



The Peace President – Addicted to Waging Endless Wars

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Glenn Greenwald: Next question from Sam: "Hi Glenn, yet again, we have an apparent end to the ceasefire and Trump indicates he will continue with attacks on Iran seemingly indefinitely. Yet we keep hearing from numerous well informed analysts that continuing hostilities against Iran is impossible and will lead to global economic collapse and that there is no military solution. The collapse seems to keep being postponed just as the end of hostilities does. What do you think are the chances that global economic collapse is not really in the cards and the continual low level war will remain?" All right, so Trump, J.D. Vance, negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding for a ceasefire with Iran, I think about a month ago now, that basically was designed to allow a ceasefire for the two sides to negotiate a permanent agreement about all issues, including what is called Iran's nuclear program, but also a whole variety of other issues. And Iran agreed to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which it had closed in response to the Israeli US attack on it. It was perfectly open before. And the US agreed to allow passage through the Strait of Hormuz and the sale of Iranian oil, which they were blocking as part of an embargo that they imposed. And also to allow Iranian assets to flow to it once the deal is made, but also a lifting of sanctions. A few other parts of it as well – the idea was, let's stop the war, let's try and work to an agreement.

Trump was viciously attacked. So was J.D. Vance for agreeing to a weak agreement, for giving Iran everything without getting anything in return, for having lost the war. He was particularly attacked in Israel. And he was attacked by Democrats too, not just for having started the war but for also ending it too favorably to Iran. Democrats were basically goading him into restarting it, saying that he gave too much away that the mullahs were strengthened. And so there were a lot of forces trying to goad Trump into restarting this war. About two weeks ago, there were some bombings that the United States carried out supposedly in retaliation for something Iran did. But it was like two days, three days of bombing and then they stopped.

And now, what basically happened was, the idea of this agreement was that Iran would be able to control the Strait of Hormuz, but would allow safe passage through it. But Trump and the US set up this kind of alternate route through a passage in Oman, and Iran considered that

part of a violation of the deal and shot some warning shots at boats. Trump took that as an opportunity to say that the Iranians had violated the deal, they're crazy, they're insane, they're stupid, insane people. He doesn't think this deal is going to last. He's now threatening again to destroy them in all the ways that he had been threatening before, and the US carried out some pretty intense bombing against Iran the last two days, including a railway, some ports, things like that. The Iranians did what they always do and are going to do if they're attacked, which is they started attacking their neighbors that are the Gulf state tyrannies that host US bases – including Bahrain and Kuwait and Jordan, they attacked the Emiratis and Qatar. Saudi Arabia, this time they didn't so far. But the issue is if the United States attacks Iran's energy infrastructure, Iran as they've already proven, they took out 20% of Qatar's natural gas infrastructure, can go in and attack the energy infrastructure in the Gulf. Which will absolutely be cataclysmic, first to the oil market and then to the global economy.

Remember, when Trump was asked, Trump is a liar, he lies constantly, like most politicians, and he just lies as brazenly as anyone I've ever seen, but he also has this inability sometimes to suppress the truth, even when he should, and so he has these moments of great candor, where he just says what he really believes. And what he basically said when he was confronted by the media with the criticism, not that he started the war, but that he gave too much away in the deal to end it, Trump explained that while oil prices did increase significantly and Americans felt that at the gas pump and other countries started having real economic reverberations around the world, because the Strait of Hormuz is basically closed to the world's oil trade – in the past, people had always assumed that if that happened for any amount of time, it's one of the reasons why we haven't gone to war with Iran, despite all this Israeli pressure, that the oil prices would just explode, 200, 300 dollars a barrel, \$10 a gallon at the gas pump. You cannot close the Strait of Hormuz. And the Strait of Hormuz was closed for a good two months, maybe even a little longer, and oil prices definitely increased – it was something like \$60 a barrel at the start of the war, went up to 115, 120 at one point, but they really didn't explode to this hardcore crisis mode, like, to really destabilize the world. It caused a lot of economic suffering for sure. It caused Trump political damage for sure. But not cataclysmic.

And the reason for that was because the world keeps huge amounts of strategic reserves of oil, precisely so that if there's an oil cutoff, you don't just suddenly end up without energy. So you have the strategic reserves of oil that you can tap into when the market's not providing enough oil. And other countries have that as well. And that's why there wasn't this cataclysmic explosion of oil prices, because the oil shortages caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz were mitigated by the fact that these countries were just using their strategic reserves. But when you use the strategic reserves, you drain them, obviously. It's like: I have this piggy bank for a rainy day, and then if it rains for three weeks and I keep going to my piggy bank, at some point there's not going to be much money in there. I'm going to lose the security I have that it gives me and have to start taking it from other places.

And Trump said, and this is true, that the strategic reserves around the world in the United States are being seriously depleted. And that if they get to the point where they're depleted

enough, and he basically said that was going to happen in about two weeks, there's basically no more oil. The world doesn't have oil. The world needs oil. It depends on oil. That's the primary energy source. And if countries don't have oil, that's when you really see instability, upheaval, wars, collapse of the global economy. Trump is someone who is not particularly concerned about other people, but he is very shrewd about his own political survival. That's why he's still around despite everything that was done to try and destroy him and everything that would have destroyed a lot of other politicians. He has a very strong sense of self-preservation. And I believe that's why he felt compelled to end the war.

Now, J.D. Vance and others have since hinted – J.D. Vance, was he saying this because he really believed it? Was he saying it to guard against claims that they were weak? He basically said, look, this strategic reserve, this ceasefire was done to give us enough time to refill our strategic reserves, to rearm, to be in a position where we could go to war with them again if we want. The problem is that we're nowhere near refilling the strategic reserves. They've increased a little bit, but it's still very low. So if we face another major closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the scenario that Trump painted is going to come true. And a lot of people are going to pay the price for that. And certainly Trump is going to be one of the people who pays the biggest price. And we're what, four months away from an election? Not even? And so I do think Trump is very afraid of restarting the war in a way that really restarts it. But I also think he feels like if Iran is doing something that is tempting or kind of embarrassing him on the world stage, he can't do nothing. The problem is this bombing is a lot more serious than the one from two weeks ago. It's already more serious, not just in terms of the American attacks, it seems like another country, maybe Israel, maybe the United Arab Emirates is also bombing Iran because the United States denies several of the bombings were from them. And the Iranians are going to react and they're already reacting.

Now, all these Gulf states, this is one of the most important things in terms of your perception of the war. If you're an American inside the United States, all these Gulf states are tyrannies, they're dictatorships. Bahrain, the Emiratis, the Saudis, Kuwait, Jordan, and they have basically made it criminal for anyone to report on the damage done inside the country from Iranian attacks. So it's very difficult to access information about the damage that has been done. Occasionally things come out. The Wall Street Journal was reporting on how much damage was done to the CIA base and the military base in Saudi Arabia at the start of the war. We know about the destruction of 20 % of Qatari energy. But oftentimes there are huge bombs and massive destruction that goes off in these countries and it takes a long time to find out and it creates this false impression that we're bombing Iran so easily and so devastatingly and they're doing nothing in return. It's not true. Iran's capabilities are still very high. They've demonstrated that over and over and over. And so the problem with playing games with wars, and I say the same thing about Russia and Ukraine, is that you can, when you get involved in them, think, oh, I'm only going to get involved in it up to this point, but if this happens, I'm going to stop or I'm going to pull back. The problem is you don't get to decide that alone. Other participants in the war or other belligerents also can decide, no, we're not pulling back. And then you're sucked in and you're forced into war. This is unintended escalation. It happens all the time. It's extremely dangerous.

And I guess the last thing I'll say is: One of the things that I heard a lot of Trump supporters saying about the bombing of the Houthis in Yemen that Trump restarted, that Biden was doing, that he criticized Biden for when he was a candidate, but then restarted almost instantly when he got into office, but then he stopped it after a month because he wasn't seeing any progress and he was afraid of having this drag on. It's costing the US a lot of money. We were draining a lot of our weapons that are already depleted because we're giving them to Ukraine, we're giving them to Israel. But it was only a month.

And then we bombed on Operation Midnight Hammer in June of 2025, the three Iranian nuclear facilities with B-52s. OK, that was only one night. And then, we invaded Venezuela. But OK, there was only one day. We took out Maduro, shot a bunch of people, killed some civilians, but we were only there one day. So the argument was, oh, look, this isn't endless war. This is not like the wars of the past. Trump just believes in going in quickly and getting out. Except, this war began on February 28th. It's now in its fifth month. Doesn't really look to me like it's about to end. Yeah, we didn't fight continuously for five months, but we're still at war with Iran. We're still bombing them. We still have huge amounts of military assets deployed off their shore. They're bombing. And if you look at the Trump administration in its second term, the current term, the first 18 months, it's basically endless war. We're constantly at war with someone, we're constantly bombing someone, we're constantly invading somebody. Remember, we're still threatening to do it to Cuba, that's on the list at some point.

"Endless war" is kind of a politicized phrase. It's not like a term of art, more like a political concept for what people are sick of, what politicians like Donald Trump vow to stop. But whatever it means, it basically means that we are a country that's just always at war in one way or another. We're still helping the Ukrainians. We're still feeding Israel arms and money. We have a war with Iran. It's basically consumed this whole year. We bombed the Houthis in Yemen. We bombed other countries throughout the Muslim world. We bombed boats in Venezuela. This is all war. I mean, from an American standard maybe it's not considered a war because for us to be at war we have to do something like Vietnam or Iraq or Afghanistan or Libya. But for everyone else on the planet, when you're bombing other countries, when you are invading them with your military, when you have massive military assets deployed off the coast and just bomb them whenever you feel like it – these are wars. And this is endless war. Endless war is not just one war that gets started and goes on forever. I mean, the Iraq war ended, but people still call that an endless war, the war in Afghanistan ended, the war in Vietnam ended. Endless war is the idea that the United States always has to find a reason to transfer huge amounts of money to Raytheon and General Dynamics and to deploy its military around the world, to kill people, bomb people, invade. And if the Trump administration in the second term is anything, it is an administration continuing this posture of endless war.

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