

# **Scott Ritter: Iran PUNCHES BACK at Trump – Putin UNLEASHES on US-NATO Drone War**

Former UN Weapons Inspector and US Marine Corps Intelligence Officer Scott Ritter takes down US-NATO neocon propaganda as Iran hits back at Trump dragging on deal commitments and Putin issues a major response to US-NATO backed Ukrainian drone strikes into Russia. This plus much more in this geopolitical round up. <https://scottritter.substack.com/> <https://x.com/danielmkovalik> 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](https://chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com) Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritho> #scottritter #iran #russia #trump #nato

## **#Danny**

Welcome back to the show, everyone, and welcome back to Scott Ritter to help me cover the latest news. Iran has punched back at the United States for claims that everything is going well at the end of this war. Right now, what we are seeing is that Mohammad Ghalibaf, chief negotiator of Iran, has said that there will be no talks with the United States further until the U.S. meets its commitments to the MOU. We also have J.D. Vance—no, not J.D. Vance, but we also have Donald Trump being briefed on options for all-out war. And he has decided, and I guess we should praise him for this, Scott, to not go back to war. This all comes, Scott, as Putin has gone unplugged and unleashed on the claim that Ukrainian drone attacks are making a difference on the battlefield, saying, well, let's wait and see, as he says Russia is making great progress. So, Scott, where would you like to begin? How about we start with Iran? What is going on here? What is your reaction to these developments?

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, I think what we're seeing right now is that the United States can't be trusted. The key takeaway here is J.D. Vance basically admitting that the president views the MOU as an interim measure, not a foundation for a final peace settlement, which it's supposed to be, but simply a mechanism to buy time so that they can refill the oil tanks, I think is what J.D. Vance said. This means that none of this is worth the paper it's written on. None of this is real. The United States isn't seeking peace. The United States is just buying time. So, you know, a strategic pause. No, it's

supposed to be a path to peace. And the fact that the United States is keeping its military options open means that the United States isn't seeking peace. Now, you talked about the Wall Street Journal briefing the president.

I would say that that's a lie. And I'll tell you why I think that's a lie. Because what military options can the president be briefed on right now? There are no military options. There is no all-out war option. That's just an absurdity. We already did all-out war. We threw everything we could at Iran, and we lost. There's nothing more we can throw at Iran because we're not ready to throw anything at Iran. What are we supposed to do? Put armored divisions on the ground in Iran? You know, it takes us six months to mobilize one heavy armor brigade for deployment to Europe. That's under ideal peacetime conditions—six months. And now we're supposed to mobilize, you know, it's going to take us 700,000 to 900,000 men to go into Iran, and even that's not going to be enough. We don't have those.

We'd have to basically mobilize the reserves, get everything out of mothballs. We're talking about a process that would take years to do. So there is no war option. By the time we prepared to go to war with Iran, the president would be out of office. It would take more than two years to mobilize the United States to be prepared to go to war, all-out war with Iran. So it's a straight-up lie, a straight-up fabrication by the Wall Street Journal, and they know it because they're not stupid. These people know what the truth is. They're simply a mouthpiece for the government. Their job is to help the government escape public opinion. You see, the president wants people to believe that he's a strong man and that he has the option to go back to war anytime he wants. He doesn't have that option.

He lost the war. He lost. He just can't admit that he lost. And so, you know, there we are. But the other thing is, he's not looking for peace. We now know that to be the case. So what good is the MOU? No good. If the Iranians had a brain on their shoulders, they'd just start bombing right now. Because if there's no MOU, there's no ceasefire. If there's no ceasefire, why let the United States continue to build up its strength? J.D. Vance said he wants to refill the oil tanks, empty the oil tanks, shut down the Strait of Hormuz, shut down the Bab-el-Mandeb Straits, and make the United States and Europe scream until Donald Trump acknowledges that there must be a path. But you can't trust Donald Trump. You can't trust anything this administration says. That's where we're at today. That's my takeaway.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, well, the question is then, why is Iran still very much committed to this? Here's what J.D. Vance actually said on the Michelle Malkin show.

## **#JD Vance**

So I think what the president has told us to do is use this MOU to sort of refill the world's oil economy, to refill some stocks, and then to see where the hand is at.

## **#Danny**

So, well, when he says stocks, Scott, that could mean, I guess, stocks in the stock market. It could also mean oil stocks. It could also mean weaponry. I don't think he means stocks.

## **#Scott Ritter**

I think he means stockpiles. I think he means, you know, to fill the tanks. But it could mean, you know, anything. But the point is that it means nothing. Because, again, if I were an Iranian and I heard that, I'd say you will never refill anything ever again in your life. Because today, you just told me that the MOU is not in effect. So I'm going to resume military action, after all, the war is still on. Sink every ship you can get, shut down every oil production facility you can hit, and make the world scream in pain. That's the only thing Donald Trump will understand. But they're not doing it because Iran is a pragmatic country.

Again, thank God the Iranian leadership doesn't think like a Marine, because if they did, we'd be in perpetual war. Thank God there are people out there who have a more pragmatic mind. You know, and every once in a while when I'm not mad—you caught me today when I'm tired and a little bit angry—so, you know, I'm thinking like, you know, I want to go out and kill some. But instead, the right way to think, and this mirrors, for instance, the thinking of Vladimir Putin. Vladimir Putin, everybody's like, why aren't you bombing Europe? Why aren't you shooting the dog? Somebody said that once—I think it was me. Why? Because he's smarter than I am.

Because he knows that Russia isn't going to be defined by this conflict, that Russia has to look forward, that he wants people to invest in Russia. And to invest in Russia, you have to have stability. And stability isn't just about domestic stability in Russia; it's about the overall global situation. Russia doesn't want to expand this conflict. Russia is winning a war of attrition against Ukraine and its Western proxies. Ukraine is a proxy of the West. So the last thing Vladimir Putin wants to do is expand the conflict. And I think the Iranians are there now. For the first time in 50 years, Iran is able to talk about getting its economy back on track. They're selling oil.

They're able to talk about internal and domestic investments and also external economic relations. And from the Iranian perspective, letting Donald Trump play stupid word games doesn't cost them a cent. If they're attacked, they'll respond. But notice how quickly Iran, you know, doesn't follow through on its previous threats of, you know, that they're going to start the war. We got a thousand missiles lined up, ready to go. Well, they haven't launched a thousand missiles, and the war has been restarted about three times now already. Iran doesn't want to restart the war because Iran understands the United States can't back up the rhetoric with action at this point in time.

And so they're seeking to maximize their economic potential during this time period. And that's what the United States is doing. So they're both going to play games. This is how I see this playing out. There will never be an MOU executed between Donald Trump and Iran. Donald Trump is incapable of executing an MOU. He just proved it. He just proved it. And even if he pretends now suddenly that he, oh, I'm serious. No. We know Donald Trump is a liar. He just admitted he lied. He signed a document. He signed a document that's supposed to be an agreement. And he just said that nothing in that document is worth the paper. Nothing. He only signed it to buy time. So it's a lie. Straight-up lie.

## **#Danny**

And when you say playing a game, I can kind of see that game shaping up because Iran is behaving quite confidently. Not only with strong statements, but even those statements have a reality to them. For example, Mohammad Ghalibaf also said, to your point about oil, that they are charging a 20% premium and have brought in a massive amount of revenue just in this MOU period alone, while at the same time saying that there's only 60 days for this thing. So after the 60 days is up and none of these commitments are met, then, you know, there's a big question mark.

But the one thing that's not a question mark in their eyes, or at least in what they're saying, is that they will, you know, they're going to enforce control of the Strait of Hormuz. But perhaps that control gets a little more stringent, given that the U.S., as you said, Scott, is not meeting any of these commitments — which there are commitments. You said it on prior programs. The MOU isn't just, you know, it's not just to play around and to pause, but there are commitments that are supposed to be met so that there's a phase two. So your reaction to this?

## **#Scott Ritter**

Look, the Iranians — they need to understand this, and I'm sure they do. Yeah, the MOU talks about 60 days, and Iran's going to maximize what they can get out of that 60 days. Well, the United States can't win a war. The United States can't undo whatever Iran has accomplished in 60 days, and they can undo it in less than 60 days. Just like Iran, by squeezing the Strait of Hormuz, can undo whatever economic benefits the United States and the world have accrued by replenishing their oil stocks, neither side wants to go back to full-scale war. The United States can't win it, and Iran can't afford to sustain it.

Because, I mean, how does Iran... All the United States has to do is disengage, and Iran will be isolated as well. Is Iran willing to destroy the state of Israel? So far, the answer is no. So what is the purpose of going to war and continuing the war? None. And the United States can't admit that it lost, so it can't negotiate peace in good faith. I think what we're looking at is when the 60 days come, you're going to see an extension, and an extension until we get past the midterm elections. And it doesn't matter because Donald Trump will either have won it and therefore be liberated of the, you know, the political harm that will, you know, accrue by telling the truth.

And although he can't tell the truth, at least, you know, he will be able to take certain actions and not have to pay a price at the polls, or he'll lose and he'll be impeached. And the last thing he'll be worried about is what's going on in Iran. You know, so the Iranians, I just don't see the Iranians, you know, going back to full-scale war. I don't think they want it. I don't see the United States going down that path because we can't win it. And, you know, that's where we're at. I think we're just going to be in this perpetual state of, you know, playing games while Iran maximizes its economic benefit, and the United States seeks to, as J.D. Vance said, replenish global oil stocks.

## **#Danny**

But that leads to, inevitably, I guess, back to square one, except the United States. As you said, a lot of these shortages that the U.S. is experiencing take a bit longer. It takes a pretty long period, correct, for the U.S. to even think about conducting the kind of strikes that it conducted after February 28th and beyond.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Look, the United States is not going to be able to reconstitute the military force that it brought to bear on February 28th for some time now. And that's another reason why this is just going nowhere. You know, this wouldn't be the first time that a hot war degenerated into war, or coalesced into a warm war and then became a cold war. That's what I see happening here. I don't see a permanent peace being established. What I see is reality, realpolitik clicking in, and you're going to see nations, you know, making decisions about their future. I don't think the Gulf Arab states are going to be saying, oh, we're safe behind an American umbrella of security anymore. They're going to be looking for alternative security arrangements.

I don't see Iran being invited back into the Western economy anytime soon, but that's okay. They'll make adjustments by realigning themselves with the East. The United States will be happy with just keeping the flow of oil going, but they're not going to make the concessions that Iran would seek. And so you're going to have a whole bunch of things not happening, and that's going to define the new reality. The new reality will be founded on the notion that both sides need to maximize the economic potential that they can accrue in this, you know, compromised situation. The Strait of Hormuz, you know, being open, but, you know, always has the potential of being closed.

You know, the United States has military forces, you know, poised to strike every once in a while. They do strike, and then that causes a tanker to get hit, and then they stop. I think this is the permanent state of affairs until we get a political change in the United States. And of course, that will hopefully happen sometime in November, you know, and it manifests itself with a new Congress on January 1st, and the termination of Donald Trump as a political power here in the United States.

But I just don't see the United States capable of peace. And of course, we're aligned with Israel, which is totally incapable of peace. So I don't see peace happening. I just see a permanent state of lukewarm war.

## **#Danny**

And speaking of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu has said in the last 24 hours that Israel is ready to go back to war with Iran whenever they give the green light to themselves, not needing the United States. This is what Netanyahu claims. What does all of this mean, though, from what you just said and this factor of Israel for not just Iran but Lebanon and the entire front? Because that clause number one, and, you know, if we have a lukewarm war, it's likely that there is a pretty hot war going on in Lebanon. No cessation there. And, of course, we have the disaster of the U.S.-Israel-Lebanon deal that happened since the last time we spoke. Your thoughts and reactions?

## **#Scott Ritter**

I just need to remind your audience, and I probably don't need to remind them, that Lebanon has beaten Israel several times in the past. That Israel has not been capable of defeating Lebanon. It hasn't shown itself capable of defeating Lebanon. It's currently losing to Lebanon on the battlefield. And when this ends, it'll end with Israel being kicked out of Lebanon. That's how this ends. There's no other ending. How we get there, how long it takes, is a different question. But the stupid games being played by Israel right now, where with America's backing they've bought a Lebanese presidency, which is then, you know, saying they've normalized relations with Israel to the extent that Lebanon now greenlights Israel's continued occupation of Lebanon.

Therefore, it's not an occupation. Therefore, Hezbollah loses all legitimacy. I mean, this kind of stupidity only reinforces the absolute legitimacy of Hezbollah. Hezbollah is today far more legitimate in the eyes of many Lebanese than the Lebanese government because Hezbollah is the only organization today willing to fight and die for the protection of the sovereign territorial integrity of Lebanon. Where's the Lebanese army? You know, playing stupid games. So Hezbollah is not going to quit, and Iran will never quit supporting Hezbollah. And this is just the reality of it.

Israel will be defeated, and eventually this defeat will manifest itself in the political demise of Bibi Netanyahu, and then Israel will have to go into a post-Bibi Netanyahu spin where anything is possible. Remember, in September of 2023, prior to October 7th, the President of Israel was warning everybody that Israel is on the cusp of civil war—not civil disobedience, civil unrest—civil war. That means Jew killing Jew inside Israel. That's where they were. That's where they still are. Netanyahu has been able to use the security argument as a mechanism to hold Israel together, but he's now run out of places he can go to war with.

And if he continues, there will be economic consequences, national security consequences, and political consequences. Netanyahu, one day very soon, is not going to be the prime minister—

whether he dies of natural causes, whether he's killed by an Iranian strike, whether he's kicked out of office and arrested, or he's kicked out of office and allowed to retire peacefully. There won't be a prime minister named Bibi Netanyahu. When that happens, you know, Israel right now, I don't believe, is capable of readily replacing him. He has been a cult of personality for such a long time now that, you know, Israel is defined by his presence. And when you remove him, there will be a vacuum created and destroyed. That vacuum can probably cause Israel to implode politically. And that's the future of Israel.

There's no more Greater Israel. I mean, they can talk about it all they want, but it's not going to happen. Israel is in retrograde now. Israel is as strong as it's ever going to get. From now on, it's just going to get weaker and weaker and weaker and weaker as it feeds upon itself, because there is no future for Israel. Benjamin Netanyahu has made that a harsh reality for Israel. Yeah. And so, you know, in a way, Hezbollah and Iran have the upper hand. Of course, you know, we have to deal with the day-to-day reality of the information war that's being waged by, you know, pro-Israeli elements in the social media camp and mainstream media who seek to suppress alternative voices so that it appears that there isn't support, that they suppress an alternative reality.

When I say alternative reality, I mean alternative as in fact-based, as opposed to the fantasy-based reality that's propagated by Israel and their pro-Western allies here in Western mainstream media. You know, the Israelis are operating on pure propaganda, and that can only carry you so far. At some point in time, reality rules, truth matters, and Hezbollah will emerge from this victorious—not only militarily against Israel, but this will also enhance their standing politically inside Lebanon.

Remember, as well as a political party, now they have people in government, and they are a very important part of the government. And because they're the only ones maintaining faith with the structural integrity of Lebanon, they're going to have far more credibility going forward than President Aoun or any of his Christian Sunni co-conspirators. And that's what they did—they conspired against Lebanon in supporting this non-deal deal with Israel.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, we'll have to keep our eyes on that situation because I 100% agree with you that this deal does not settle anything. It likely just accelerates what is inevitable, which is that there will be continued resistance, and that resistance will not go well for Israel vis-à-vis Hezbollah. Scott, now I want to get to the Ukraine situation. In particular, there have been more drone attacks, right? It's like the saga continues—more drone attacks into Moscow.

Now the mainstream media, from Al Jazeera to, of course, publications like The Independent, are all saying that Vladimir Putin has now admitted that Russia is facing problems in the Ukraine war because of these drone attacks, in particular fuel shortages. But what I want to do is play the words from the man himself to get your reaction to what I believe is a very strong, really a very strong counter to these claims. Here he is speaking to the media after a briefing on the military situation.

## **#Putin**

Then, of course, these strikes on our infrastructure facilities create problems.

## **#Danny**

Let me slow it down just a little bit. That's obvious.

## **#Putin**

We are currently observing a certain deficit, but it is not critical, as I will explain now. There are several tasks here that we must solve. My colleagues and I have just been discussing this. The first task is to quickly and significantly increase the production of the most in-demand air defense systems, to constantly improve them in accordance with the needs of conducting combat operations and covering the relevant facilities, taking into account what is being used by the enemy and what is being transferred to them from Europe, such as new unmanned aerial vehicles with new technologies. We actually have all of these means of protection. The question is the speed of scaling up their production and delivering them to the troops or for covering facilities of critically important infrastructure. It is clear what needs to be done in order to ensure normal supply and get rid of this temporarily arisen deficit.

## **#JD Vance**

We need to complete the repairs faster.

## **#Putin**

We need to establish the necessary volume of imports and, as I have already said, reliably cover these facilities. It is also necessary to coordinate the work of all levels and structures involved in repelling attacks by unmanned aerial vehicles and missiles on our infrastructure and, most importantly, on people. The main task here is the protection of people, the civilian population, and the minimization of damage to the economy, to individual sectors of production, and to industry. As I have already said, there is damage, but all damaged facilities are restored fairly quickly, and the emerging problems are not of a critical nature. Everything of ours is working stably and with a large margin of safety. As for the supplies of energy resources...

## **#Danny**

That is a very different story from what we're hearing in the mainstream media, which is that there's panic in Moscow. Russia is being attacked very hard. It's now having a major impact on energy supplies. And of course, that Ukraine is turning the tables. Scott, your reaction to this discrepancy here?

## **#Scott Ritter**

I mean, how do you say horse shit politely? No, because that's what this Western media spin is. I just got back from three weeks in Russia, including 10 days in the SMO territories, where I witnessed firsthand, sometimes up close and personal—closer and more personal than I wanted to, perhaps—the reality of drone warfare and what's happening. There can be no doubt that Ukraine has launched a massive drone campaign against Russia that is basically designed to accomplish a couple of things. First and foremost, it is to create the perception of Ukrainian resilience that then feeds into the notion of a shifting economy in a strategic initiative away from Russia to Ukraine, and then helps promote the notion of the potential of Ukrainian victory.

And this has all been in place since May, designed to reach the crescendo right before the NATO summit so that, you know, we can get the United States and Europe to commit to the inevitability of Ukrainian victory and provide resources that would extend this conflict even longer in the vain hope that, you know, the wishful thinking that, uh, attaches itself to this propaganda that Russia is becoming weaker actually becomes reality. Um, you know, perceptions do create their own realities in the minds of those who perceive, but it doesn't mean it translates that way on the ground. Um, you know, I can't speak to the specifics of Russia's, uh, energy situation. The president of Russia has addressed those issues, and I have no reason to doubt him.

## **#Putin**

Um.

## **#Scott Ritter**

I can say this: I arrived in St. Petersburg on the morning of June 3rd, and the city was attacked by over 50 drones that morning. The targets in Kronstadt were on fire, black smoke in the sky. I didn't see it by the time I got off the train—it had already cleared away—and the people of St. Petersburg scurried along their normal selves, not worried about this. It was, you know, entertainment for a moment. But, you know, if you looked at the headlines in the West, I mean, St. Petersburg was on fire, ablaze, you know, defenseless Russian people cowering in their basements. No, that's not the case at all. The day I left St. Petersburg, June 6th, the city was once again under Ukrainian drone attack.

I don't think the people of St. Petersburg even noticed. That's how much this meant. You get to Moscow, and again, that's under drone attack. Um, I head to the special military operation. I have to tell you, we arrived in Lugansk on the evening of June 8th. We went to a restaurant, and the entire meal was interrupted by air raid sirens, including explosions. The city was under attack—drone attack—part of the Ukrainian drone offensive. We went to Starobelsk the next day to visit the college that had been attacked by Ukrainian drones on May 22nd, murdering 21 sleeping students. And the

Ukrainians attacked Starobelsk about a block and a half away from where we were. Two drones struck, prompting our evacuation. So, you know, it's real.

We went to Gorlovka, had to drive under the drone nets, had to do a sprint through an area where there was imminent threat of Ukrainian drone attack. We had to scan the sky for drones. We had a plan of action if a drone was spotted—how to get the hell out of the car and hope that we could get far enough away not to absorb shrapnel. Um, it's a real thing. There were burned-out cars, burned-out trucks, burned-out gas stations, burned-out gasoline vehicles. This is the reality of it. The same thing when we got to Melitopol. I was supposed to go visit the Zaporizhia nuclear power plant. Couldn't. The road connecting Melitopol with the nuclear power plant was under constant drone attack. It was just deemed to be far too dangerous, even though I said, I don't care, I want to visit.

It was an irresponsible thing for me to say, because if the Russians had said, okay, we'll take you, that means they're putting other people's lives at risk for my pride, for my hubris, for my arrogance. Thank God they're rational people, and they said, no, it's just too dangerous. In Melitopol, the city was attacked every night we were there. Most of the city was without electricity, without water. But the city lived on. I spoke at Melitopol State University, and there were students—hundreds of students—in the audience. These are students who go home to houses without power. These are students who go home to houses without water. These are students who live in an environment where they understand that there, but for the grace of God, go they—meaning that the 21 students who died in Starobelsk could very well have been 21 students from Melitopol State University. But they don't give up.

And that's the point. In all of this, everything the Ukrainians are doing, the Russians are just shrugging it off. Is it inconvenient? Yes, it is inconvenient. Is it scaring the Russians? Well, I mean, I'm not going to pretend the Russians aren't concerned, but I'm telling you, they wake up every morning and they just get on with their lives. It just is what it is. And then I met with Russian military people specializing in drone warfare. One of the main focuses of this tour was to visit Russian drone units and talk about the reality of drone warfare, making a documentary film that hopefully will manifest itself sometime in the near future. The Russians are fully cognizant of what's going on.

I had an open conversation with them about drone warfare. You know, they acknowledge the difficulties that they face. The Ukrainians are very good, very skilled operators, and they are receiving a tremendous amount of advanced technologies from the West. And drones are all about technologies, and if you can bring in sufficient quantities of high-technology drones, you're going to have an advantage. And the Ukrainians are just flooding the zone with drones. The Russians make up for it with grit, determination, and skill, and they've evened out the playing field. But it's a very tough, touch-and-go situation there. You know, the drones that struck Starobelsk were guided in by Starlink antennas provided by Elon Musk. So, yes, Elon Musk, you're a murdering sack of shit, son of a bitch, who deserves to cry in hell for what you've done.

There's no forgiving you for what you've done. You claim that Starlink is a civilian network providing internet connectivity for the masses. You murdered 21 sleeping girls, Elon Musk. That's on you, you sack of manure. We were in Melitopol, and the convoy we were in got hit by Hornets. Hornets are drones that are created and funded by Eric Schmidt, head of Google. Eric Schmidt, you and I are going to have a meeting one day, and I'm going to remind you just how stupid and criminal your actions are, you murdering—again, I have no love lost for these guys. There's no excuse for what they're doing. They are empowering the Ukrainians to commit acts of terrorism against Russian civilians. The Hornet drones are being used almost exclusively against civilian targets.

There's no military rationale or military justification for what's being done. It's purely an act of terrorism designed to strike fear into the heart of a people who can't have fear struck into them. Let me remind people that the people of the Donbass have been living under fire since 2014. It's not like they woke up four years ago and went, "Oh, crap, war." No, they've been at war for a long time. And they know war. And this just isn't bothering them. The Russian forces are kicking ass—seriously, straight up crushing the Ukrainians. You know, the Ukrainians are flying all these drones, but one thing that's happening is the Russians are sitting there monitoring them. They're taking hits. I'm not pretending otherwise. I'm not here saying the Ukrainians aren't doing it.

The Ukrainians are blowing up a lot of stuff, killing a lot of people, mainly civilians. On the front line, it's very tough, very tough. You know, people in the West—I read the stupidity of the chat. Not yours. I'm not picking on them today because I haven't read them yet. Maybe I will, because I'm in a really bad mood and I'd love nothing more than to get in a fight with somebody over a stupid chat. But the point is, I've got to calm down. The fact is, though, that there are people out there who are like, oh, the Russians are only advancing a kilometer, they're very slow-paced. You know, when the war first started, the gray zone that separated the militaries was defined by the maximum range of the weaponry available.

So if it's an infantry-based war, basically the zone separating you is the maximum effective range of your machine guns or your rifles. You bring in your armor, you know, now you extend that. So you're talking about a gray zone of one to two kilometers separating the zone. So if I were to attack you, I've got to cross my line of departure and advance through a gray zone, one or two kilometers, where I'm going to come under fire from your... In World War I, you've seen the World War I movies where the guys go over the trench line. They have to go through a gray zone to get to the other trench. That's the gray zone. And while you're doing that, you get hit with artillery, machine gun fire, etc. Today, with drones, the gray zone is 60 kilometers wide sometimes.

So in order to advance, you've got to go through 60 kilometers of hell—drone strikes, artillery strikes, artillery guided by drones observing. So when we say the Russians are advancing a kilometer a day or two, they're advancing 60 kilometers a day because they have to go through the gray zone, fight through the gray zone, close with the Ukrainian positions, and then continue their advance. People have no clue about the reality of this war, how hard it is. It's extraordinarily hard, but how good the Russians are. And I don't mean good just in terms of their military proficiency, but as the

Russians advance, they're coming upon village after village after village of places that were populated by civilians, Russian speakers who considered themselves to be Russian, who don't want to leave.

The Ukrainians mocked them. They called them Zhdun, the waiters. And mainly these are old people or kids, and they hide in basements. The Ukrainians mock them and laugh at them, and when they come out for water, the Ukrainians kill them. They let them starve to death there. The Russian soldiers come in and rescue these people. They come in and realize you can't evacuate them initially, so they secure the position, then they bring in food and water and medicine to care for these people. When the time comes, they try to evacuate them. Oftentimes they get attacked, and the Russians cover the bodies of these elderly with their own bodies, absorbing the bullets, absorbing the shrapnel, absorbing the drones, getting wounded, dying.

I went to a refugee camp where I talked to, you know, a room full of elderly people, people who should be retired, tending to their gardens. Instead, they've lost everything. And they're now sitting in a dormitory being well cared for, but they've lost everything. These people, some of them couldn't even talk about it. I tried to engage them; they just break down in tears. But when they talk about the Russian soldiers, you know, they're funny because they're like, ah, the bureaucracy is slow, I need more of this, I need more of that. I mean, just like anybody would do. It's normal old people complaints.

## **#Putin**

I complain like that. I'm an old person, but...

## **#Scott Ritter**

So they complain. But then as soon as you mention the Russian soldiers, they just well up in tears. They're like, these guys saved our lives. And they talk about how the Russian soldiers surrounded them with their bodies. And, my God, the Russian soldiers are good. They're good people. They're good soldiers. They're good warriors, and they're winning. And that's what this entire Ukrainian propaganda exercise can't undo. You can have people spin Vladimir Putin's words any way you want.

What you can't undo is the fact that yesterday Russia liberated a number of villages and towns, that Russia eliminated several brigades of Ukrainian manpower. Russia advanced another several kilometers deep in, and Russia's closing in on the final urban defensive belt that exists in the Donbass. And they will take Slavyansk, they will take Kramatorsk, and then the Donbass will be captured. They'll keep advancing because Ukrainians can't stop them. And now, for the Ukrainian drone operators — the drone operators there, you know, they're very good, but drone operators operate from a fixed location. That's one thing that, you know, came across to me.

I thought the drone operators would be mobile and maneuvering in there. Now, the drone operators pick a fixed location. They get locked in there, and then they offset their antennas with, you know, wires and lines and all that stuff. But they're running their drones. They have to be careful, though, because the enemy is looking for them. The Ukrainians are looking for the Russians, the Russians are looking for the Ukrainians. The Russians have a specialty unit called Rubicon that specializes in this sort of thing. And so when the Ukrainians launch this big drone attack, understand there's a drone operator somewhere guiding it, and he's going to be in that position for 10 to 14 days before he rotates out.

One of those days he's going to fuck up. All right. He's supposed to have a trash bin where he drinks his water, and then he's supposed to put the empty plastic bottle in the trash bin to disguise his presence. But they get lazy. About day eight, he's drinking the water, he's focused on something, and he throws it at the trash bin. It hits the lid, rolls out underneath the tree cover, and a Russian drone operator goes, "Plastic bottle, got you, son of a bitch." And then they track it in. Immediately, three to five FAB 500-kilogram bombs on the scene kill everybody. This happens over and over every single day. It's the most dangerous job in the war — Ukrainian drone operators.

They're dying by the bush because they're out there flooding the zone, but they're flooding the zone in a marketplace where the Russians are monitoring everything they do, and the Russians are singularly focused on killing them. Now, the Russians make mistakes too, and the Ukrainians kill them. It's a hard war being fought, but the Russians are winning this war — winning this war decisively. I went to drone development centers and looked at what the Russians are doing in terms of developing the technology that Vladimir Putin spoke of to shoot down Ukrainian drones. They have the technology. Now they just have to take it to scale, and that's what the Russians are working on.

We went to one place, the Archangels Drone Research Center. They've recently signed a deal with Kalashnikov out of Izhevsk to take their design and mass-produce it and get it in the hands of the soldiers. And there are other innovation centers. Rogozin, Dmitry Rogozin, the former head of Roscosmos, runs a combat unit called Bars Sarmat. Bars is the Russian abbreviation for reserve forces. Sarmat is the name he picked for it because he helped develop the Sarmat heavy ICBM, and he just brought that along with him, basically implying that he's going to kick your ass — and he is. And there are other research centers, too. The Russians are on top of this.

And that's what people don't understand. You're out there reading the Wall Street Journal. You're out there reading the Kyiv Post. You're out there reading the New York Times. You're out there reading just stupidity. Guys, don't believe me. Go yourself if you have the balls, okay? Because I'll tell you what, it takes a pair of balls to go there right now. And if I had realized how bad it was going to be, I may not have done it. Because there was a period of time where you're sitting there going, wow. If this goes bad — I mean, look, my driver was a veteran special forces guy, sort of a Russian Delta Force-type equivalent, cool character.

But when he is sitting there—because basically, if a drone's coming at you head-on, you're dead. There's nothing you can do. You're going to die. So don't even bother looking in front of you, because if you see the drone coming at you... just wave. Maybe they'll catch you on camera and your mom can see your face. Put a smile on it, because the Ukrainians love to record your face and put it out there. So rather than looking scared, just smile, give them the finger, do something. But you're going to die. That's just the way it's going to be. But if you scan to your left and your right, you can catch the drone coming, and you may have time to get out—to bail out of the car.

The drone's coming after the vehicle, not necessarily the people. So if you can get out in time and separate when they hit it, you might only get a couple of holes in your back, your ass, and your legs. That's the reality. But that's if the drone comes in on the horizon. If the drone comes in on the tree line, by the time you see it through the tree line, it's too late. It's right there on you, and you're about two seconds away from dying. We were driving in parts of Zaporozhye where it's relatively flat, but you have tree lines. And you know what looks like a drone coming at you?

A freaking crow flying straight out of the tree line. And there were a couple of times where we were driving and all of a sudden, here comes a crow, and this guy's like, you know, because he just thought he was dead. He was like, I'm dead, because that's what it looked like. We all just jumped. We're like, shit, we died. No, we didn't. Thank God it was a bird, but it could have been a drone. We only had to go through one day of that, getting out of there. The people that live there go through this every single day. They don't quit. They tell jokes. They have great humor. You know, gasoline is tough. There's no doubt about that. Ukraine has blown-up gas stations. The convoy that we were in, the reason why it got hit was that there were five, you know, gasoline tankers there.

Now, the thing that saved us is that they had the gun trucks, and the gun trucks were able to shoot down the drone. But, you know, the Ukrainians were targeting that. The thing about these drones that Eric Schmidt provided them, these Hornet drones, is they have AI built into them. So they come in, they get guided in there, and then they get into a search routine. So basically, it's just fucking Russian roulette. You're driving down a highway of death, and you just, you know, when the drone pattern changes—if you're under the drone pattern when it's there, it got you. You're dead. Or you can bail out of your car and run. If it's outmaneuvering past and you drive through there, you get to live. It's Russian roulette every single day.

Now, the AI in the drone is telling it to give it certain things to look for. So it's, you know, prioritize military vehicles, gas tankers, things of that nature. But drones, especially like the Hornet, they're battery-driven. It's the battery life. And as the battery comes down to around 20%, the AI clicks into automatic kill mode, which means it's no longer searching for something that could be military. It says, kill the first thing you see, which more often than not is a civilian vehicle. And, um, that's the reality. That's why you see cars hit and all that. So, you know, these drones are literal terrorist tools. So Eric Schmidt is a terrorist. Google is a terrorist organization. And I wish the United States would prosecute them to the full extent of

## **#Danny**

Yeah. And Scott, if you could now, you know, you mentioned the battlefield situation, and I wanted to just pull up this. This is from the Institute for the Study of War—of course, Victoria Nuland's pet project, constantly, of course, spreading the same narratives you outlined there. But here we see some major progress going towards Slavyansk and Kramatorsk, you mentioned. And of course, the person who posted this said Ukraine is winning, Russia is collapsing, Putin is panicking, and that Russia, the reality is, is 10 kilometers away from breaking the fortress belt. What does this mean, and how significant is this?

## **#Scott Ritter**

First of all, understand that this map is totally meaningless. The Russians have things called DRGs. Ukrainians use them as well—deep reconnaissance groups. Basically, these are special forces, reconnaissance forces that are searching for the seam in the Ukrainian defenses. So they push forward, identify Ukrainian strong points, and then they'll bring drones in. What you're not seeing here right now is in Kramatorsk, that city, the Russians are operating fiber-optic FPV drones. So the gray zone has already pushed into Kramatorsk. Right now, it makes it look like Ukraine's in control of Kramatorsk. Ukraine's in control of shit—they don't control anything. Kramatorsk is a dead zone. Slovyansk—the Russians have already advanced into it. You have DRGs that have closed within the city limits.

And again, the drones have cut off Slovyansk. It's unsustainable. You know, this is the reality of it. This map doesn't show you the reality of this war. This war is a very fluid war. You know, and the advances, too—you know, the day of, you know, I could fight and win this war, that's the thing. Maybe I could learn and adapt. But, you know, the war I learned to fight isn't what's happening here today. I can't take a Marine company online and advance, you know, with three platoons abreast or two platoons moving in, the third in reserve. If I put a platoon of Marines online, the drones would come in and kill us all. Right.

So you advance in terms of threes and sixes. I mean, you're down to small units of men who are given very limited objectives at a time: seize this particular knoll, seize this strong point. And you have a drone support plan that comes in with you, providing fire support. And the war becomes one strong point at a time, and you take it or you don't take it. I mean, if you screw up, the Ukrainian drones come in and you have a bad day. That's the nature of war. It's a very fluid thing. All these lines that you see—these aren't lines. They're meaningless. It's actually a blur of activity, but almost all of the activity is based upon Russian movement and the Ukrainians in static positions.

The Ukrainian troops have lost the ability to maneuver. They've lost the ability to support other troops. When they counterattack, again, you keep hearing, oh, the Ukrainians advanced, took back X amount of territory. They're punching into the gray zone, so they're taking back no man's land. And they're not taking it back—they're just advancing into a kill zone, and they all die. Nobody ever talks

about them. Today, the Ukrainians counterattacked, and they recaptured Village X, Village Y, and they took this amount of square meters of territory. And then tomorrow, you say, well, what happened? Well, they're all dead. Why?

Well, they advanced into a kill zone. They advanced into the gray zone, and the Russian drones came and cut them off and killed everybody. Russian troops are mopping them up and, you know, ripping the chevrons off the bodies as souvenirs. This map is meaningless. But the one thing that you get out of this map is the inexorable advance of the Russian forces. The Ukrainians can't stop them. They won't stop them. This war is over. When's it going to be over, Scott? You said it's going to be over in three weeks. Fuck you. I mean, I'm just going to straight up say that, you know. When I said that, along with others, like the director of the CIA and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we thought Russia was going to war. Russia didn't go to war. Russia carried out a special military operation.

It took us a while to figure out what the hell that was. Once we did, we realized that we were dealing with something totally different, and we had to readjust all the algorithms that we use for war. And I did. In fact, if you remember, Danny, back in April and May, when the United States promised a \$48 billion injection of funding to Ukraine, I said, this is a game-changer. Scott, you're flip-flopping. I'm not flip-flopping. I'm identifying a new reality. Forty-eight billion dollars' worth of military assistance changes the nature of this game. And now it's going to be extended. And Russia's going to have to respond. And Russia did. And that changed the game. And we've been looking at the back-and-forth game. But one thing that hasn't changed is that Russia has retained the strategic initiative throughout.

And that Russia's winning, not just against Ukraine, but against the collective West. In 1993, George Soros wrote an article where he said that it's inevitable that NATO will go to war with Russia. Inevitable. 1993. So all the people out there saying NATO wasn't looking for war—1993—NATO was looking for war. But he said that it won't be a war that NATO fights directly with Russia because NATO's European societies can't handle the body bags coming home. That NATO will have to find a source of Eastern European manpower and provide them with technology and weapons. Well, that's what's happening today. Ukraine is the source of Eastern European manpower. NATO is supplying it with technology, weapons, and funding.

And now we're into a gigantic war of attrition where Russia is being compelled to basically terminate the DNA, you know, the DNA reservoir of Ukraine. Ukraine will never be the same. Ukraine will never recover from this war. Ukraine has lost so many men it will never recover from this war. Ukraine is a dead nation, not just a dying nation—they're dead. You know, we've passed the point where Ukraine can be revived. It's a dead nation, it's a fake nation, it's a false nation, you know, propped up by Western support, Western money, Western funding, etc. But Russia's not just fighting Ukraine; Russia's fighting the collective West—the United States, Europe, the economic potential of all. People tend to forget that Europe has a much larger population than Russia.

And Europe has a much larger gross domestic product, yet Russia is fighting from an inferior position and winning. People never focus on that. Russia is outproducing the defense industrial potential of the collective West, including the United States. And their forces are burning through Western stockpiles. People keep saying, oh, Russia's run out of tanks. I don't think the Russians are the ones that ran out of tanks. When was the last time Germany delivered a Leopard 2 to Ukraine? A long time ago, because Russia killed them all. The Russians are still producing a lot of T-80s, T-90s. They may even resume production of the T-14 once they, you know, get the drone issue—once they develop technologies that make maneuver viable in the current drone reality. But, you know, the fact of the matter is that Russia has done a hell of a job here. Vladimir Putin—everybody's critical of him.

You know, I was at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. I actually got a great seat—I was in the second row of the plenary session, so I got to see the bead of sweat on Vladimir Putin's forehead. I'm joking, he didn't sweat. But the point is, the speech that he delivered didn't make any mention of the war whatsoever. This is right after Starobelsk—21 murdered students. This is after a Ukrainian drone attack on the opening day of the St. Petersburg Forum, and you thought that it would, you know, that this would dominate. Everybody thought—I thought—I thought he'd come up there and just be breathing fire and brimstone. It was time to, you know, shoot the dog. But it didn't. He said, no, my focus is the economy, my focus is Russia, my focus is the growth and the development and the welfare of all Russians. He did talk about the war, and he basically said that it will be continued until we win on our terms.

Uh, but he's not letting the war define this. And people tend to forget because there are people out there right now—I mean, you know, my favorite, Danny Haiphong—who's basically saying that Vladimir Putin is under pressure, that the military is ready to revolt, and that this, that, Vladimir Putin under pressure? I mean, what, his approval rating went from 81 to 78? Western politicians would kill for a 78% approval rating. Kill. This man is under no political threat whatsoever inside Russia. Are there people upset? Sure. There are always going to be people upset.

Doesn't mean that they're going to be screaming for a Maidan moment in Moscow anytime soon. There are people who say that Vladimir Putin should strike more decisively, but they forget that he's winning the war. This is the one thing people tend to forget. Everybody who says, let's bomb Europe tomorrow, including me, has to stop and take pause and ask the question, then what? Because if you bomb Europe tomorrow, you run the chance of expanding the conflict that you're winning. Why do you want to change the algorithm of attrition that you're winning? Because some bloggers are pissed off that, you know, Ukraine gets to publish propaganda that resonates in the West.

It's an echo chamber. You know, all the Gilbert Doctors are doing is echoing Western propaganda and echoing it back and breathing life into it. But the reality is, Vladimir Putin, as you saw, you know, is it having an effect? Yes. But Russia will adapt. Russia will adjust. And Russia will not stop doing what it's doing, which is winning this war. And at some point in time, that urban belt that you

showed—Slovyansk and Kramatorsk—is going to fall. And when it falls, that's the end of the Donbass. Russia occupies it. When the Donbass breaks, the Ukrainian army breaks, and we begin a cascading effect of collapse. And, you know, that's it. When's it going to happen, Scott?

## **#Putin**

I don't know.

## **#Scott Ritter**

The other fiction out there is that the Russians have put timelines out there. Vladimir Putin has missed 15 self-imposed deadlines and timelines. There have been no timelines. I challenge anybody to find me one statement from the Russian government that says the Russian army needs to do this by this date. Hasn't happened. The Russians aren't looking at the calendar. The Russians are looking at, you know, objectives—accomplish this objective, that objective. And that's what's driving this war. And it drives people in the West crazy because the people in the West want things to happen on a calendar. And if it doesn't happen on a calendar, then they determine, you know, victory or defeat. Ladies and gentlemen, Russia doesn't operate on the Western calendar.

Russia does. You go to Melitopol, you'll understand. The only calendar they care about is their calendar of their own personal reality. Their personal reality is to get up in the morning and do what you need to do to survive, and hopefully you make it through the day. Then you go to bed at night, you wake up the next morning, you do the same thing. And you keep doing that day after day after day until the war is over. If the war doesn't end the way you want it, then the war continues. That's the other thing people don't understand. They just aren't going to quit. Anybody who thinks that Russia is going to quit, you haven't been to Russia and you don't know the Russians. Gilbert Doctorow has been to Russia, but he's talking to the wrong people.

Hey, Gil, let's talk about it. You're in Brussels, right? Sort of like NATO territory. How much contact do you have with MI6? I mean, are you echoing their talking points? Because it sure seems like you are. It sure seems like you're playing into the game book that's being written by MI6 Moscow House in London Station. And I think that's exactly what Gilbert Doctorow is doing, whether he knows it or not. It's a 100% guarantee that Gilbert Doctorow is being used by Western intelligence to feed this absurd propaganda that Russia's losing, that Putin's under pressure, and that the military's about to quit. Gil... go visit the Donbass and come back and tell me Russia's about to quit. There ain't no quit in Russia.

## **#Danny**

And Scott, to your point about Russian approval of Vladimir Putin, the Levada Center—it's a very interesting graph given the dates when you look from the beginning of his tenure as Russian president in 2000, and then, of course, subsequent elections. But you see quite a lot of variation

here. One thing that is quite certain is that the approval rating has dramatically increased since the Ukraine conflict began. And yes, it has gone down a bit, but that's relative to these massive numbers—I mean, 88 percent in 2022, 85 all through, and now 79. So no, it's not a collapse.

## **#Danny**

I know, yeah. That graph does not signal a collapse. That graph looks very good for Putin.

## **#Scott Ritter**

I was in Moscow and walking around, and everybody in the Telegram chat and everything were, oh, Moscow's... I mean, talking about burning fires and... I mean, just panicking. I was on Arbat Street. I mean, it was just like, yeah, panic. There ain't no panic. I mean, the street was full of people just living their lives. No panic, no running, just people living their life. And this is the reality of it. You know, like anything, you know, people get tired of it. To pretend that the war is not having an impact on the Russian economy is absurd. Of course it's having an impact on the Russian economy. And to pretend that after four-plus years of war that people aren't tired of it—of course they're tired of it. And if I go to a café and talk to people, they're going to tell me they're tired of this war.

Do they want the war to end? Who doesn't want the war to end? I mean, that's just the reality of it. And so on any given day, you can have people go, ah, you know, Vladimir Putin's not doing a good job. You know, whoop, uptick on the Vladimir Putin disapproval rating. You know, and I'm, I'm, I don't know. I watched Ksenia Sobchak the other night, and I've decided I'm against Vladimir Putin. Oh, damn, it goes down to 79%. But Ksenia Sobchak—I did a three-hour interview with her that she still hasn't aired. Ksenia, what's going on? Call me if you have a problem. We can sort it out. I think she tried to ambush me, and it didn't work. But she's somebody who has embraced the anti-Putin narrative. She's not, you know, in support of this war.

And she tried to create the impression that many people in Russia weren't in support of this war, that mothers throughout Russia were hesitant to send their sons off to fight and die. Well, what mother isn't hesitant to send their son off to fight and die? But, you know, I think most Russian mothers identify with The Motherland Calls, the statue at the Kurgan Mamayev, where, you know, Mother Russia is telling the sons to go forward and fight the fascists. You know, the Russians understand what's going on here. They know what the stakes are. And the Russians will defend Russia, and the Donbass is Russia, and Zaporozhye is Russia, and Kherson is Russia. It's populated by Russians, and Russians will defend Russia. There's a handful of people who, you know, still believe in the time when the West provided the shining city on a hill for the Russians to aspire to be like.

You know, people like Gilbert Doctorow who brought in their Western technology and their Western business practices, and they made the Russians kneel in subservience to the wisdom of these all-knowing Westerners. Those days are over. The West no longer holds any sway over the Russian

people, and people like Ksenia Sobchak are out of time. But again, Russia doesn't have any free speech? Well, Ksenia Sobchak certainly can get up there and say the crap that she says—and says it regularly. She worked for Rain TV, which is, you know, an opposition-funded organization. You know, there's plenty of dissenting voices in Russia today. That's one of the reasons why people like Gilbert Doctorow, you know, resonate here in the West, because they can echo off of certain chambers.

But again, we just get down to the fact. At the height of the Ukrainian drone offensive, Vladimir Putin's approval rating is 79%. You know, what was George H.W. Bush's approval rating after he won Desert Storm? Was it close to 79%? My point is, you know, people literally don't know what the hell they're talking about. They really don't know what the hell they're talking about. And you won't know unless you go to Russia. Go. It's not illegal. Get a damn passport. Go to the consulate office. Pay \$180. They'll give you a visa and go. The police state ain't going to grab you at the airport. A taxi driver will try to drive you into Moscow for cash. Can't use credit cards yet. But it's affordable. The people are nice. And, oh, gosh, you can't leave Moscow or St. Petersburg. Yeah, you can. Travel.

Travel. Don't try to go to the special military operation without permission. They will stop you at that point. But it's a war zone, after all. But, you know, you can go to Volgograd. You can go to Kazan. Go to Chechnya. Hell, go to Grozny. They have a great restaurant there. Go to the third floor. They have great chicken soup. I mean, it's good stuff. Russia is a great country, and people need to see it to believe it. But stop listening to the naysayers. Stop listening to the propagandists. Stop. Vladimir Putin said it right. It's difficult right now. But it doesn't mean, you know, difficult doesn't mean it's over. Difficult doesn't mean you're losing. Difficult just means it's not easy anymore. Difficult means you got to change what you're doing. You got to adapt. Russia is populated by people who are more capable of adaptation than anybody else in the

## **#Danny**

And then my final question to you, Scott, is regarding the NATO summit. It's coming up next week. And, you know, Russia has not been striking Kiev as hard as it has, let's say, in recent weeks and months. There are reports, actually, that there might be a pretty significant strike very soon, maybe even as soon as today. But do you think Russia will try to send a message? Because, you know, Putin has made clear that he's very well aware of the European and NATO support for Ukraine's drone attacks on Russian civilians. Do you think Russia will make a statement during this summit that, yeah, it can hit very hard and maybe coordinate its heavier strikes on Ukraine with this summit?

## **#Scott Ritter**

You know, I can't speak for the Russian government. I definitely won't speak for Vladimir Putin. Russia's not in the business of making statements. They're in the business of winning a war. You know, an Iskander missile costs, you know, millions of dollars. So to make a statement by throwing away a Russian missile means that you've thrown away production that is supposed to be used to

achieve a specific military task. And the Russians are very, you know, pragmatic when it comes to that. You don't expend a missile for a statement. You expend the missile to kill people, blow up things. So when Russia strikes, it's because the intelligence information suggests that there's a target worthy of the strike.

The other thing is that Vladimir Putin has been assiduous in avoiding meaningless escalation. He's winning. What the West wants, what Ukraine wants, is escalation. They're trying to provoke him. He's avoiding the provocations because he's winning. Why change the system that you're prevailing in? Why create the opportunity for the system to change into one that you may not be prevailing in? Why, you know, throw away victory? It's a very politically sensitive time right now, and I'm sure many in the West would like Russia to send a signal. I mean, how convenient would it be for NATO to be meeting in Kiev to go, "Those dirty Russians, see what they've done?" Because what are they going to say? They're not going to say it's inevitable that Russia wins.

They're going to say, look at the Russians once again striking defenseless Kiev. We need to give more air defense to Ukraine. So how effective was the Russian statement at that point in time? I don't see the Russians, you know, making a statement. In the middle of this, the Russians decide that the target has made itself available. They may strike, but then again, they may not because, again, you have to weigh the political disadvantages of striking during this politically sensitive time. Why would Russia want to strike NATO right now? I mean, let's just think. Let's walk through this one, because NATO is certainly saying we're all coming together. We've got a G7 meeting where everybody agreed we're going to build weapons and provide munitions to the Ukrainians.

## **#Putin**

Hey, we're awesome.

## **#Scott Ritter**

You're not that awesome, guys. Put it in the perspective of NATO for a second. 9/11 — the United States compelled NATO to invoke Article 5. The United States compelled NATO to do it. We didn't need to do it, but we compelled them to do it. And then from that compelling, we got NATO engaged in a 20-year conflict in Afghanistan — a 20-year conflict which we then withdrew from unilaterally. You know, when you're generally dealing with a NATO environment, people go right to Article 5, collective self-defense. But, you know, the more important article is Article 4, which requires consensus and collaboration, consultation. We withdrew from Afghanistan without any consultation.

We abandoned our NATO allies, and they were forced to leave on their own. That left a bitter taste in their mouths, where the United States invokes Article 5 but refuses to engage in Article 4, which means that NATO is nothing more than an extension of the United States. I think that's the reality, but nobody likes to have that thrown in their face. Now we have a situation where the United States

entered a unilateral war against Iran outside the framework of international law, with no justification whatsoever. Now they want to invoke an Article 5-type response from NATO. The United States hasn't been attacked. The United States did the attacking.

But we demand that NATO rally to our cause as if it were Article 5. But we're doing this without any consultation. NATO was never told that the United States was going to attack. And so NATO isn't doing it. So there's a lot of resentment in the United States right now. A lot of resentment in Europe. You really want Russia to do something that brings these two sides together? This resentment's real. Turkey. Turkey's the host. Last time I checked, just a few years ago, Turkey was sending a shipment of weapons to Libya when a French frigate attempted to intercept the Turkish convoy, and the Turks threatened to sink the French ship. That's NATO-on-NATO violence.

Last time I checked, Turkey was involved in supporting Azerbaijan against Armenia—Armenia backed by the EU, Armenia that wants to join NATO. That's a little problematic, too. Turkey went into Syria, was attacked by Russia, went to NATO and said, we need help. NATO said, we're not going to help you on this one. You're on your own. Turkey has done a number of things to protect itself and ended up getting sanctioned by the United States. Right now, Turkey's talking about building an F-35-type fighter. All they want is old F-16 engines, but we won't give them to them. The Turks feel like second-class citizens.

And July 15th, 2016, there was a coup against Erdogan, run by and backed by the United States and NATO. A coup backed by the United States and NATO trying to get rid of Erdogan. But now Erdogan's hosting NATO. Anybody who thinks that NATO is going to come rolling into Ankara, that this is going to be just one big kumbaya party, has no idea what's going on. Vladimir Putin's best bet at this point in time is to sit back, pop up some popcorn, and enjoy the show because it's going to be a shit show. I mean, NATO is just going to fall in on itself. Trump's going to say, where's your 5%? Why haven't you come to help?

NATO's going to say, why aren't you helping us with Ukraine? Zelensky's going to be there, and he's going to do something just stupid and piss Trump off. And then Trump will reverse course on the G7 commitment. And the Russians are going to sit and go, I mean, because that's it, baby. It's entertainment. So for all the people saying, Russia's got to act now, send a statement—why? Why would Russia do that? Now, I'm not saying they won't, but if they do, they're going to have a reason. But the best statement is to sit there and say NATO is dysfunctional, and watch NATO prove that assessment. Hmm.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, well, oftentimes on social media it's shared regarding China, but the statements of "do nothing and win," I think that can be applied here to Russia and NATO. NATO is not looking well. It has not been looking well for many years. Scott, I want to make sure everyone knows that your website is in the video description at [scottritter.com](http://scottritter.com), where they can follow you and support your work. I also

want to mention quickly the case of Dan Kovalik, a mutual friend of ours. He was detained by UK authorities under the Terrorism Act in the UK. His things were taken. He's been on this show before. We have done a lot of work together, both Scott and I, with him. All of his devices were taken away. I believe he is out now, but nonetheless, they have seriously violated both his constitutional and human rights. So I just want to put that out there. I'll give it to you, Scott, for the final words, as I think I'll put up the new members and super chats on the way. But final word for you, Scott.

## **#Scott Ritter**

Well, let's just deal with Dan real quick. If you go to [scottritter.com](http://scottritter.com), you'll get to my Substack page, and on there you'll see a section called Ritter's Rant. It's actually my YouTube channel, and I did a rant yesterday about Dan. The point is that Great Britain likes to talk about a special relationship with the United States, but a special relationship is predicated upon common values. Today, Great Britain and the United Kingdom have no common values with the United States. Dan Kovalik is a lawyer, an international lawyer, a man who defends human rights.

He's the good guy. He's on the right side of history, and he was detained because of what he spoke about. He spoke out against the genocide in Gaza. He spoke out against the illegal war of aggression in Iran, and the British pulled him aside. Now, you can disagree with Dan Kovalik, but you can't suppress his speech if you call yourself pro-American. Now, England is a sovereign state. The United Kingdom is a sovereign state, and they can do what they want, but there should be consequences. The United States has values. We stand for something. And one of the things we stand for is free speech.

And I would just hope that all American citizens would rally around the cause of Dan Kovalik and let the British government know that they screwed up, that this will not be tolerated, that you've identified yourself as an enemy of the United States, an enemy of free speech, and you should be treated as such. So that's that. Dan, if you're watching, stay strong, buddy. We got your back as much as we can at this juncture, but you haven't been forgotten. And I just want to point out again that I just came back from a three-week trip to Russia. It's a mind-blowing trip. I've written some about it. I'm getting ready to write more about it. We have two documentary films that are going to be produced based on this. And, you know, it couldn't have happened without your support.

I'm an independent journalist who operates on a budget that's defined by your donations. And so far, your donations have been fantastic. They also got me to Turkey for a three-day summit in preparation for the big NATO summit. I just wrote an article about that today on my Substack. Substack's free. If you subscribe, you pay my salary. But if you donate, you actually fund the next trip. And today was an amazing day because a trip I thought I was making in September to do one thing has turned out to be something else, something mind-blowing. But again, it can't happen without your support. So the coffers are down to zero. Thank you. I spent your money wisely, and you will see the product of your investment.

If you can help me rebuild it so that I'll be able to take the September trip, you won't be sorry. I went to the Special Military Operation, spent 10 days there because of you, because of your support, but also because the goal is to gather information, and in September I'll have the opportunity to pursue the next phase of potential conflict between Russia and Europe. You know, whether or not there will be a flare-up in the Baltics or a flare-up in the Arctic. If you guys think that's cool, go to the Substack page and donate if you can. But again, I want to thank everybody for all the support they've provided. None of this would have happened.

And I want to thank you, Danny, for bringing me on. And I just want to encourage your audience to support you as well. Dan Kovalik is a friend of ours. It's just been proven they're trying to silence us. They're trying to shut us down. They're trying to prevent all this from happening. They want you to be able to do nothing more than tune into the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, and all the other crap that's out there that echoes the lies of the Trump administration, echoes the lies of the war party. If you believe in peace, if you believe in the potential of peace, if you believe that truth is power, then you have to support people like Danny Haiphong and Dan Kovalik and others. So thanks.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, thank you, Scott. Everyone, make sure you hit the like button before you go. That's a free way to support this channel, and it helps boost the show so more people get to hear this. Without further ado, everyone, make sure you go to the video description after the show. After you hit that like button, you can find Scott's work. You can also find Dan Kovalik's X account, and make sure you check out his books. He's got a lot of books, a whole host of books on all the topics that bring you to this show. So do check his work out. All right, everybody, also in the video description is where you can support this channel. And tomorrow I'll be back, 2 p.m. Eastern. I'll let you know who will be joining me shortly. July 2nd, 2 p.m. Eastern. All right, everybody, see you then. We're out of here together. Bye.