



## A Ground-Level View Of The West's War on Iran

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**Dimitri Lascaris (DL):** Good day, this is Dimitri Lascaris coming to you from Tabriz in Iran on March 20th, 2026. This is my initial report from Iran having arrived here earlier this morning at about 12:30 a.m. I was invited with other foreign journalists, a small group of foreign journalists who come to Iran by the state broadcaster. At the end of the day, given the short notice and any other circumstances that prevented their coming, only four of us were able to accept this particular invitation. I'm not going to identify who the other foreign journalists are. My audience will probably know, many of them will know at least two of those journalists, if not all of them. But I just haven't had a chance to get their consent to identifying them at this particular stage. I'm sure they'll be letting their audiences know that they're in the country if they have not already done so very quickly. In any case, we had to enter the country given the closure of the airspace to commercial traffic – as far as I can tell, it's been completely closed to commercial traffic ever since this war of aggression began on February 28th – we had to fly into Turkey. We met with a gentleman who, interestingly, is a university academic or was. He has a doctorate. He happened to be in the area and he was asked by the state broadcaster to effectively act as our guide into the country and he met us in Ankara and then from Ankara, the capital of Turkey, we took a flight to the border city, the Turkish border city of Van, which is in the part of the country the southeastern part of country which is heavily populated by Kurds and from then we took taxi to the boarder, it was about a 90-minute drive from Van to the border of Iran. The view along the way was quite spectacular. It was quite a mountainous country. Large parts of it were pristine, uninhabited. There was a lot of snow on the mountain peaks, but it was dark and it was very difficult for me to film any of that. But it was quite breathtaking, actually. And then when we got to the border, it was a large border facility, but there weren't too many people there, especially at the hour at which we arrived, which was around midnight. And we then passed through Turkish customs without any difficulty. We walked a long distance through a corridor, a long empty corridor to the Iranian side of this border facility. And there were several people waiting to greet us from the state broadcaster. And we went through Iranian customs quite easily. It was just as easy as entering any Western country with a Western passport. And everybody, I would say there were approximately ten people there who either were working at the border

facility or who were there to accompany us on to our next destination, which is Tabriz, where I am today. Everybody there was very kind, very hospitable, and in good spirits, frankly. And even people who didn't greet us, weren't there to speak with us, just happened to be there for whatever reason, also seemed to be calm and in good spirits.

That might have something to do with the fact that Iran retaliated enormously to the criminal attack on its oil facilities or the gas facilities in the South Pars field and its response included an attack on the oil refinery in Haifa; major oil and gas facilities were struck in Qatar, in the Saudi autocracy, as well as the UAE and perhaps even others. And on top of all of that, the Iranian military published yesterday footage of its air defences striking an F-35, apparently first time in history that this has happened, the history of that particular aircraft, that it has been struck and the striking of the aircraft has been recorded. At least this is the first known such event. And so it really blew a hole in the whole mythology of the stealth nature of aircraft, this extremely expensive aircraft, which, you know, it's a manufacturer of McDonnell Douglas, or I believe Lockheed Martin has made an absolute fortune selling to various hapless vassals of Washington around the world. In any case, this has been confirmed, apparently, by US officials that the aircraft was struck over central Iran. They say somehow it managed miraculously to arrive, to fly to an unidentified Gulf country and that its pilot or pilots were in stable condition, I believe that's the word they used. Whether in fact they're telling the truth about the survival of the pilots and the landing of the aircraft, who knows? Maybe we'll find out one day soon. But at this stage, that's the official version. [

In any case, a couple of points about my trip along the road last night. We arrived in Tabriz at 4:30 in the morning after having left the border facility, I would say at around 12:30. We stopped along the way for about 45 minutes to have a meal. And quite interesting, when we got into the restaurant, one of the foreign journalists who was with me said, have a look around, Dimitri, and see what you notice. I was so tired, I wasn't taking any particular attention to the details around me. But when I focused, what I noticed was that there were about 15 or 16 customers in the restaurant sitting down and dining at four tables, I would say. And at two of those tables, there was a woman with no head covering, and the woman was smoking hookah. It was a small town, by the way. This was not some big modern cosmopolitan metropolis like Tehran. And so I had seen, and I reported on this, when I was in Tehran in May of last year, a few weeks before the 12-day war, that walking the streets of Tehran, as I did over the course of the week, covering dozens of kilometres, I saw hundreds of women, hundreds of women who were walking in the streets without head covering, women of all ages, and nobody bothered any single one of them as far as I could see. There were no police, no morality police, there were no sort of private citizens taking upon themselves to harass these women into wearing head covering. They seemed perfectly at ease. And I did ask myself at the time, is that something that's peculiar to the city of Tehran, which is, as I say, a large cosmopolitan city, or do these conditions apply throughout the country? Well based on what I've seen thus far, outside of Tehran, which isn't much admittedly, this is not unique to Tehran, the principle that women are free to walk in public, to show themselves in public without any head covering. And as I say, two of those women sitting at two different tables were actually smoking a hookah. So we then continued on our

way after grabbing a bite to eat. We came to Tabriz and checked into a hotel. We only have had a few hours to sleep because we have a very full itinerary today. We're going to be going around the city. They're going to show us sites that have been bombed out. And then we're going to leave later this evening for Tehran. And I understand that's gonna be a ten hour road trip or so. Behind me you can see the city, the first time I've ever been here. I've never been outside this hotel in Tabriz, so I'm fascinated to see what the guides are going to show us. But a few observations I'll make, I was able to gather a little bit of information about this city on the road last night, between Naps, and it's a city of approximately 1.7 million. It is the sixth largest city in Iran. It is the provincial capital of a province by the name of Eastern Azerbaijan. And it borders Armenia and Azerbaijan to the north. I believe it also borders on Turkey. I don't think there's a province between East Azerbaijan and the Turkish border.

In any case, this city has quite a history which I only began to investigate last night. One aspect of its history that caught my eye, just doing some very preliminary research, is that this city has been occupied on numerous occasions by Russian forces. And apparently, during one of those occupations, which was a few years before World War I, Russian forces killed in excess of 1,000 residents of the city. I think the number was about 1,200. The reason why I raise this is because many people in the alternative media and the anti-imperialist community understandably expect Russia and Iran, which have a shared history and which have common interests in opposing Western hegemony to be closely allied in their efforts to resist the domination of the Western elite. And that certainly is true to a degree, but just based upon the little research that I've done, there have been some rather difficult periods in relations between Iran and Russia. Again, based on my limited information, Iran has been on the receiving end of the aggression rather than the party that engaged in aggression in the relation between Russia and Iran. This is not to say that the current government of Russia is in any way, shape or form responsible for that. It's just a historical fact, I think, which does complicate matters and makes it a bit more challenging for them to build trust, perhaps. And it has also been widely reported by historians that the Soviet Union did support at least to some degree Saddam Hussein, the dictator of Iraq, when he launched his war of aggression on Iran in the 1980s. Now it wasn't the Soviet Union that helped Saddam to gas Iranians. That was an ignominious distinction belonging to Western governments, particularly the United States and certain governments in Northern Europe, like the Germans and the Dutch. But nonetheless, that too, support of the Soviet Union for Saddam Hussein in that war; probably has left a lingering bad taste in the mouths of some Iranian officials. So that's not to say that people here speak ill of the Russians. I've never encountered people who do. But they oftentimes talk about the complexity of the relationship.

Now a couple of other observations I want to offer to you is that and admittedly it was dark when we were driving, but I didn't see any bombed out buildings along the road. I was awake for much of the trip and was paying careful attention to what was around us and this morning I certainly haven't seen any bombed out buildings. I can't see anything from up here. I have a panoramic view of Tabriz. This is the rooftop restaurant which is closed right now at the hotel we're staying at and I haven't seen or heard any military aircraft flying overhead. I haven't seen any soldiers in the streets. I haven't heard any explosions of any kind. Now, admittedly,

I've only been here a short while and I'm sure I'm going to see all of those things in abundance at some point during this trip, but it just reminds me that Iran is a very large country. It's not a tiny little pipsqueak of a country like the genocidal Israeli entity and it has strategic depth. And the idea that in the course of two and a half weeks, the United States and Israel, whose military forces have already expended gigantic amounts of munitions in their criminal wars all over the world and particularly in West Asia during the past two and a half years, the idea that in two and half weeks they could turn this country or even any major city of this country into Gaza is simply preposterous. Not only do they not have enough munitions and aircraft to do that, but the country is too far away, and it has the ability, as we saw yesterday, to shoot down aircrafts that enter its airspace. It's not just the F-35. They may well have taken down a refuelling aircraft or two over Saudi Arabia. Sorry, I am tired this morning. I believe it was actually Iraq where the Americans lost a refuelling aircraft. But there were also three warplanes that crashed over Kuwait. But we have seen extensive video of dozens of advanced drones sent into Iranian airspace or near Iranian air space by the Americans and the Israelis, dozens of videos of those drones having been taken down, one or two actually intact. And they've shown us videos not only of the wreckage, but they've shown us videos over and over again of the impact. So clearly, Iran still has air defences that do pose a significant threat to Israeli and American aircraft. And so that also is a reason why, you know, you're not just going to walk around this country after two and a half weeks of warfare, as brutal as the Americans and the Israelis have been, and see entire cities level to the ground. So I do know from the research that I've done and from my conversations with our guides that this city has been struck and it has been struck repeatedly. The Israelis and the Americans admit as much that they've bombed Tabriz. But I don't think it is one of the cities based on what I've heard, read, and seen thus far that has been most heavily impacted. That almost certainly is the capital, Tehran, where we will be heading later tonight.

One other point I want to mention, which is quite interesting, is that when we were in Ankara before we departed for the Turkish city of Van, an official of Iranian embassy in Ankara came to meet with us and just to greet us and to express his profound gratitude on behalf of the Iranian government for us coming to the country during a time of war to document the crimes of the the Epstein regime and and to speak with its people and to understand better how they view this war and how they're dealing with this difficult situation. I told him in response that, in fact, I felt an obligation to thank him as a representative of the Iranian government for the immense service that Iran is rendering to all of humanity right now by resisting American and Israeli aggression and quite possibly driving American forces from this region once and for all. At this stage, I think that is a distinct possibility. And it is due unquestionably to the ingenuity, the courage and the determination of the Iranian people as a whole and he thanked me for that sentiment, and we parted company. But before he left us, I did have an opportunity to ask him about relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey. And although I don't want to get into the details, he didn't authorise me to get into details, but he actually spoke rather positively of relations between the two countries at this time. He did recognise the reality that Turkey is a member of NATO and its relationship with the United States is very important to the country and that puts Turkey in a rather difficult situation. But he did think that on the whole, relations continue to progress positively between the two

states. In any case, I'm going to be signing off for now. We're going to leave in a few minutes from this hotel, checking out and going into the city of Tabriz behind me to see some of the facilities that have been destroyed and I'll be reporting to you later today with the details of what we've seen. In the interim to close off this report I'm going to show you a little bit of footage I shot of the city from up here just before I began to do this report this morning. For now I'm signing off on March 20th, 2026 for Reason2Resist.

**END**

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