



## **Ex-CIA Officer: What's Behind the Terrorism Accusation Against Iran**

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**Chris Hedges (CH):** A State Department cable, signed by Marco Rubio, has ordered US diplomats to pressure allies to designate Iran's Revolutionary Guard and Lebanon's Hezbollah as terrorist organisations. The March 16th cable instructs US diplomats to raise the issue with foreign counterparts by March 20th and coordinate with Israeli officials. The campaign is part of the effort to brand Iran as the world's leading sponsor of state terrorism. Because of its support for Shiite militias in Iraq, the Houthis in Yemen, and Hezbollah in Lebanon, as well as Hamas in occupied Palestine. But is Iran, by supporting proxies, doing anything the US has not engaged in for decades? And can the groups that Iran supports always be classified as terrorist organisations? Hamas, which is Sunni rather than Shia, was not formed as a terrorist group. It was formed as part of the Palestinian struggle for liberation, when the secular leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation failed to deliver on its promises to create a Palestinian state. Hezbollah also was not formed as a terrorist organisation. It was birthed as an opposition force to fight against Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon from 1982 to 2000. The Houthis as well rose up to fight a repressive, Saudi-backed regime in Yemen. While these groups, like all resistance groups, including Jewish militias that founded the State of Israel and the African National Congress, have carried out acts of terrorism, including bombings, kidnappings, assassinations, and hijackings to achieve their goals of liberation, they are not strictly speaking terrorists or nihilistic killers. They are fighting in their eyes for an end to occupation and liberation. How is this different from the US backing of proxy organisations? The CIA has long funded and armed groups that use terrorism as a tactic. Cuban anti-Castro organisations funded by the CIA, for example, placed a bomb on a Cuban commercial airliner in 1976 that killed all 73 passengers on board. The CIA helped form and fund death squads in Chile, Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, and later, during the war in Iraq, armed and trained, murderous Shiite militias. The US backed right-wing terrorist organisations in Italy during the so-called Years of Lead from the late 1960s into the early 1980s. From 1979 to 1990, Washington provided financial, logistical, and military support to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua. The Contras seeking to overthrow the leftist Sandinista government carried out an estimated 1,300 terrorist attacks. The US also provided extensive

military aid to Syrian militias, including the notorious Nour al-Din al-Zenki Islamist group and ISIS in Syria, fighting against the Syrian regime. These Islamist groups abducted and tortured journalists and foreign aid workers and carried out executions by beheadings.

Joining me to discuss the designation of Iran as the world's greatest sponsor of terrorism is John Kiriakou. John worked for the CIA from 1990 to 2004, first as an analyst and later as a counterterrorism operations officer overseas in Bahrain, Athens and Pakistan, where he was the CIA's chief of counterterrorist operations. He led a series of military raids on Al Qaeda safe houses in Pakistan, capturing dozens of suspects including the 2002 raid that captured Abu Zubaydah, then thought to be the third ranking member of Al Qaeda. He was also the first CIA officer to publicly confirm that the CIA water boarded prisoners and that such an action was torture. He also confirmed that torture was an official US government policy rather than wrongdoing by a few rogue agents. He became the sixth whistleblower, indicted under the Espionage Act by the Obama administration, and was sent to prison for two and a half years. I have this question, John, is there any intelligence agency anywhere in the world that you know of that does not contract out either with individuals or proxy groups who I think would fit the clash of classical definition of terrorism or are being a terrorist?

**John Kiriakou (JK):** Oh, I think just about every country does things that may be illegal, others might object to; certainly the United States and its major allies, the UK, France, for example, others that are close to the United States have committed acts, even recently, that I think you or I or any reasonable person would consider to be acts of terrorism, certainly.

**CH:** The designation of Iran as the world's leading sponsor of terrorism, and I tried to make that point in the introduction, the groups they sponsor are not nihilistic terrorist groups per se, where does that come from, and can you compare Iran and its support for proxies or quote unquote "terrorist groups" with other countries, including Saudi Arabia?

**JK:** Sure. First, I think we owe viewers a definition of terrorism. The generally agreed upon definition of terrorism is the act of carrying out violence in the civilian population for the purpose of creating terror for a political purpose. Terrorism supporting national liberation organisations is not an act of terrorism. It's just not, whether we disagree with that or not is a separate issue, but it's just, not an act of terrorism. I would add that there are close US allies, you named Saudi Arabia, for example, that if we were to hold the Saudis to the same definition, would be at least as guilty as the Iranians. Look at the havoc that the Saudis have wreaked, for example, in Yemen. It's incalculable and it's gone over the course of decades. Look at what the United States has done. You mentioned the Contra rebels. That's a great example, but look at others. Look at the, let's say the Greek military junta, for example, that carried out acts of terrorism against its own people. Look at Israel that has carried out assassinations all over the world. We could even point the finger at the government of India, for that matter, for carrying out assassinations and terrorist attacks in Canada, blowing up a 747, no less. So really, the complaint that I have with this designation, this terrorism designation, is that because we've manipulated the definition so many times over the years, and we've used that designation as a cudgel against countries that we don't like or whose

policies we disagree with, it's become meaningless to place a group or a country on the list of terrorists. It means nothing now in the end.

**CH:** Well, Iran does not appear to – it is a very repressive regime, I was thrown in jail there once and deported in handcuffs another time – but it doesn't appear to carry out the spate of targeted assassinations against opponents, especially outside its borders that Israel does.

**JK:** Right. I mean, Israel is, in my view, an extreme example. If you happen to be an Iranian military official or nuclear scientist, or businessman who is carrying out trade that the government of Israel disagrees with, and you happen to be in Vienna, or London or Dubai, for example, you can easily be assassinated by Israeli officers there as you could be in the centre of Tehran. And let's talk about the centre of Tehran. The Israelis use cutouts, they use recruited assets on the ground to carry out acts of terrorism in the centre of Tehran, targeting military officials.

**CH:** But explain what a cutout is.

**JK:** A cutout is a person recruited to carry out an action that gives the initiator of the action plausible deniability. So for example, if you don't want to send an Israeli intelligence officer into Tehran, you assess that the risk is too high, you recruit, let's say an Afghan refugee to do it. He might do it for \$100. Or you recruit somebody that's already in Iran, maybe an Iranian national who has the ability to come and go, perhaps you recruit that person in Dubai and send it back to Tehran to carry out this act. But there are a million ways to commit acts of terrorism and the Israelis use a lot of them.

**CH:** Well, we have long supported Mojahedin-e-Khalq, which was based in Iraq. And I think it's an anti-Iranian resistance group, but I think that was on the list of designated terrorist groups for...

**JK:** Oh, decades, decades. Chris, I'm so glad that you brought up the MEK, because I feel like I've been the only one talking about the MEK in recent months and nobody knows what in the world I'm talking about. The MEK, the Mojahedin-e-Khalq, is a terrorist group that's been around since the 1960s. It's more of a cult than anything else. It was formed by a husband and wife team in the late 1960s to carry out terrorist attacks in Iran. Now, these attacks weren't just against the Shah and the Shah's governmental officials, there were attacks against Americans, against the American ambassador, for example, in Tehran, against a highest ranking US army general posted in Iran, a lieutenant general. They were based in the mountains of –

**CH:** Am I right, John, that they were killed, right?

**JK:** They were killed. They were killed. That's right. At least the ambassador was killed. You're exactly right. The Mojahedin-e-Khalq was based in camps in the mountains of northeastern Iraq and Saddam Hussein even gave them a radio station with which to transmit their propaganda to Iran. Now it was set up as a communist group but it wasn't really communist it was as I said more of a cult. The founder Rajavi, his first name escapes me,

disappeared one day, just disappeared, was never seen again. His wife, Maryam Rajavi was rumoured to have assassinated him and had his body buried. But in any event, she took over the organisation and immediately started working to open a channel of communication with the West. It was in 2009, Chris, during the Barack Obama administration with Hillary Clinton as the Secretary of State, that the US government decided to lift that terrorism designation from the MEK. And immediately, the MEK was feted in Washington, in New York, in London. Hillary Clinton used her influence to get the Brits to lift the terrorist designation, the French and others, and then the MEK leadership was very smart in that it recognised the need to hire high-powered lobbyists in Washington. And so they hired the likes of Rudy Giuliani and Howard Dean, a Republican and a Democrat. They spent millions and millions of dollars on Capitol Hill trying to win friends and influence people and they were successful. And so now we have this terrorist, this murderer, this cult leader, Maryam Rajavi, arriving in Washington and being treated as a conquering hero. Why? Because she hates the Ayatollahs. And our government hates the Ayatollahs. Now, this led to a bigger problem in my view. We know that the Israelis have provided an inordinate amount of so-called intelligence to the US government since the beginning of this conflict with Iran. I use air quotes around intelligence because in my view, a great deal of it is just made up out of thin air. For example, this ridiculous assertion that there are Iranian terrorist sleeper cells in cities all across the United States. I can't tell you how many emails I've received from people in such disparate locations as Cleveland, Ohio, and Honolulu, Hawaii, and Oklahoma City, and Denver, and Miami, asking, is it true that there are Iranian terrorist cells embedded in my city? No, it's not true. That was a lie that the Israelis made up to convince the American people that we needed to overthrow this government in Tehran, number one. Number two, Maryam Rajavi takes Israeli money. The Israelis brag about it in their media. Maryam Rajavi tells the Israeli government that the people of Iran are on the brink of an uprising, all the government needs is a little shove, it's a house of cards, it's going to topple when the first missile flies and there will be democracy and everybody will live happily ever after. And anybody with any brain, anybody who has ever followed developments in Iran, would have been able to say that that was preposterous, that no such thing would happen. A third point; I was intimately involved in the planning for the 2003 Iraq War, something of which I'm not at all proud. I was the executive assistant to the CIA's deputy director for operations. One of the things that I learned then, I mean, I guess I already knew it, but I learned it definitively, was that the United States, no matter its intent, will never be seen as a liberator. It will be seen as an invader and an occupier. And so for the average Iranian, it is better for them to live with the system that they have now than to risk the chaos that invariably comes from an American Israeli. I can only imagine what the average Iranian thinks about a joint invasion by the United States and Israel.

**CH:** The Israeli objective appears in Iran different from the American objective, I mean, who knows what the objective is, I'm not sure Trump knows, but they would like to see the regime changed. I think Trump foolishly thought that decapitating the top of the Iranian regime would give him a Venezuela type situation. The Israeli goal is really to create a failed state. They destroyed Iraq, where of course we were urged by the Israelis to start the Iraq war. Iraq is fractured into antagonistic factions. Syria is a failed state. They are carrying out a

Gaza-like obliteration of southern Lebanon as I speak. And it seems clear and Netanyahu has been lobbying for the war with Iran for almost four decades that what they would do is like to splinter, destroy, fragment. And only 60% percent of Iranians are Persians, the people don't know that it is a very diverse ethnically religiously diverse country. But as somebody who's dealt with the study terrorism for a long time, it's those failed states that really spawn terrorist groups, isn't it?

**JK:** It really is. You're exactly right about the Israelis. The Israelis believe that they benefit from surrounding countries being mired in chaos. For example, in Syria, the Israelis benefited from the never-ending war there. I always maintained that the devil you know is better than the devil you don't, and that Bashar al-Assad was no threat to Israel. But then you put the former co-founder of ISIS in charge, a man who was a long-time member of Al Qaeda in charge. He immediately begins pogrom against minority communities, whether they're Druze or Christian or what have you. And that's supposed to be better for whom? In Iraq, the same thing. The Israelis were threatened by a central government led by Saddam Hussein. They benefited from chaos. Their view was if Iraqis are busy killing each other, they're not going to be a threat to Israel. They won't threaten to kill Israelis. We saw the same thing happen in Libya. Now we're seeing the same thing happen in Iran. I think that you're exactly right that the Israelis really want, at the end of this, a failed state. They want to see decades where Iranian is pitted against Iranian, and they just simply take years and years to kill each other.

**CH:** I want to raise something that you know and I know, but most people who follow the Middle East don't know, and that is that at certain pivotal moments, Iran was our ally. Iran has a very antagonistic relationship with the Taliban. And when the Sunni militias were ascended, Iran worked with the United States to support Shia groups including sending armed Iranians into Iraq with our blessing.

**JK:** Yeah, that's exactly right. And we're not talking about the period of the Shah of Iran. We're talking about post-Shah Iran. This is something that I've always felt very strongly about. We've missed issue after issue after issues on which we could have cooperated with the Iranians. We could have cooperated with the Iranians on counterterrorism, on counter proliferation, even counter narcotics. I've told the story, Chris, many times. When I was the senior investigator in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I told the chairman, Senator John Kerry, that I wanted to go to Afghanistan to do a study on the cultivation of heroin poppy. And so I flew out to Bagram Air Base. They were waiting for me. They weren't happy about it. But I said that I needed to fly to Kandahar and then to Helmand province, the capital of Lashkar Gah in order to do this study. I wanted to go into the poppy fields, I wanted to interview farmers. They hated the idea. It's the only time in my career that I ever pulled rank on someone. And I said, look, with all due respect, because I'm a senior congressional staff member, I have Brigadier General status and I am ordering you to fly me to Kandahar and Lashkar Gah. And we got in the helicopter and we went. Well, when we get to Lashkar Gah, we get into a couple of Jeeps and with a translator, a security detail, we go into the poppy fields and we stumble on a poppy farmer. And I asked him what in retrospect was a very naive question, I said, why do you grow poppy when instead you could grow things with two

growing seasons, like onions, or tomatoes, or pomegranates? He was very frustrated with me, and he said angrily, the Americans told me in 2001 that if I told them where the Arabs were, I could grow all the poppy I wanted. I said, what Americans told you you could grow poppy? And as soon as those words came out of my mouth, my military handler said, meetings over, we're under threat – which we weren't – he pulled me back to the Jeep, and we went back to base. And then I had to fly back to the air base at Bagram. In any event, I fly back to Washington. I write a very strongly worded report and I send it to a friend of mine at the drug enforcement agency. And he calls me back a few days later and he said, buddy, you know, you're never going to get this published, right? And I said, why not? And he said, Afghanistan produces 93% of the world's heroin. Almost all of that heroin goes to Iran and Russia, and we want them to be addicted to heroin. It weakens their societies. And of course, Senator Kerry would never allow it to be published and I had to kill it. Well, here we are all these years later and we cannot get a handle on our fentanyl problem. The fentanyl that we deal with is made in China. And why won't the Chinese work with us to stop it? Because they want us to be addicted to fentanyl. It weakens our society. So here we're in this position where we try to wreck Iranian society for decades, rather than to go to the trouble of cooperating, rather than going to the trouble of trying to identify common ground where we could work with them and maybe begin to improve relations, which have been so poor since 1979, we elected instead to try to get their people addicted to heroin, maybe have some of them die, work with the Israelis to assassinate their scientists and their military leaders and just let them devolve into a chaos that we hoped would last for many years.

**CH:** The other thing about targeted assassinations I know because I've intimately followed Israel's assassinations of Hamas leaders, some of whom I knew of course, is that what it does is inevitably strengthen or see the solidification of the hardliners, the most fanatic, because the message is, why negotiate, why speak, why try to make deals, they'll just kill you. And you go from, I knew Dr. Abdel Aziz Rantisi, one of the co-founders of Hamas, and then after he was assassinated in 2004, along with Sheikh Yassin, the other co-founder, I knew his successor, Nizar Rayan, you end up with a Yahya Sinwar. And this is just true, inevitably, that all of these targeted assassination campaigns, and maybe that's what they want, it creates people who are much more rigid.

**JK:** I think that's exactly right because then those people are easier to attack politically and easier to isolate. I think that's exactly what the plan was. And another part of the plan, and this is something that has sort of moved into the arena of public discourse is the accusation that everybody who doesn't tell the line is antisemitic. I mean, you're anti-Semitic, I'm anti-Semitic, Tucker Carlson's anti-Semitic, everybody who doesn't agree with the Likud line or the farther to the right line in the Likud coalition government is an anti-Semite. I have a good friend who was an IDF special forces officer and is now an American citizen and married to an American, and he told me that he was actually taught in school to automatically accuse anybody who criticised Israel in any way of anti-Semitism, that it served to silence dissent. And so we see that now to the point where it's beginning to backfire and people just aren't buying it anymore.

**CH:** Do you have any idea or had you heard in your years in the CIA, what is the quality of Iranian intelligence? Is it considered good or weak, or do you have any idea?

**JK:** Yeah, it's considered to be one of the less effective services. Part of the problem is that it's tough for them to find decent training. They'll get a little bit of training from the Russians. They might get a bit of equipment from the Chinese, but that's about it. The rest of it is sort of done in house and they're just not very good at it.

**CH:** In terms of using this stick of Iranians, and of course that has been one of the reasons for the sanctions, using this stick of Iran being the world's, I think they call it the world greatest sponsor of terrorism, are there other factors that essentially mitigate that profile? I don't know if you can do comparisons, but are there ways by which we can put Iran in some kind of perspective, given other nations that support groups that we consider terrorist groups?

**JK:** Sure. Let's look at Pakistan. One of the most memorable tours that I ever had in the CIA was in Pakistan. I loved every minute that I was in Pakistan, and I enjoyed working with the Pakistani intelligence service and the Pakistani military. That is not to say that they don't actively support a myriad of terrorist groups. They do. I've always said that it's as though there are two parallel Pakistani intelligence services, ISI, there is the half that I worked with, every one of which, every one of whom was trained at Sandhurst, and then you go to the ISI headquarters and you see some of these guys with very long beards, they're the ones who formed these groups like the Jaish-e-Mohammed or the Kashmiri liberation groups, they're the ones that financed the attacks on the Jewish centre in Mumbai and the Western hotels in Mumbai, bona fide terrorists. But the Pakistanis are our friends when it comes to Al Qaeda and working against the Taliban. Never mind that they created the Taliban, now they're working against the Taliban.

**CH:** That's an important point, John, because the Saudis and the Americans funnelled, I don't know, billions through the ISI, and the ISI consciously funded the most radical elements of the Taliban and refused to support more moderate or democratic resistance movements.

**JK:** That's exactly right. And not only funnelled billions of dollars, gave them state of the art weapons to use against the Soviet military. It turned the tide of the war, but then they kept the weapons to eventually use against us. So yeah, there's a lot of very poor planning. We could say the same thing about the Indians, in that the Indians support their own Kashmiri separatist groups, extremist groups. And it's the Indians that blew up the 747 in Canada. It's the Indians that carry out hits or attempted hits against Sikh activists or Indian leftists or anti-Hindu nationalists in places like Canada or the UK. There's plenty of blame to go around and not to even begin to discuss what the CIA does on a daily basis.

**CH:** Well, I remember interviewing you before and you talked about after the attacks of 9/11, the gloves were off. I mean, everything the Church Commission had tried to prevent, which were assassinations and torture and everything else, it just evaporated.

**JK:** It really did. We used to always hear about this golden age of the CIA as a law-abiding pillar of our democracy that began in 1975 with the advent of the Church and Pike committees. That just simply wasn't true. Yes, they did clear out a lot of the old timers, the assassins, the coup plotters, the MKUltra, Dr. Mengele's, sure, they were fired in 1975 and 1976, but then Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980, and everything changed because he was obsessed with communism and obsessed with Central America, and the next thing you know, the CIA is overseeing a secret war in Central America and cocaine is somehow magically finding its way into American society. So was there really a golden age? If there was, it only lasted for a minute.

**CH:** But after 9/11, didn't the raid of assassinations by US intelligence officials skyrocket or am I wrong?

**JK:** Oh, no, you're absolutely right, and skyrocketed. I wish, I wish there was even a stronger word. Executive Order 12333, which was signed by President Ford in 1975, as one of its provisions, banned assassinations by the CIA. The CIA was out just killing everybody it didn't like until 1975. President Ford put an end to that. 12333 was amended by Ronald Reagan to allow targeted killings of any person posing a clear and present danger to the United States, an American citizen or an American installation. 12333 was again amended just in the days after 9/11 to allow the CIA to assassinate opponents at its discretion. And so, skyrocket it did, to the point where the agency set up teams, formal offices, with an administrative structure even, a career panel, a promotion panel, where your job was to fly around the world and kill people. And then you would get a fitness report that, yes, he killed these people and he missed this one and he couldn't find that one, so we'll pass him over for promotion and this time we'll promote him next time; if he kills the next five people. I mean, this is the craziness that we adopted at the CIA post-9/11.

**CH:** Just to close on the war with Iran, I'm curious what your thoughts are, but given the fact that Israel and the United States have assassinated, including of course the Supreme Leader, these major figures, and before that, in the first Trump administration, they assassinated Soleimani, the general, do you see the Iranians essentially attempting to pay us back?

**JK:** I do. I do, it's something that I think we should be thinking of. You know, Chris, one of the very first things that I learned in my CIA operational training was how to handle something called a walk-in. A walk-in is someone who literally walks in off the street into an American embassy and says I have information that I want to pass to the CIA. And so I was frequently the walk-in officer because I have multiple foreign languages. I would put on a disguise. I would go to the walk-in room, which was usually outside the hard line, not always, 95 times out of 100, and I'm specific about this 95 because studies have been done internally, 95 times out of 100 these were just crazy people. The CIA has a chip in their head, they have a message, the head of Al Qaeda is Queen Elizabeth, that kind of thing. We used to get that all the time.

**CH:** I just want to interrupt because those people always come to journalists and want you to write up exactly that, just so you know you're not the only one plagued by those people.

**JK:** It was very frustrating and it was a great waste of my day. But you have to take every one of them seriously just in case that one is the real McCoy. Now, of the other five some are what we called intelligence brokers where they actually do have a little nugget of intelligence and they'll give it to you and they want \$500, but then they're going to go to the British embassy and sell it to them and the French embassy and the Chinese and the Russians and they sell it all of them. And that's a month's salary. They did pretty well for themselves for that week. Some of the real McCoy, usually it's about one out of a hundred, maybe less than one out of a 100, it's the real deal. A nuclear scientist, an intelligence officer, a military, a senior military officer. But then the other one out of 100 is called an intelligence probe. This is somebody sent by the Russians, the Chinese, the North Koreans, the Iranians, Hezbollah, Al Qaeda, they're coming in to pretend that they want to be a walk-in, but really they're looking to see where the cameras are, how much of the glass is bulletproof or bomb proof, how heavy the door is, is the door armoured, how far inside the embassy can they get, how many people that they encounter have side arms, and they amass this intelligence in their databases, just in case they need to attack the United States. It helps them to identify the weak link in the chain. And so, for example, in Pakistan, a walk-in could never get anywhere near the actual embassy itself. There's a little hut out in the parking lot, and we're gonna meet with that person out in the parking lot. But there were some embassies that I worked in where we welcomed them right inside the building. In one case, we met with walk-ins inside the MSG, the Marine Security Guard uniform room with the guns in their racks on the wall, which was lunacy to me. But then they know that, well, if the United States attacks, let's say Iran in this example, they know that the American embassy in XYZ country is a weak link, and then that's the embassy they're going to hit.

**CH:** Do you think that, I mean, for every reaction, there's a reaction. I am certain that the genocide in Gaza will eventually spawn what we will call terrorism. These Palestinian militants don't have an air force, they don't have the ability to carry out what we would consider state terrorism. I'm just wondering if you see that coming I do vis-à-vis Iran?

**JK:** If I were Iranian, if I were an Iranian leader or an Iranian intelligence officer, I would be plotting my revenge starting right now. Yes. And I said a moment ago, there are no Iranian sleeper cells in the United States. They don't need to have sleeper cells. They need to have a cell in a country or a city where the United States has diplomatic interests, let's say. There's a huge Iranian population in Dubai. Is there an Iranian cell in Dubai? Probably, I would guess that there would be. And I would want to hit an American interest in Dubai or in Islamabad or in Manila or someplace where it's less likely to be protected.

**CH:** Well, I think throughout the region, many Shia, certainly in Iraq – Iraq is about 60% Shia, Bahrain is primarily Shia – they see this as a war on Shiism. And we have already seen a series of attacks by Shia militias in Iraq on American interests. So I think it's important to understand that you can recruit beyond Iranian citizenship.

**JK:** That's exactly right. Yeah. Many Lebanese are Shia. Most Bahrainis, as you said, are Shia. There's a large minority Shia population in Kuwait. There's a Shia population in the

Emirates, most of them are expatriates. There's large Shia population in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia.

**CH:** Around the oil facility.

**JK:** Around the oil fields. That's right. There are Shia in Afghanistan, the Hazaras. There are Shia in Pakistan. So sure, I could see it.

**CH:** It's what they call blowback.

**JK:** It's exactly what they call it.

**CH:** Great. Thanks, John. And I want to thank Sophia, Thomas, and Max who produce the show. You can find me at [chrishedges.substack.com](http://chrishedges.substack.com).

**END**

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