And I think to both conflicts, too. For Iran, I think it's a pretty great compromise to be saddled with Oman together to regulate the Strait of Hormuz and have that control. The last resort that you have is to close the Strait of Hormuz if things get really bad, if there is some kind of real existential threat to you. But to be able to—and this is—the United States will not be able to question this. Oman and Iran are already negotiating this together, that they are going to.

#Scott Ritter

But you know that the United States—Trump says that's not going to happen, right?

#Danny

He says, "Oh, it's not happening." And this is why I want to ask you.

#Scott Ritter

It's done. A done deal. You weren't invited to the party because, I mean, think about it. You lost the war. Losers don't get invited to the victory table. Iran and Oman are establishing the rules of... And the interesting thing, too, is—here you might correct me, because I could be off on this—I haven't had a chance to dig deeply into it. But my understanding is that the major insurance companies still aren't insuring shipping through the Strait of Hormuz because of the insecurity brought about by the inconsistency of the American position. But the Iranians and the Omanis are offering short-term transit insurance, saying that we will guarantee your shipping. And so, you know, they're stepping in and filling. So they're doing things and they're raising money. I think, you know, Trump even said, you know, they potentially reach \$500 million a month in additional income.

Well, baby, yeah. And, you know, that gets Donald Trump's attention because he, of course, is the ultimate, you know, grifter, and he's always looking for a scam. And he's like, I want a piece of that action. I love this man. When I say I love him, I mean I love the consistency of his lunacy. Because, you know, we can't allow the Iranians to do this. It's a crime. It's highway robbery. But if I can get in on the scheme, then it's a good deal. So if America can get a piece of the action, he is just the ultimate criminal mind. This is literally one of the greatest—and I don't mean that in a good sense—criminal minds in history. Who's the president of the United States? And he runs the United States as an organized crime family. I mean, it's just the way we run today. This isn't normal. This isn't the way America is supposed to operate.

#Danny

And the spin—I feel like there's a lot of spin happening right now for both conflicts. I mean, literally, I think, as you said, you know, the consistency of Donald Trump is the lunacy. The way that the Iran conflict is being spun is far harder to believe. And the poll numbers are showing it for the United States, where every concession that is being admitted to is being told that it will all come back to the United States. All of Iran's oil that is going to go through the Strait of Hormuz, that's going to sail out of the Persian Gulf and into the global markets, all coming back to the United States. The lifting of sanctions or the relief on sanctions for this amount of time, this short amount of time—all of it is going to go toward the United States.

All the farmers in the U.S. are going to sell all their stuff, all their food to Iran. And you made a great point that, well, actually, Russia and Iran are pretty good partners with a pretty good track record for not doing what the United States does. And Iran has said, we choose our partners based on what we need and what we want to do, not what the United States says. So there's that spin. And then with the Ukraine conflict, I feel like the spin now is, wow, look at those drones filled with kerosene, and, you know, look at them flood the air defenses, and a couple get through and they cause a fire because they go boom on the floor, and now Ukraine is winning.

It's a total spin job because it ignores the reality actually on the ground. I think in both conflicts we're seeing such an intensity of the propaganda. But Trump right now, and the current U.S. administration, are really representing how bad things can get and how misinformed we can all be when the U.S. is on the back foot and not really the front foot, because in neither of these conflicts are things going well, at least for the U.S.'s stated aims. But, you know, your final thoughts, Scott, as we close up here—I just tell people, beware of the propaganda war. Let's just take one quick example.

#Scott Ritter

The other day, I think yesterday or the day before—I'm losing track of time—Ukraine struck Voronezh. They struck a defense industrial facility that makes electronics. And the headline is that in Ukraine, we hit this because this is essential to the Russian war economy. It makes electronics that go to this missile, this missile, this missile, this system. And now we've shut it all down. This is proof the Russians can't sustain this fight. The Russians have a deficit in air defense, and now the electronics company that produces the parts for the air defense has been destroyed, and you can't do anything. And you're just going on and on and on and on and on, not reflecting on the reality that the drones struck administrative buildings that have nothing to do with manufacturing.

And so, yes, they struck an administrative building. Yes, they killed and wounded some people. None of them are the people that build the components. The factory is still fully functional and operating and generating all the components they want. The same thing with Votkinsk when it was struck. Machine Building 19, you know, did some damage. But, you know, it didn't shut missile production.

Missile production is still ongoing. The Ukrainians are doing this huge propaganda exercise, these long-range sanctions, they call them. And they're designed to achieve a video that generates smoke and fire and explosions. And everybody watches this, and then the ill-informed go, oh my God, the Russians are being beat.

I'm just telling you people right now, I was there. You're welcome to come. I mean, the Russians will let you in. Trust me, they'll let you in. They're not ashamed. Come and see. Come and see if you have the courage—but you don't. You'd rather just sit back and listen to crap that's put out on X and on other platforms, and read mainstream media posts that are dominated by pro-Ukrainian outlets, about the lies about what's happening inside Russia. Go to Russia and see it firsthand. I just did it. You know, and you'll see that there's no panic. Yeah, of course there's some dissent. If you want to find people who are against Putin, you can find them. I can find them. I found them. I talked to them.

But the idea that they represent the majority or anywhere near a significant minority is absurd. The vast majority of the Russian people are solid behind their president, solid behind Russia. The Russian economy is functioning. It could be better. I mean, hell, anything could be better. It's a war economy under sanctions, but it's growing. It's not shrinking. Russia's fully mobilized defense industry in a way the West can never match. This is the reality. You need to decouple yourself from the mainstream media and from certain allies. There are some people who say, Scott Ritter's a propagandist too. Well, you know, gosh, maybe, but I'm a propagandist governed by truth.

You know, you can go to a Russian film, *Brat*—*Brothers*. In there, there was a conversation between the Russian protagonist and one of the American businessmen. The American businessman said, you know, what is power? Money is power. And the Russian responded, no, the power is in the truth. And that's ultimately the truth. The truth will set you free, but you got to find the truth. That's why your show is important, Danny. And I'm thankful for you bringing me on. And I would hope people will continue to support you and watch you because you are seeking the truth. It doesn't mean we're perfect. I'm an analyst. That means that I make 40 or 50 mistakes a day.

But the beauty of being an honest analyst is to look at it and say, yeah, I got that one wrong. Why did I get it wrong? How did I get it wrong? And try to correct it to do a better job going forward. And one of the ways that you do a better job is to make sure that your data is pure. And the best way to get pure data is to go to the source. And I went to the source. I spent three weeks at the source. And it was interesting. It even got a little dangerous at times, but it was worthwhile. I would have done that trip all over again because I'm more empowered with fact-based truth today. And I thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my insights derived from this fact-based truth with your audience.

#Danny

Yeah, it's always appreciated. And I think the hopeful thing right now, Scott, and to the audience, is that, you know, our views—and they're not views, they are based on facts—you know, more and more people in the United States are becoming... And whether they're watching us or they're not watching us, they are becoming more and more aware of a very similar kind of reality on these kinds of issues. And I think we would both be the first people, if there was a different reality, to say Russia is actually losing, Iran is actually losing.

We would say we might not be happy about it because we don't like to see the injustice of it, you know. We know how the U.S. and Israel do things. So if Iran was actually losing, they'd probably have a lot more casualties, a lot more civilian deaths, all kinds of horrible possessions. He said it recently. He said, you know, if we didn't have our missiles, we would be just like Gaza right now. And, you know, so we would not be happy about it. We would be angry because there would be way more crimes. Yeah, and we would say it because it's way more effective.

#Scott Ritter

I talked with Russians about Russian casualties, you know, and I had come in with two-year-old data. And actually, I came in with data that was, like, you know, from November when I talked to a very senior, well-placed Russian who was very honest, a military man who talked about casualties. And I came back and reported accurately on Russian casualties at that time. And I said that the kill ratio was disproportionately in favor of Russia and that the Russian casualties were significantly lower than what the West is saying. Now, right now, Ukraine is talking about killing 30,000 to 35,000 Russians a month. That's ridiculous. But they're killing a lot of Russians a month today. The war has become much more violent because of drones.

Russia is suffering casualties. The other thing that's happening is that we're also learning more about how Russia calculates numbers. The Ministry of Defense doesn't lie when they put out Ministry of Defense numbers, but understand that there are a lot of casualties out there that have been inflicted on Russia by Ukraine, by the collective West, that don't get factored into the Ministry of Defense calculations. And now the harsh truth about the reality of Wagner and the meat that was ground up through their prisoner parole program, where they went to prisons, emptied the prisons out, had them sign up, gave them two weeks of training, and sent them to the front lines.

You know, Wagner fought four big battles near the end of its time, and in each battle they lost 50 to 60,000 dead. So, you know, we're talking 200 to 300,000 dead. That's just Wagner alone. Nobody talks about this. Nobody talks about those casualties. These are significant casualties. You know, the Donetsk People's Militia and the Lugansk People's Militia were doing frontline service before they became part of Russia, and they lost very heavy casualties. And even lately, many of their units have taken some time to sign contracts, and so they continue to fight, take casualties, but they're not counted among the official Russian dead numbers.

And so we're in a situation where I was briefed by somebody who's very well informed that Russia has suffered over a million dead. Now, that's a number that's mind-boggling. I never would have supported that number. I would have always said 300,000. That's the max that I was willing to embrace. And that number is accurate when you talk about the Russian military. But now, when you have to add in the totality of Russian dead, which includes private military contractors that aren't factored in, the DNR and LNR that aren't factored in, the fact is Russia suffered a million dead. That seems to be the reality. I'm here to tell you about it. I'm not happy about it. I'm not bragging about it. I'm just basically saying that this is tough.

There are villages in Russia where there are no men. All the men are dead. The villages in the patriotic parts of Russia. You have republics like the Buryat Republic where they're extraordinarily patriotic, and Russia leans on them and takes—I'm not going to say takes advantage of it—but you get a lot of recruitment, and the Buryat units are on the front line, and they're paying a disproportionate price. You have graveyards in the Transbaikal area. You go and look at the satellite photographs. These graveyards are every bit as big as the graveyards that exist in Ukraine. Nobody talks about this. But the fact is that Russia has paid an extraordinarily heavy price for this conflict. And this is a reality that has to be acknowledged.

#Danny

Well, on that note, Scott, I think it's a good time we can close here. I want to make sure everyone knows that your Substack, [ScottRitter.com](https://scottritter.com), is in the video description so people can continue to support you, check out your work, and donate if they're able there. All the links in the video description to support this channel are there as well. Thanks to this new member, Anne, and thanks to Farzan Andim for giving a super chat—sorry if I'm butchering your name. Everybody, I'll be back tomorrow with our mutual friend Larry Johnson, same time tomorrow, 2 p.m. Eastern time. Scott, we'll be back in touch, I'm sure, soon enough. And yeah, everyone, see you then. See you tomorrow, June 25th, 2 p.m. Bye-bye.