

David Pyne: Iran's Retaliation: Nuclear Pullout, Hormuz Blockade, and US Base Strikes

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Saturday, June 27, 2026, and our dear friend David Pyne is here with us. Welcome back, David.

#Guest

Thanks, Nima. Great to be back with you.

#Nima

And let me start with what happened last night between Iran and the United States. Again, we've seen Iran and the IRGC trying to manage the Strait of Hormuz because some tankers are using routes that are not designated by the Iranians. They're trying to use them anyway. Today we have two tankers that were forced to use the designated routes defined by Iran. Then we had the American attack last night because of the attack that happened the day before in the Strait of Hormuz. And then the Iranian retaliation — they hit some targets, American assets in the region. At least Associated Press reported that one of the targets was in Bahrain. Looking at the situation, do you think that we have anything like an MOU? What does that mean anymore?

#Guest

Well, I think that, I mean, you raised a really good point, you know, because the whole thing, the whole purpose of the 60-day MOU, which was, it's called a ceasefire. We already had an April 7th ceasefire, so what was the point of a new ceasefire? And the point that I understood it to be was that this would be a real, genuine ceasefire. In fact, I was so hopeful, I called it a temporary armistice. That turned out not to be true because an armistice, you know, kind of implies some level of permanence. But because it had so many different terms, it was comprehensive, it really had all the elements needed for a permanent peace agreement, such as what was envisioned during in-

person negotiations in Islamabad a couple of months ago, that I thought that it, you know, was basically a temporary armistice agreement that could be extended indefinitely.

But what we've seen is that the last ceasefire was fake. You know, this one has been proven as it's also fake because, you know, both sides violated it. But I think they managed to stage that drone attack on the Singapore-flagged vessel on Thursday. It was foolish to respond not proportionally by attacking an Iranian ship, but by escalating it and attacking four Iranian sites, including the headquarters of the new Iranian Persian Gulf Trade Authority, which was basically, you know, showing that the real reason for their attack is to try to undermine the new Iranian management of the Strait, this Omani route, which hugs the coast of Oman.

And this is a recipe for endless war, because they didn't do a press conference against the U.S. military or U.S. military bases, but they did strike Bahrain with the drone attack, as you mentioned, and also at least one other vessel in the Strait of Hormuz. So this is really, you know, it's kind of a competition between the U.S. and Iran. The U.S. is insisting that the Strait be free and open, that Iran is not in control and that they're in control, and Iran is demonstrating on a weekly basis that the ultimate authority of the Strait of Hormuz goes through them, and there's little the U.S. can do about it.

#Nima

I think the point is the first clause of the MOU was about the case of Lebanon and the war in Lebanon. And you see the agreement coming between the Israelis and the Lebanese government. By the way, they were not fighting Israelis; it was Hezbollah fighting Israelis. And you have a new agreement, and they're basically defining the same yellow line that they defined before. And right now, it is legitimizing the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, which is a recipe for disaster. Because as long as they're in Lebanon, we're gonna have this sort of fight. You know, this is not a permanent solution to the war in Lebanon. I think the case of the Strait of Hormuz is manageable somehow because the case is between Iran and the United States. After all, we can see this sort of fight. We can see somehow the attacks, as you mentioned, are so dangerous. Basically, as Ambassador Chas Freeman calls it, this is, you know, a ceasefire with Israeli characteristics. That's exactly right.

#Guest

Yep. Just like communism in China is communism with Chinese characteristics, which is just a Chinese interpretation, yeah. They call it the Chinese interpretation.

#Nima

Yeah. By the way, when it comes to the case of Lebanon, do you think they're serious about what's going on? Because this is a recipe—they're creating a trap for themselves and for Netanyahu, legitimizing Netanyahu staying in Lebanon and continuing the war.

#Guest

Yeah, everything that Rubio helped mediate and negotiate a couple of days ago in Washington, D.C. between the Lebanese government and Israel is complete crap because it goes, you know, it's a complete flagrant violation, as you mentioned, of Article 1 of the MOU, which Trump signed, you know, to some fanfare and applause at the Hall of Versailles when he was at the G7 meeting on June 17th last week. And what is he doing? It says right there that both parties commit to ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. And so what does that mean? Well, it clearly implies that there will be no foreign occupying troops in Lebanon, so that the U.S. would do everything in its power to persuade Israel or pressure Israel to pull its troops out of Lebanon.

And that was something that was not expressly in the agreement, but it's clearly implied by Article 1. And reportedly, it was one of three last-minute concessions that Trump made on June 14th in order to prevent Iran from striking Israel with missile strikes after Israel bombed Beirut and to salvage his 60-day armistice deal. And so the U.S. continues to contradict itself. It continues to show that Israel, or Netanyahu in particular, wields a tremendous amount of influence over the White House. President Trump—I just published a couple of articles, one of which demonstrated all the different times that President Trump has cussed out Netanyahu left and right since, including in September, which was actually one of the worst times he did because Netanyahu rejected his 20-point Gaza ceasefire deal.

And, you know, Trump had to chew him out to get Netanyahu to reluctantly accept it. So Netanyahu is a warmonger. He's, you know, we've known from the beginning that he would, you know, he's a war criminal. You know, he's mass murdered 60,000 innocent civilians, you know, Gazan and Lebanese civilians, at least 20,000 of which have been children, some of whom have had their limbs blown off. And he's done so with U.S. support. And President Trump ordered Israel to knock it off and implement a ceasefire. And the day after the ceasefire was signed, Israel was back to bombing Hezbollah, and they killed a couple of innocent girls.

So, you know, Netanyahu continues to show that he is the senior partner in his relationship with the U.S., which is absurd because Israel is the size of El Salvador. So it's 444 times smaller than we are. And Trump rightly said, you know, he said last week that, you know, the U.S.—we, as in the U.S.—are the big partner and Israel is the very small partner. And then Vance followed up with that by saying that Israel is a country of nine million and they can't kill their way to peace. But Netanyahu continues to stick his thumb in the eye and, you know, show the middle finger to Trump and Vance, and he's just going to do whatever he wants to do because he has the goods on President Trump.

#Nima

Yesterday they signed the agreement, and today we've seen two attacks in Nabatieh by drones and fighter jets. Sorry. And this is the reality of what's going on. And if they decide to stay in the yellow zone, they can argue every time that there is something going on right above the yellow zone or the

yellow line that they have designated in the southern part of Lebanon. So we have to preempt those attacks. These arguments are basically preemptive attacks on the part of Israel.

So just... do you think that—do you see any sort of sign that Hezbollah are going to back down? They said it's humiliating what the government in Lebanon has done. And the other fear is that they may have some sort of civil war in Lebanon. But today I talked with Professor Randy, an Iranian professor who knows Lebanon. He says that Hezbollah is so keen about what is happening inside Lebanon, so they're somehow managing not to have any sort of civil war while keeping the fight with the Israelis, because this was the case for them for many years. It's not something new for them.

#Guest

Yeah, Hezbollah is never going to disarm. They were ordered to disarm under an agreement, I think in 2005 or 2006. They haven't done so. It's been 20 years since. They haven't even started to disarm, and they're the most powerful military force on the Lebanese side. So, you know, really, I mean, Lebanon can't afford to have Hezbollah disarm because then they would lose their ability to resist a full-scale Israeli occupation. One of my friends, Mario Nawfal, who I've interviewed with several times, stated—he's Lebanese, a Lebanese Australian—and he stated that he thinks the solution is to merge Hezbollah within the Lebanese army. And I think that's really the best option. And a real ceasefire, you know, that was legitimate, would call for that—would call for Hezbollah to simply merge its military with the Lebanese military.

And the Lebanese military, of course, is commanded by a Christian, a Maronite Christian, under the Constitution. And that would be ideal. I'd love to see that. I love, you know, I love Lebanon. Lebanon has got a Christian president. It's got a, I think, you know, it's got a Christian deputy prime minister and a Christian head of the army. And it's just really, you know, it used to be the Switzerland of the Middle East before Israel ruined it and invaded it. And obviously President Reagan, Ronald Reagan, set the example by, you know, reading Israel the Riot Act after they invaded Lebanon, I think in 1982, and basically told them that he was going to cut off all U.S. security assistance if they didn't knock it off and pull their troops out.

I'd love to see President Trump, you know, follow in Reagan's footsteps and do that. But you're absolutely right. Hezbollah is the largest Muslim political party in Lebanon. They lead an opposition in parliament that has 62 seats out of, I think, 125. Basically, it might be a little higher than that, but basically you need 65 seats to have a majority, and they're three seats short of a majority. They really have no interest in a civil war, but Israel is very interested in seeing a resumption of the Lebanese civil war, which ended about 20 years ago, because they want—they believe—they would just love to see, you know, that's really their solution for every country.

You know, they want—obviously they benefited massively from the Syrian civil war, which overthrew one of their biggest enemies, President Assad, who obviously fled to Moscow. And then it was taken

over by a former al-Qaeda and ISIS leader, al-Shara. And, you know, they'd love to see that in Iran. They want to break it up into little pieces. Basically, any country that is independent or challenges their hegemony over the western Middle Eastern region is a country they want to destabilize, they want to undermine and annex their territories and occupy their territories, and that's what they've done.

#Nima

I think the solution you talk about, merging Hezbollah with the Lebanese army, I think that's going to be in the aftermath of the ending of the occupation of Lebanon. Because before ending the occupation, before putting an end, Israel has to withdraw. There is no way for Israel to stay there. And you talk about the future of, you know, what would be the future of Lebanon. Because that's the basic, the main reason for, you know, having a group like Hezbollah in Lebanon — it's the occupation of Lebanon. They were not... that's because their very existence — it was in 1980, if I'm not mistaken — they came into existence because of the occupation, which happened before the formation of Hezbollah. These are so important. They're so... but when you look at the situation, first of all, you have to remove the occupation. You have to do something about the occupation. Then talk about what would be Lebanon. Then they're going to redefine themselves, maybe in the aftermath of ending the Israeli occupation of Lebanon.

#Guest

Yeah, that's absolutely right. And of course, Israel will insist on, you know, no, Hezbollah needs to disarm before they withdraw any troops. And so this ceasefire agreement, you know, which was not conducted between opposing military forces, as you mentioned, it's like having a treaty — it's like the Treaty of Versailles, basically. The Treaty of Versailles was called a diktat by the Germans because they didn't have any influence on it. They were asked to sign it, and ultimately, when they were asked to sign it, they got a couple of last-minute concessions, but they were locked out of the negotiations. So it was essentially an unconditional surrender for them.

And that's essentially what this is for Hezbollah, because they were not allowed to participate. Iran was not allowed to participate. So basically, it was one-sided, you know, it was like allies negotiating with each other. It's like the U.S. and Ukraine and the EU getting together and negotiating a peace treaty for Russia and saying, OK, you've got to sign this, or, you know, you don't even need to sign it. This is the way it's going to be, essentially, like they're not even asking Hezbollah to sign or approve it. So it's really just a propaganda measure. It really has no validity. It's never going to be implemented.

But basically what it does is it legitimizes a permanent Israeli occupation of the southern fifth of Lebanese territory, which, of course, is Shiite. They've ethnically cleansed the 200,000 Shiite Lebanese from southern Lebanon and have obliterated all their houses. They've essentially Gazified it, just as they've destroyed 92% of Gazan homes. There's over a million Lebanese refugees. And,

you know, the U.S. has a tremendous amount of diplomatic heft, which we are refusing to use, in terms of the Trump administration, to try to rectify the situation with a just and lasting peace for Lebanon. And a just and lasting peace for Lebanon means no Israeli occupation troops.

#Nima

David, what is your understanding of some people like Mike Huckabee, the American ambassador to Israel, who basically says that without Israel, we wouldn't have existed—the United States, he's talking about the United States? I don't know what his understanding is of the United States and Israel, because as I understand it, Israel was founded in 1948. So is that something religious in his mind? What is your understanding of that? Because these people are decision-makers when it comes to the situation in the Middle East.

#Guest

Yeah, Mike Huckabee is an evangelical Christian, and he's misinterpreted a verse in the Bible that talks about how the Lord will bless Abraham and his descendants, and anyone who blesses Abraham and his family will be blessed. Anyone who curses them will be cursed. Well, guess what? According to the Bible, basically the entire Arab nation, which is scattered among a dozen or more different countries, are children of Abraham through Ishmael. So that could be used both ways. If we're sitting by and doing nothing as innocent Gazan civilians and Lebanese are being slaughtered, all life is equal in the eyes of God. That's in the Bible. So as Christians, we are supposed to believe that. But Christians seem to believe that the value of Jewish lives is somehow higher in God's eyes than Muslim lives. And that's just simply not the case.

And so, yeah, Huckabee is delusional. Obviously, President Trump responded and said, you know, he said multiple times, he said Israel would not exist without the U.S. If it had ever existed, it would be destroyed by now without U.S. assistance. And I think he's largely correct. But Huckabee's statement has no basis in fact. It's part of his delusional theology, which, you know, twists the Bible in ways that never were meant to be, because obviously Israel didn't exist. This wasn't talking about Israel, the modern state of Israel, because Israel didn't exist at that time. That was, I don't know, 1500 B.C. or thereabouts, 1400 B.C. And, you know, Israel didn't exist until 1948. So Israel is a great country, but it's led by, you know, far-right extremists that are basically Hitlerian aggressors.

Obviously, they're not genocidal aggressors on the level of Hitler. But in terms of a rogue state aggressor, that's what Netanyahu is. And unfortunately, most Israeli leaders are that way as well. I'd love to see the leader of the Democrat Party in Israel, who's admittedly somewhat of a socialist. He's really the leader of the only Zionist party that supports peace with Israel's neighbors. And that's exactly what Israel needs right now. We don't need regime change in Iran anymore. We need regime change in Israel to a peace-loving government that's willing to withdraw Israeli forces from neighboring regions to ensure a just and lasting peace in the region.

#Nima

Do you think when Donald Trump suggests Syria may play a big role in Lebanon, what does he mean by that? Is he talking about the new factions in Syria being used in Lebanon, or the government? Because the government in Syria came out and said, we're not going to be part of this, we're not going to attack, we're not going to participate. But there are some factions in Syria who are fighting the other factions of ISIS in Syria. Yeah, it's just amazing how Syria is today. But literally, those people who were in Idlib and then came to Damascus are fighting among each other. And Donald Trump is saying, let's take this chaos, remove it from here, and put it in Lebanon. To me, it's a recipe for chaos and new problems for the region. And I don't know how that's going to help Donald Trump.

#Guest

Well, I think Trump is obviously very frustrated with the Israeli invasion and continued occupation of Lebanon, but he's clearly not willing to do anything about it. And this ceasefire agreement proves that, because it's meant to be a lasting ceasefire. And obviously, we talked about how Israel violated it the very next day with two separate attacks on Hezbollah and killing a couple of innocent girls. So I think that Syria, obviously, historically under Assad, was a stabilizing influence in Lebanon. There was a Syrian military presence. Syria helped provide security against Israel for some period of time, but also stabilized their politics, essentially made Lebanon kind of a Syrian vassal state.

And obviously, Syria was an Iranian ally, as Iraq is today, and now it no longer is. So I think the idea that Trump has is, you know, Muslim troops or Muslim forces would do a lot better job stabilizing the situation because presumably they wouldn't be there for occupation or conquest. They would serve more as peacekeepers, ideally to replace the Israeli occupation troops. So I think in concept, you know, if Syria was a stable government led by, you know, a secular leader that wasn't kind of an al-Qaeda head chopper as al-Sharaa was, I think that's a reasonable idea, you know. And if Syria was indeed a neutral arbiter from, you know, a Muslim country, again, or Arab country, you know, either Turkish or Syrian or even Egyptian troops.

The idea of them being peacekeepers to replace the Israelis and maybe, you know, or even the U.S.—I mean, I don't want U.S. troops in Lebanon—but even U.S. troops guarding the southern border between Hezbollah and Israel and allowing civilians to return to what little homes they have left, I think that's a promising idea. So I think President Trump's on to something. But as you mentioned, al-Sharaa doesn't seem interested in doing that. But, of course, I think he could be induced to, you know, by financial promises of assistance, perhaps in the billions of dollars. I think he could warm up to the idea, but obviously he's only going to want to do that if there was some kind of level of Israeli concurrence. And Netanyahu has made very clear that Israel is not going to agree to withdraw any troops aside from these two tiny little pilot zones that they are transitioning over to Lebanese army control.

#Nima

From the Iranian sources, so far we've learned they may not go for the next round of negotiations to talk with the United States because of what happened last night. It seems some channels reported in Iran that the IRGC is moving their weapons around the country. I don't know if some sort of attack would happen tonight. But the situation is so critical. I don't know, because the other thing that has happened—J.D. Vance, right after the second round of negotiations, said there is a new line of communication between Iran and the United States to manage the Strait of Hormuz. Then the IRGC last night came out and said there is nothing of that sort happening between us. So there is no communication between the two sides to manage the Strait of Hormuz, which we were told by J.D. Vance that there is. And today, tonight, it seems that we're going to have some more escalations in the region.

Yes. How do you see the whole concept of the situation in the Persian Gulf and the way that Donald Trump, instead of talking, instead of talks between the two sides—because in Iran, it's not that simple—because many people, when it comes to Iran, say, oh, these people are in charge, we're going to do this, and they're going to accept. And they have their differences. Like the United States, you see the different forces within the Trump administration—we have two factions basically fighting each other. The same thing is happening in Iran. We have two sides. One of them is more military, sort of—they have the military mindset to do it militarily. The other part is basically inclined toward more negotiation, more talks. But after all, they're going to decide. If these escalations happen and continue to happen, it's going to be critical for the region.

#Guest

Yeah, so there was an operation called Project Freedom, as I'm sure you and your viewers remember, and that's when the U.S. sent three U.S. Navy destroyers through the Strait, and they came under immediate Iranian attack with drones, missiles, and fast missile boats. And in response to that, the initial response of the Trump administration was that it did not warrant a U.S. retaliatory response. That did not rise to the level of requiring a major combat response. And my argument would have been, if I had been Trump's advisor, that this was an IRGC attack on a neutral ship. It's not a U.S. ship; it's a Singaporean ship. The ship survived with relatively light damage. It had moderate damage to the bridge.

It successfully transited the Strait of Hormuz, and there were no casualties. So this does not warrant a U.S. military response. It warranted a diplomatic protest, you know, as a violation of the ceasefire. And we absolutely should have given a strong warning that that would not be tolerated in the future. But Trump simply overreacted and escalated by attacking Iran directly with military strikes that should not have happened. And it was really a complete violation of the spirit of the ceasefire MOU, which he had been implementing for, I think, 12 days, essentially, if you count from the 24th or the 14th of June when he electronically signed it and first announced it.

So, President Trump is often his own worst enemy. He sabotages his own peace agreements, his own foreign policy. He famously goes back and forth. He flip-flops. He gets really tough on Netanyahu privately, and then he backs off publicly, lets them have whatever they want. So this is the problem with having a leader of a superpower that is unstable. It's fundamentally unhinged and unstable. And, you know, he started out as a noble, courageous peace president. He talked about ending all the conflicts, not starting any foreign wars. And now he started a war that he doesn't know how to finish.

And the way to finish it is to implement the ceasefire agreement and to basically ignore any minor, what I would consider relatively minor, Iranian violations. So simply give verbal protests and then back it up with a proportional response if they do it again. But yeah, the way he escalated suggests that he doesn't understand how to deescalate the war. And if you don't deescalate the war, it can continue to escalate out of control. And pretty soon, you know, the bombings will resume—daily bombing strikes, you know, U.S. on Iran and Iran on U.S. military bases in six different countries the same day. And I don't think that's what he wants.

But unfortunately for the U.S., Iran has something that the U.S. doesn't have, and that's control of the Strait of Hormuz, which, you know, if they shut down again, they can easily cause a global depression within a year's time. So I don't think that that's possible. President Trump clearly stated the main reason he decided to sign the deal on Iranian terms—basically accepted virtually all of them, the terms that he previously said weren't acceptable—is because he didn't want to be another Herbert Hoover and lead the U.S. into a second Great Depression. And unfortunately, he seems to be forgetting that that's pretty critical, and that if he continues to attack Iran, it's almost inevitable that they'll reclose the strait.

#Nima

I think what the United States, with the recent visit of Marco Rubio, is trying to do is balance the Strait of Hormuz politically in the region—going to Bahrain, Kuwait, and the UAE, talking with them, trying to put pressure on Oman, and convincing them that maybe these tankers can use the Omani routes to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. Then the IRGC comes out and hits some of these tankers and ships and vessels, because the leverage on the part of the Iranians is military—their presence in the Persian Gulf, in the Strait of Hormuz. They're controlling that region.

But they're trying to go and convince the Omani government, which was not part of the conflict. They were not part of the war. They tried to do their best to bring the two sides together. And right now, this political move—I don't know what Marco Rubio is seeking. Because the guy, whenever he goes to Europe, makes new troubles. Goes to the Middle East, makes new troubles. He's not the solution, at least for the last 12 months or more than a year that he's been in office. He's the Secretary of State of the United States.

#Guest

Yeah, Rubio is really the worst person. I mean, he famously went to renegotiate the 28-point peace plan between Trump and Russia for ending the Ukraine war, of which I assess 25 points were acceptable to Russia. And then he basically replaced it with Zelensky's peace plan, which is a maximalist peace plan that Russia rejected in its entirety. And he said, oh, the agreement's much better now, much better that we caved to all of Zelensky's terms and threw all Trump's terms in the trash can.

So he is someone who is known to work against U.S. national security interests. He's essentially a bought politician by Israel and, to a lesser extent, Ukraine. And, you know, he's a neocon. And like you said, he supports every war. You know, he loved the Iran war. He didn't, you know, he wasn't vocal in support of it, but he's been very vocal in support of it since it started. And, you know, he just causes trouble wherever he goes. And he's extremely pro-Israel.

He can't see—he has zero strategic empathy. You know, he doesn't accept any of the legitimate reasons they have to defend themselves and defend their own countries like J.D. Vance has. J.D. Vance has pointed out that Iran is a great power—well, he hasn't said the words "great power," but he said that Iran has the right to self-defense just as much as Israel. They have the right to have ballistic missiles. Trump says they have the right to enrich up to 3.7% so they can have their own nuclear energy and just all the rights of a normal country under international law. But Rubio doesn't believe that. Rubio sees everything as black and white. He sees the Israelis as God's soldiers here on Earth, essentially, fighting God's wars. And all of their enemies are automatically evil. And, in fact, it's much more gray.

You know, both the Iranians have, you know, obviously the Islamist regime has killed off, I think, 6,700 protesters by my count—certainly not the 40,000 or 20,000 that we've heard today by propaganda sources. But those protesters were called into action by the Mossad and the CIA. They'd still be alive today if we hadn't basically got them to rebel and get Iran, the regime, to kill them off. But Israel is an equally murderous regime that's killed many more people in a much shorter period of time than the Iranians have during the last three years. So why is the U.S. taking sides? The U.S. should be completely neutral. I discussed this on your show before. You know, the U.S. should pursue a policy of benevolent neutrality, which is we won't ally with Israel.

Obviously, we won't ally with Iran, but we won't ally with Israel. We will sell arms to Israel if they behave, and if they don't invade or commit international aggressions against their neighbors—unprovoked aggressions—but if they do, we'll cut off all security assistance and all defense cooperation, including intelligence. And, you know, that's something I think J.D. Vance would be willing to consider if he was president, and hopefully he will be elected president in 2028, with the support of Tucker Carlson and many others who have left Trump's orbit and don't support Trump over his decision to put Israel first over America. But that's what we need. We need a president who is truthfully a peace president, who doesn't start new wars and does everything in his power to end the ones that we have right now.

#Nima

To your understanding, David, do you think there is some sort of division forming among the Arab states in the Persian Gulf?

#Guest

Well, I think the Arab states in the Gulf region are being forced to confront a new reality, which is that the U.S. security guarantees were mostly worthless because the U.S. decided to reposition many of its missile defense systems from the Gulf region to Israel. They prioritized the defense of Israel over the Gulf states. And obviously, the Gulf states are more exposed, so there's less that we could do to defend against Iranian missile strikes due to their proximity to Iran. But essentially, the U.S. Navy has proved powerless to overcome Iranian naval strength and military strength in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

And so Iran has proven that it is a major regional power and an incoming regional hegemon to be reckoned with. And as a result, countries like, I think even Qatar, were talking about sharing their electrical power system with Iran so that Iran wouldn't want to attack them again. And they're making all kinds of, you know, increased diplomatic agreements and potentially future security agreements to do everything in their power to de-incentivize Iran from wanting to attack them again. Ultimately, the answer, of course, is to expel U.S. military forces from their countries.

And then, you know, like Oman, even though Oman does have a U.S. military base, as you mentioned, Iran didn't attack them because the Omanis were very, very genuine in trying to negotiate a peace deal on the nuclear issue before the war started. And in fact, Iran did offer a very promising nuclear deal, which is much better than anything we could hope to achieve now, now that we've killed off Iran's first family, the supreme leader and 50 other leaders, and killed off 1,700 civilians, including 150, 160 girls in that double-tap Tomahawk attack in the first couple of days of the war.

#Nima

Do you think that the case of Russia and Ukraine would become a priority anytime soon for the Trump administration? Because recently we had the Secretary of State, the Secretary General of NATO, coming to the United States, talking with Donald Trump. Donald Trump, by the way, he was basically making some sort of propaganda for Donald Trump, saying he's doing this and that, he's amazing. And Donald Trump said that Ukraine is doing well right now, that Zelensky is just amazing in the way he's working right now. I don't know what the reports are.

Is he reading some sort of reports from Ukraine, or is he just making things up to help the position of the NATO Secretary General, which, by the way, is supporting Ukraine and sending more arms to Ukrainians and selling more drones, arms, and support to Ukraine? And it seems to me that the case

of Ukraine is somehow going into the background. It's not anymore the priority for the United States. And on the Russian side, when you hear them, Rubio said, by the way, he said that the Anchorage sort of understanding has passed away and there is nothing there anymore in Alaska. They had some sort of understanding, the meeting in Alaska. What is your take on that, on the case of Ukraine?

#Guest

Well, I think we did have a deal that was ready to be between the U.S. and Russia on the terms to end the war, and it included, of course, the Ukrainian military withdrawal from the remainder of the Donbass region—20% of Donetsk Oblast that they controlled or still control. And that was 1% of their territory. And President Trump famously had a, you know, a shouting match, a very profane shouting match in the White House with Zelensky in October, which was two months after that, and threw Zelensky's map of the Donbass on the ground and told him Ukraine's defeated, you know, it'll be destroyed by Russia if, you know, they don't accept what he said were Russia's very reasonable peace terms.

And then he walked out of the meeting and repeated all of Zelensky's talking points. So, you know, President Trump has a lot of courage, you know, in person, you know, in private, but then he becomes much more cowardly afterwards because he kind of caves to the deep state, his deep state advisors. And obviously his leading deep state advisor is Marco Rubio, who's not only Secretary of State, he's also—well, not interim—he's National Security Advisor as well. And so he's kind of the Kissingerian brain behind President Trump, all of his bad decisions. Kissinger actually had some good ideas that he gave to Nixon. Going to China wasn't one of them, of course. I've always opposed that.

But other than that, he had some good ideas. Obviously, getting us out of the Vietnam War with the quote-unquote "peace with honor." But Rubio, he doesn't do his job. Rubio really doesn't negotiate peace deals with Russia or Iran. There have been a couple of times where he's met with Lavrov, I think two occasions last year, when he was having serious negotiations with the Russians. But other than that, he's been, you know, he just doesn't—he's been AWOL. You know, J.D. Vance is doing his job with Iran. Rubio apparently is too—he's too good of a person, I guess, to meet with our enemies. I mean, that's the job of a Secretary of State—you meet with everyone. And diplomacy with our allies is relatively meaningless.

What's really meaningful is the diplomacy you do with our adversaries, or the adversaries of any country, because every country, including great powers and superpowers like the United States, has a vested interest in having good diplomatic relations with our enemies, including Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea. And, you know, we're really struggling with that. And, yeah, obviously, I think that President Trump has backtracked. Rubio came out and said that we're not neutral mediators in this war, you know, as President Trump and the White House insisted we were for the past 15 to 18 months. But he's saying that we're an active supporter of Ukraine and an active adversary of Russia.

So the very fact that he said that the Anchorage Memorandum is dead shows that President Trump has given up on diplomacy. And that's something I came out with back in May of last year. I said it was apparent that President Trump had given up on diplomacy, and he started making all these threats, including nuclear threats against the Russians. He clandestinely, in my opinion, supported the Ukrainian drone strikes on Russia's nuclear bomber fleet and just has made a lot of stupid mistakes since then. Anchorage was a welcome replacement, a reprieve from that, and negotiated an MOU which could have ended the war in August. And he backtracked from that. And he tried to go back to it in October. And ever since, he's just been following the neocon tune, essentially.

#Nima

Yeah, exactly. Thank you, David, for being with us today. A great pleasure, as always.

#Guest

Thanks, Tim. It was a great pleasure being with you. I hope you have a wonderful weekend, and let's hope and pray for peace in the Middle East.

#Nima

Exactly. And see you soon.

#Guest

Take care. Take care.