

# TRANSCRIPT

A VICTORY COALITION BRIEFING

## SitRep on the Iran War: How – *and Where* – Is it Going?

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Media File: Webinar\_Sitrep\_IranWar.mp4

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT:

[00:00:00] **Frank Gaffney:** Welcome to this edition of our Victory Coalition Briefing series. We're going to provide a situation report on the war in Iran—the nature of the war, the combatants in that war. Their numbers keep changing, of course, but it began with the United States and Israel taking defensive action—preventive action—against the Iranian regime, and doing so in ways that have been devastating to that regime, including its senior leadership and much of its apparatus for maintaining control and projecting power.

We're going to talk about the implications of all of that, as well as the extent to which the war is proceeding according to plan—what that plan is, what the end state for the plan must be, and whether it is in fact the agreed end game for the two principal combatants, the United States and Israel—and what the others who are now being embroiled in it seek to do for themselves and for the coalition of which they've become a part.

We're going to talk about all of that with a very distinguished panel. It will include some of our regulars and, I think, one new contributor, and we're very pleased to have him with us. We will introduce him in due course.

Let me simply say at the outset: this has been a little bit delayed due to preoccupation on my part with another very much related effort, which is to try to prevent the further metastasizing of what I believe is the animating force behind the war in Iran—namely Sharia, the totalitarian, toxic, and I would argue demonic doctrine, political-military-legal system, ideology—however you wish to describe it. “Death cult” suits me just fine.

That has made Iran the threat that it is, and that is now beginning to inseminate much of the United States with those who adhere to it and with their very dangerous agenda. So

I've been in Texas for the past month working to try to get a very significant proposition on the Republican primary ballot there approved—and approved overwhelmingly.

I'm very pleased to say the team of which I've been a part has succeeded. On Tuesday of last week—one week ago—we saw 1.9 million Texans vote, by a margin of 95 to 5, to approve the proposition: Texas should prohibit Sharia law. It is an important, we hope, tipping point for a course correction here inside the United States against this threat, as well as a further impetus behind the successful conclusion of a campaign against arguably the most dangerous Sharia-supremacist regime on the planet: the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We're going to hear first from one of our most important colleagues in this fight. His name is Rabbi Pesach Wolicki. He is based in Israel, having made aliyah there from the United States three decades ago. He has emerged as one of the most thoughtful, most clear-eyed, and most impactful members of the information-warfare team helping support Western civilization—not just Israel, not just the United States, not just other parts of the free world, but Western civilization, or Judeo-Christian civilization—from his vantage point in Israel, where he is the executive director of Israel365 Action.

It now has a YouTube channel—Israel365 Videos. I commend them to you heartily. He is also a columnist for *The Jerusalem Post* and the co-host of the *Shoulder to Shoulder* podcast. We're always pleased to have him with us, and it seems appropriate, given your forward-deployed position, Rabbi, that you are our leadoff batter.

Thank you so much for joining us for this briefing. The floor is now yours.

[00:05:13] **Rabbi Pesach Wolicki:** Thank you, Frank. The title of this is a situation report, and I think that means we need to look downrange and see: where were we, where are we, and where is this going?

One of the big questions from the beginning was: what is actually the objective? And it's very nice that up until this point—from last Saturday, or two Saturdays ago, until now—the United States and Israel have been lockstep. They've been brothers in arms. It's like a couple lovebirds in the early period of their dating relationship—everyone's happy at the cooperation because they share the same objectives to this point.

But let's be very clear-eyed: that's not necessarily the case. The United States and Israel do not necessarily have the same endgame objectives. And at some point we could—and I suspect that we will—some say we already have, but I don't believe so—we could see a divergence of objectives.

We could easily have a situation where the Americans say, "Mission accomplished, we're done," and the Israelis are like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. What are you talking about? We're not done yet."

I'll give you the most recent and glaring example: the whole question of regime change. For a while—until just a few days ago, until last week really—throughout the negotiations leading up to this, and then the first opening days of the war, the Americans were staying on message that the goal was not regime change, were they?

Marco Rubio said it very bluntly when he was at Congress last week. He said the goal is to remove the ballistic missile threat—which would have served as a shield for the nuclear threat—and to remove those threats and deal with the threats. And then he said, “Let’s be clear: if the Iranian people take this opportunity and bring down the regime, the United States will welcome that. We will welcome a regime that is not run by Shiite clerics, by extremists. But that’s not our goal.”

But then President Trump, I believe the next day, was sitting with Chancellor Merz, and he said something for the first time that he’s now repeated multiple times since. This is now his thing he keeps saying.

He was asked about regime change and he talked glowingly about what he calls the “Venezuela model.” He even drilled down and explained what he meant. He said that in Venezuela, we removed Maduro—we removed the top guy—but we kept the rest of the structure intact. That prevented chaos. It meant things kept running, and it’s a wonderful partnership. And then he went on praising Delcy Rodríguez for being such a wonderful partner—everyone respects her—blah, blah, blah.

Now obviously, the problem with that is obvious. There was a democratic election in Venezuela, won by María Corina Machado overwhelmingly. She was then hunted down by Maduro, and Delcy Rodríguez is simply Maduro’s number two. Some people who know how it works actually say she was really the number one, kind of running things there. The problem is that all the same mobsters and criminals who were running that regime are still running that regime.

So Trump is touting this as a success. Again, there are pros and cons. I wrote about this—I have a column in *The Jerusalem Post* that ran online yesterday, but it’s going to be in the print paper tomorrow. I lay this out. I say: what exactly does that mean as a success?

If the Americans have in mind that somewhere in the future, as things stabilize more, they will move toward a U.S.-supervised democratic election in Venezuela, and that this is an interim situation—fine. Then maybe this is a good thing. You avoid the chaos.

Trump contrasted the Venezuela model to the Iraq model. He specifically said that—and he’s said it multiple times. He said it with Merz and he said it again yesterday in his press conference, which confused many people, which I’ll get to in a moment. He said, in Iraq, they fired everybody, it turned into chaos, and then you got ISIS.

So he's holding up this contrast—Venezuela versus Iraq—and being very clear that he wants to see the Venezuela model. He said, "We've got a good system. We've got a good model. We're gonna go with this."

What does that mean in Iran? It means what he's looking for—and I'm not sure he's going to find it—is some sort of decapitation of the top leadership, where the bureaucracy that keeps things intact and running remains intact. He finds reasonable people in there he can work with. The Americans come in and kind of hold a gun to people's heads and make them behave, and then move forward.

The problem is the comparison of Iran to Venezuela is not really that good. First of all, the Venezuelan junta—the mobsters, the criminals in the Maduro regime—are basically that: Marxist-communist mobsters. They're not filled with religious Shiite fervor.

In the Iranian regime and the IRGC, of course you have that. Especially as you move down in the ranks, they're even more ideological. Also, it's not a small regime. The Iranian regime spans the globe. It has many layers. It has hundreds of thousands of people who are part of the apparatus. It's not so simple to go in and say we're going to do decapitation and it's going to work.

On the other hand, there's something to be said for avoiding chaos. You have the Kurds in the northwest making rumblings, and it looked like the U.S. and the Israelis were helping them a bit, but they're interested in carving out some autonomy. You have MEK, which really is a terrorist group, also running around—licking their chops at taking a bite out of the carcass of the regime. So there are a lot of ways this could go sideways.

In the midst of all of this, just yesterday at the United Nations, Israeli Ambassador Danny Danon held an incredible event—a very important event. It was great messaging. He tied it to International Women's Day and brought forward a number of women who either were directly persecuted by the regime or represent the persecution of women in the regime, to highlight that.

But in his opening remarks, he made a very clear statement—the kind of statement that would have to get approval from on high. This wasn't just Ambassador Danon issuing his opinion. He said it will be unacceptable to Israel if there is a regime change that is just removing the top people and leaving the rest intact. That will be unacceptable to Israel.

So I think he was putting a marker in the ground after a few days of Trump touting the Venezuela option, saying that's not what the Israelis want.

So we're already seeing, if we look downrange, where the divergence of the Israeli position and the American position could be.

To complicate matters, we have Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Again, they're being attacked by Iran, so officially they're on our side. But they have their own agenda, and it's my contention that they do not want the regime to fall completely. It would be the worst thing in the world for them.

The last thing the Saudis and the Qataris—and even our good friends, the Emiratis—want is a free, open democracy with a thriving Christian church and a massive oil-producing nation sitting right there: Iran.

If Iran becomes the Iran we're hoping it becomes, strategically those countries become less important—because their importance partially stems from the fact that the biggest bully on the block, the largest population, a massive oil-producing country, is a fanatical Iranian regime. If it becomes a pro-Western state, they become less important.

But more importantly, they become threatened by the fact that there's a democracy with open Christianity on their doorstep. They don't want that in the region.

I believe what they want is a crippled and weak regime that remains intact. I think they prefer that to the regime falling for a number of reasons.

And that combined with Trump wanting the Venezuela option, we could see the screws tightening on ending this thing prematurely—because Trump thinks he has someone reasonable in the regime to work with. That would simultaneously throw the Iranian people under the bus, create a gap between them and Israel, and then the Israelis would end up diplomatically isolated because the Gulf states—the Arab states—would be working with Trump saying, "Let's negotiate. Let's end this," without really bringing down the regime.

That said, I don't think Trump's going to find what he's looking for. And at the end of the press conference yesterday—where Trump sounded like he was saying the war is almost over—at the very end he quoted the families of the fallen soldiers at Dover who said to him, "Finish the job." And he said, "I'm gonna leave you with that."

So that sounds like he's willing to push forward. Very ambiguous press conference yesterday. But that's my situation report. I'll stop here because I've already spoken enough.

Thank you, Frank, for doing this. It's so important.

[00:14:29] **Frank Gaffney:** Rabbi, thank you so much—an excellent perspective, laying out some of the challenges that this operation is facing. We're going to explore some others, I'm sure, in the course of this, but I suspect we will keep coming back to this one, as it may be central to the question of whether we find, at the end of the day, decisive victory—or another half measure that is wanting in every respect.

We're going to hear next from another of our faithful contributors to these programs, a man whose expertise in the Middle East is, I think, at the very pinnacle of that on offer inside the United States at the moment. His name is Dr. David Wurmser.

He has been, among other things, an adviser to senior people in the State Department, the National Security Council, and the Office of the Vice President. He has served as well as a naval intelligence officer and rose through the ranks to that of lieutenant commander.

These days he is the director of the Middle East program at the Center for Security Policy. And he is a very, very important contributor—not only to these programs—but also, I'm proud to say, to our television program *Securing America* on the Real America's Voice network.

Dr. Wurmser, we're delighted to have you with us. I believe you are going to pick up on some of the points that have just been made by Rabbi Wolicki.

[00:16:01] **Dr. David Wurmser:** I'll leave some stuff for Marty to deal with—some of the granularity as well as strategic understanding of where Iran is beyond this and so forth. But let me pick up on what Rabbi Wolicki said.

We have to understand the nature—when we talk about unconditional surrender, you could imagine something like Japan, where you had an orderly government still making an orderly governmental decision to raise their hands and say, as a nation, we surrender. You are in charge. And then we dictate the terms, et cetera—as we saw on the USS *Missouri* in August 1945.

You could also see what you saw in Eastern Europe—specifically the Czechoslovak world—where there's just a chaotic removal of the leader that took some people inside the security services to do too, but it was more or less a popular revolt.

Or you can see what you see in Venezuela. So this whole thing of unconditional surrender is very vague. We really have to look at: what is Iran? What is the Iranian leadership? And what's even possible?

First of all, you have to understand this is Shiite leadership. All Shia, up until the 20th century, were essentially communities out of power. I'll leave Iran aside for one moment. They were out of power and the bulk of Shiite Islam had developed into a concept of quiescence anchored to the idea that sooner or later the Mahdi—the 12th Imam—will come back.

After Mohammed, you had 12 successive imams for the Twelver Shiites. The last one disappeared and will come back. He's in occultation.

So essentially for all Shiites that are Twelvers—which almost all Iranian Shiites are—they realized: we're out of power, we're a minority, and like other minorities we adapt and navigate.

A big change started happening about a hundred years ago. In Iraq you had a colonial presence, and you started having revolts by clerical leadership seeing they might have a shot at taking power. You started having constitutional revolts and so on.

In Iran, you already had essentially a Shiite government in power for the last 400 years. So the fundamental question began to arise: how does Shiism rule? If you've adopted a minority status, you don't need to ask that question, but you do if you're in power.

A new revolutionary concept of Shiism emerged at that point, which Ayatollah Khomeini embodied. For those of us who study philosophy, it's Plato's philosopher-king concept. The irony is that Iran was governed under Khomeini by essentially a Greek myth, which shows its external origins.

Bottom line: their view is that among us there is a great scholar—a great imam, a great ayatollah—who is such an expert on jurisprudence that he speaks for the hidden Imam. He speaks in the spirit of the hidden Imam, and you can create a totalitarian system anchored to the law—Sharia—that he represents.

That was Ayatollah Khomeini. And since the system embodies the will of the 12th Imam and is in his place—the deputy for the moment, because the Imam isn't coming back anytime soon—you see the system becomes the embodiment of Sharia-governed Shiite community in power. And its survival becomes important.

Ayatollah Khomeini, when faced with a serious existential crisis in 1988, made the choice: he would save the regime rather than pursue the ideology all the way to the end, because preservation of the regime was the embodiment of the 12th Imam's will.

Now we keep thinking that's what's going to happen here: that the essence of the Islamic Republic is to save the regime.

The problem is we didn't notice what happened at the end of Ayatollah Khomeini's reign, which is that Ali Khamenei took over. Ali Khamenei was first part of Khomeini's entourage, but very early in he was nearly assassinated by a group of people who do not agree with this interpretation.

Their interpretation is that the Imam is about to return, and acts of faith—pushing it to the level of an apocalyptic, eschatological crisis, a collapse war—will hasten the return of the hidden Imam, the Mahdi. Therefore the whole point of the enterprise is the end of times—bringing about the end of times. The Islamic Republic was an instrument to trigger the end of times.

That's the [Hojjatiyeh]. Obviously Khomeini thought this very dangerous, so he suppressed them. They became bitter and angry. They retreated into the IRGC. They were the core of the fighting in the Iran-Iraq War—desensitized, grizzled people.

They tried to kill Ali Khamenei—assassinate him. But when he recovered, he realized: if he was going to realize his political ambitions, he needed a posse, a group of people loyal to him. So what did he do? He turned to those who tried to kill him. He turned to them, and he built a structure of power and influence among them. They were happy to have a patron to protect them.

When Ali Khamenei took over, you had a coup within a coup—a revolution within a revolution. These people began to fill the top ranks.

Now remember: the Islamic regime has now spent 37 of its 47 years under the control of Ali Khamenei. The entire top level of the IRGC is filled with these people. Their basic view is: the worse it gets, the closer you are to an apocalyptic struggle. The more it's a test of faith, the more you retrench into that faith.

So we now have a regime in Iran that sees suicide not as a bad thing, but as an instrument toward getting to where they want to go. And we keep thinking we can negotiate with that—that somehow a survival instinct will kick in.

Much to the point: the son of Ali Khamenei was named in the last two or three days—either alive or dead, nobody knows. But at any rate, when he was named, it wasn't just because he was the son, or they wanted dynastic succession. He was named precisely because he was seen to be faithful—perhaps even more faithful than his father—to these ideas.

We have a group of people who literally are taking the nation and running it off the cliff. So the more we talk about Delcy Rodríguez and trying to find a Delcy Rodríguez at the top of the IRGC structure—one, two, or three levels down—the more all we're doing is deflating the hopes of the Iranian people, who believe they're on the Titanic, that their ship is sinking, and they're desperate to get off. They're desperate to throw the crew overboard and maybe save the ship. But they do not believe this crew running the ship is going to lead to anything but everybody's death.

So they're horrified and deflated every time we talk about Delcy Rodríguez. They want a much more profound change.

Are there elements that could cooperate—turn? Iran certainly has a lot of corruption up top. So you may find a few corrupt people you can work with, and a few other corrupt people in the IRGC. But by and large, at this point, we have to understand this regime is in it to the death.

We will not find a negotiated surrender the way we saw with Japan. It's going to have to look a bit more like Czechoslovakia. And in that circumstance, we have to bring boots on the ground—but not our boots. Our boots on the ground are the Iranian people.

So the strategic core of where we have to go from here is to ensure we keep the Iranian people on board, give them hope, and in the end of the day, they're the ones we have to turn this over to, to take over. Everything we do has to be calibrated right now to helping them organize and be confident enough to do that because, in essence, they are our boots on the ground. And that is how this ultimately is going to be won.

[00:26:12] **Frank Gaffney:** David Wurmser, thank you—profoundly important historical context and the nature of the regime itself is far better understood as you've described it.

I do want to add—and he's not with us to make this presentation himself, alas—but our colleague Sam Faddis has been writing periodically at his platform, *End* magazine on Substack. His perspective, as someone who served in the Central Intelligence Agency as an undercover operative, I believe working against the Iranians in a number of places, possibly including behind their own lines, is sobering.

He has just published a piece about what he describes as the “mosaic defense structure” of the Iranian regime, which affords considerable autonomy to the various forces that would be pursuing the kind of national insurgency he describes in the face of this assault by U.S. and Israeli forces.

It's a very sobering article, as have been a number of his recent ones concerning what we are up against. I think what Rabbi Wolicki, David Wurmser, and Sam Faddis have said are all subjects that I hope our next presenter will speak to.

From the perspective of someone who has worked for many years with a man who has been seen by some inside Iran—and certainly many outside of Iran—and who I believe has shown himself willing to serve in a transitional role from this mullahocracy to what we all hope will be a far better governing arrangement.

His name is Mehrdad “Marty” Youssefiani. He is an Iranian-American expert in strategic communications and served as a strategic counselor to the Crown Prince of Iran, Reza Pahlavi II. We are so pleased to have him with us, and I want to thank David Wurmser for helping arrange this—and of course Marty for finding time to share his insights with us.

[00:28:50] **Mehrdad “Marty” Youssefiani:** Thank you very much, Frank, and your guests. I appreciate being back here with this group. Yes, I think the frame has been perfectly outlined by the guests here. David Wurmser said it best.

I think the core of the challenge here is for us—for policymakers—to understand the driving philosophy of the current regime. And Shiism, as David very well outlined, can be simplified, if I might, as a philosophy of the glorification of martyrdom.

Add to that what David described as the Mahdi, or the Mahdists. In Persian or Arabic, the Mahdi is the equivalent—in a sense—of a messianic Armageddon concept. So you combine two things: the philosophy of glorifying martyrdom and the messianic viewpoint of where, in their view, humanity stands now. It's a catastrophic combination.

In some of the discourse and projections—where will the ayatollah go?—I always maintained, as did David, that no, he will not go to Moscow. He will not be found in a ditch like Saddam Hussein was, nor will he find himself begging for his life like Colonel Gaddafi did.

At the end, he actually welcomes the opportunity to be martyred, because in his viewpoint and philosophy he believes he will join history as one of the grand martyrs like Imam Hussein of Islam.

So when you look at that, therein lies the danger in terms of what the goal and the objective of this kinetic initiative faces.

I think the world—and certainly the Iranian people—expected and desired, and welcomed perhaps, a quick decapitation leading to a quick submission and handover. But when you look at the truth, based on the driving philosophy of the regime, that is not the end game for them—at least those who have the levers of power, now being handed to the son.

With that in mind, where do we go from here? What is next?

Even if the president announces a quick end of military actions, what are the goals? Certainly key basic goals that everybody has been looking at: the 400 kilograms of enriched uranium—where is that? Who can deliver that if there is going to be a deal made with whoever within the regime?

The nuclear program has now twice been labeled as “inundated.” The missiles—certainly the launchers—have been neutralized. What percentage of the actual missiles are destroyed remains to be seen. But if they don't have the launchers, it renders them ineffective.

The drones, the production capacity, destruction of command and control—previous to this entire initiative, we saw the Israelis really neutralize the collective of the regime's proxies.

So much has been done. Politically, a declaration of “mission accomplished” without the banner can be claimed to an extent—yes.

But ultimately, for 92 million Iranian people, the entire region, and I think the world, we are looking to see what the political solution produces.

I can tell you this with confidence: Camelot is not around the corner in Iran. Paradise is not awaiting. The work will just begin, irrespective of whether a deal is made with remnants of this regime, or if the people take over and elect their own people.

The transition will be mission-critical to the future of Iran and the arrival of democratic values and processes, but it'll be a long road ahead.

Just to draw a parallel: the world fully understands what transpired in Iraq. If the chaos that ensued in Iraq was a result of the incompatibility of political alliance between three principal constituencies—Shia in the south, Kurds in the north, and Sunni remnants of the Ba'athist party—Iran's constituency is a multiple of that.

You have multiple ethnicities which compose anywhere between 50 to 55% of the population, depending on which database you look at. The CIA World Factbook lines them up at 58%. So you have roughly half the population composed of ethnic communities. They must be brought into the fold. Pluralism is, we believe, the ultimate solution for any transition awaiting Iran.

Outside of that, you have the traditional constitutional monarchists—anywhere between 15, 20, 25, 30%. Even if you are generous and say 35 or 40%, you still have a balance. You will have a significant component within the Iranian polity who desire a republic.

Then you have the centrists, the leftists—you have any number of ideologies that claim, and desire, and deservedly need to be part of a process.

So outside of the military solution, I think it's critical that we look at pluralism as a core component of how Iran can be put together.

Having said that, we need to look at the regime itself—the bureaucracy—having learned from de-Ba'athification as a whole. The Iranian bureaucracy today offers payroll to 3.5 million people. That represents 15% of the workforce. They cannot be excluded any way you look at it.

Directly, 3.5 million. Indirectly, about 8 million people in Iran are somehow tied to the bureaucracy of that government. That's about 35% of the workforce of Iran.

So these power centers need to be brought into the fold, because Iran—population of 92 million, with that massive geographic footprint—needs to be rebuilt. The trains need to run, the food needs to be distributed, water shortages, security.

One of the big concerns right now—irrespective of who inherits power in Iran—is that the central government, the day after it takes over, will have no navy, no air force. The army, as we speak, is being beaten into a pulp.

What happens to the security and territorial integrity of Iran as a whole? These are complex issues that need to be addressed.

This group here, I think, has the best understanding of what is happening there. We just need to make sure that policymakers—deciding quickly to draw down and declare victory, or cutting a deal with elements within the regime—cannot exclude the realities.

Regime change through air power is one thing. Building a nation after that is another.

So I'm at your disposal here to answer questions. But it's a good framework to follow through. Thank you.

[00:38:34] **Frank Gaffney:** Thank you, Marty, very much. Your experience, as well as your service in advising the Crown Prince—who assuredly is a figure in all of this—is deeply appreciated.

We are going to turn to an interview that I conducted on our program *Securing America* earlier today with Josh Hammer, who is not able to be with us in person, but has given us some very important food for thought.

I believe we have edited his remarks slightly just for time, but I hope we've captured his most important points, because they are quite important.

Josh is a senior editor-at-large at *Newsweek* magazine. He has his own television program, *The Josh Hammer Show*. He is an attorney by training and special counsel to the extraordinarily important Article III Project.

He has been very actively engaged in the public policy debate about what to do about Iran long before this war began, and in its aftermath. And we are very pleased to be able to present to you his comments.

[00:39:47] **Josh Hammer:** There are a few high-level observations that I think are worth noting.

First and foremost, the operation thus far—and by “the operation,” I mean all of it, the totality of the combined effect of what Pete Hegseth just this morning referred to as the world's most powerful air force—the combined effect of this joint multinational operation has been, thus far, on its own terms, a staggering success.

The Iranian navy, to the extent it exists, is an utter shell of what it was as recently as two weeks ago. Over 30 Iranian vessels have been sunk. The Iranian air force is so utterly decimated that the secretary of war is joking that the Iranian air force was built in 1996 and it died in 2026. Perhaps that's tongue-in-cheek, but it doesn't seem, from what I can tell, to be a whole lot of an exaggeration.

The daily barrage of Iranian missiles and drones that they are launching has severely diminished over the extent of these 10 days—not just into Israel, by the way, but into the Arab countries as well. In fact, the UAE—the United Arab Emirates—has actually taken even more incoming missile and drone fire than Israel itself. Their daily barrage is not just into Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and Israel, but also into Dubai and Abu Dhabi. These numbers are coming down on a daily basis.

So there's been tremendous damage to Iran's military, to Iran's ballistic missile arsenal, to their defenses, and to some strategic nuclear and uranium enrichment facilities as well.

I do have some additional, more specific questions, Frank, when it comes to that particular part of this operation. At some point, I would like a little more detail when it comes to the damage that's been delivered to some of this rogue uranium. We know that there was some highly enriched uranium that managed to escape Operation Midnight Hammer last June, for instance. That's one thing I have in the back of my mind simmering. I want additional clarity on that question.

But when it comes to conventional military war metrics, this has been a truly staggering success.

Another thing that I think is worth noting at a higher level is that this is one of the greatest examples of two countries going to war together in the modern history of warfare. I'm not even entirely sure that I can think of a more compelling recent example of two countries essentially in synchronization, in lockstep—especially in those first few days of the war.

Anecdotally, what I heard from folks in Israel and folks in the U.S. military is that the two militaries were so in sync that they were essentially fighting as one joint military unit, which is extraordinary. You probably have to go back to arguably World War II or the Korean War to find another example of multiple national militaries being in such utter lockstep.

And I think on those terms, it's been an astonishing rebuke to the Israel-haters all across the political spectrum—certainly on the left, but very much, unfortunately, increasingly these days in some pockets of the so-called “right” as well. Israel clearly proving its merits as an ally—something that Pete Hegseth, Chairman Caine, they've all been saying, when it comes to the utility of Israel as an ally.

Another thing that I think is worth noting is that the Iranian tactic of trying to expedite an end to this war by essentially just going crazy and bombing a bunch of Arab countries—that seems to me to be their strategy—hasn't worked.

And if I may issue a word of unsolicited advice to the powers that be, up to and including the president, the commander-in-chief himself: do not bend until the mission is complete on your own terms. This is the single most important thing right now.

To me, victory in Operation Epic Fury from the American perspective means the neutralization of Iran as a threat. That has definitely been largely and partially accomplished. I strongly suspect there is still some work to go.

We just saw Khamenei's son—Mojtaba Khamenei—is now the new so-called supreme leader. Clearly, the clerics are still in charge. From what we can tell, the IRGC, the Basij, the secret police are still roaming the streets. So there's definitely still a threat at this time. And I would just encourage the United States to go until the mission is done on its own terms.

But thus far, Frank, it's been certainly a staggering success.

At the very beginning, the U.S. and Israel clearly were in sync. They were going after Khamenei, they were going after the IRGC, they were going after ballistic missile facilities, the navy, the air force. And you do think there could potentially come a time where the incentive structure—and especially the domestic politics of the two countries—could militate in differing directions.

The most obvious place where I could foresee a potential delta, a potential gap between U.S. and Israeli interests here, is if Prime Minister Netanyahu and the IDF define their war aim—what they call Operation Roaring Lion—as regime change and nothing less than regime change.

That does not seem to me to be the exact same thing as how Operation Epic Fury is conceived from a United States—Pete Hegseth, U.S. CENTCOM—perspective. Again, the American perspective, insofar as I understand it, is that we are trying to accomplish the neutralization of the Iranian threat.

So if the Israelis define victory as nothing less than regime change, then there could potentially be room for a delta here.

Here's where I will say, though, that I'm not super worried about this, Frank. On my own show, *The Josh Hammer Show*, I asked multiple guests about this last week. I asked Mike Doran—our friend from Hudson Institute—and what Mike Doran basically told me, and I find this compelling, is that in this partnership the United States is the big superpower. Israel is a powerful military, but it's a relatively small country. They're ultimately the junior partner here, and I believe they are not going to do anything to risk the ire of the friendliest president in the history of the Jewish state, which is President Donald Trump.

The other thing to bear in mind is that it's possible the Israelis define victory the exact same way the United States does. I had our mutual friend Rabbi Pesach Wolicki on my show last week, and I asked Rabbi Wolicki how he believes Israel defines success in Operation Roaring Lion. He gave almost the same answer, almost verbatim, to what I define as the American answer: the neutralization of the Iranian threat.

So if that is the answer for both countries, then I'm less concerned. But to the extent that Israel potentially is willing to settle for nothing less than regime change and Trump might get a little skittish of that, that's where you could potentially see a delta. But it's a hypothetical at this point. We're certainly not at that bridge yet.

President Trump has a way with words where he sometimes says things and leaves it to others—or potentially to himself months down the line—to fill in the blanks as to what was necessarily said or implied.

Look: I think Donald Trump has zero interest in leaving the Iranian mess for a future president. He has essentially said that pretty much verbatim. He's the first president who has had the courage to act on this threat since the rise of the Islamic Republic with the 1979 revolution. He's decided he's not going to kick this can down the road any further. That means he does not want Iran to be a threat.

Now, soberly speaking: is there the possibility that there could be a subdued, a more chastened IRGC—one that knows if they act out of line they will just be bombed out of existence by the U.S. air force, potentially with the Israeli air force at their side? Sure. That's a possibility.

Delcy Rodríguez, who's currently a leader of Venezuela, is very much a Marxist-Leninist in the Hugo Chávez, Nicolás Maduro mode. She's also essentially fully cooperating. She's allowed American oil and natural gas companies—Chevron, ExxonMobil, you name it—to get control of that country's abundant natural resources, for the simple reason that she knows—and she's been told this explicitly—if you act out of line, you're next. We're going to get you next.

So if the IRGC is so systemically degraded—if they truly fear for their life—then yes, there's a potential where a subdued Islamic Republic could exist essentially in name only. That strikes me as a real possibility, a non-negligible possibility. Going back to Mike Doran, he said this is a real possibility—one of his guesses as to what Iran could look like a year from now.

I do think there is potential for something greater than that. The issue, Frank, as you know from having studied this region and this regime for so long, is that the regime has essentially a monopoly on the weapons.

Now, the CIA is involved in arming some Kurdish factions in western Iran, but the Iranian people just saw tens and tens of thousands of their own countrymen butchered in the streets in late December into the first couple weeks of January. As far as I can glean right now, Basij paramilitary units are roaming the streets with weapons, essentially starting to shoot anyone who dares to step outside and protest against the regime. That's daunting—especially when you don't have any weapons on you.

So I don't pretend to have all the answers as to how to fill that gap—how to make it more feasible for the Iranian people to take matters into their own hands. But if something more than a chastened or subdued IRGC is going to transpire—if the Iranian people are truly going to get in there, if Reza Pahlavi, the exiled crown prince, is actually going to be able to parachute in and try to implement his roughly 200-page transition plan that he's had ready to go for decades—if there's any chance of that happening, then the people need more arms.

Again, easier said than done. But it's a moving target exactly how Trump interprets “unconditional surrender.”

One thing I can tell you is definitely not unconditional surrender: the elevation of Khamenei's son—by all accounts even more radical and hardline than his father. That is certainly not unconditional surrender. I feel very confident in saying that.

[00:50:33] **Frank Gaffney:** Dr. Hammer, thank you. Powerful insights on various aspects that we're going to want to touch on as we wrap up.

Our final presenter is Rod Martin. He is the chairman of the board of our Institute for the American Future, which makes the work of this Victory Coalition possible. He is also a serial entrepreneur and now the author of a very important online platform, *The Rod Martin Report*. You can find it at [rodmartin.org](http://rodmartin.org).

He has been commenting with an intensity that's breathtaking on what is going on in this war with Iran, making very insightful comments about what must come next. We're delighted to have him be the cleanup batter for this program.

Rod Martin, thank you for joining us, and over to you.

[00:51:24] **Rod Martin:** Always good to be here. I would encourage everyone to be optimistic. That's hard to do sometimes. We've been let down so many times by so many American administrations, it's hard to contemplate.

None of this would be happening but for a betrayal by Jimmy Carter, who actually went to Iran and pledged friendship with the Shah and did all these things and then sold him down the river—and all of the people of Iran with him.

From that point on—with a brief intermission with Reagan and an occasional happy surprise from the Bushes—we've had disappointment upon disappointment.

I don't think that's going to be the case here.

Where we are today is we have a president who clearly means to remake the world in his chosen image, and that image is comprehensive in nature. Done are the days of one-off theaters here and there and yon that don't relate to one another.

No: trade policy has everything to do with boxing in China. The interdiction of shadow-fleet tankers has everything to do with boxing in China. Going after Venezuela and then Iran has everything to do with that strategy.

Donald Trump sees China as the focus of all real threats to the United States, and he's doing everything he can to imitate Ronald Reagan's strategy with King Fahd in the mid-'80s to deprive them of their ability to compete should they choose to have an arms race or something more kinetic.

That same logic applies to a lot of people, and Putin is one of them. Disrupting the shadow fleet is painful for China. It is catastrophic for Russia. Russia cannot finance this war indefinitely without the oil exports that are largely going to China.

China has been completely predatory—utterly predatory. They have taken that oil at ridiculous discounts. They've done similar things across the spectrum of what they have bought and sold from Russia. Not least in how they have taken payment, which is exclusively in yuan and gold. They are doing their best to deplete the Russian treasury of gold stocks, all the while calling it an alliance without limits.

Well, I haven't seen the first CCP division on the front lines in Ukraine. I also haven't seen the first Chinese fighter jets flying missions against the United States in Iran. None of this is happening. China isn't anybody's ally.

So part of Trump's strategy is to show that China is in fact a completely unreliable ally. Honestly, they're nobody's ally, and no one should depend on them.

Also, somewhat serendipitously, we get to demonstrate that their arms export industry is not something anyone should take seriously, because their stuff is junk and we keep blowing it up again and again.

Is the stuff around Beijing better? I'm sure it is. Is the stuff aimed at Taiwan better? Probably so. But I wouldn't count on it if I were Xi Jinping today, and I certainly wouldn't count on it if I were a foreign buyer of Chinese armaments.

That puts a real crimp in their ability to export. It also puts a real crimp in Russia's ability to export. They're a little busy wasting all the materiel they can put together in Ukraine.

But the arms export industry has always been crucial to the Soviets and to the Russians—and now who would want that stuff? It's a joke.

So from beginning to end, there's this comprehensive effort to humiliate key enemies, all with the ultimate aim of boxing in China so that you win the new Cold War the way Reagan won the old one—by depriving them of the cash necessary to keep up in an arms race.

That was partly fanciful because we really didn't have the technology to do SDI the way everybody talked about doing it at the time. I would contend there were ways you could have done it that would've been quite effective, but I don't think you could ever have gotten them funded in Congress.

So we head-faked them. We convinced them we were doing things they simply can't afford. After a few Soviet premiers die, we end up with Gorbachev backpedaling and trying to find an accommodation, which ultimately ends up in their dissolution.

Which brings me to an article we published at [rodmartin.org](http://rodmartin.org) this morning about the seeming panic we're seeing in Beijing over the possibility that people will draw inspiration from what's happening in Iran and attempt to overthrow the regime there.

Part of this comes from China's long-standing assessment that Trump would never do this in Iran, and if he did, it wouldn't work. None of that is proving to be true.

If you purge everybody who can talk back to you, if you purge everybody who's competent, if you get rid of the only people running the military who have actually served in combat—as Xi has done—you end up hearing only what you want to hear. And now we are seeing, flashed on everyone's nightly news, how completely wrong that assessment was.

Back to Iran. In Iran itself, I want you to be optimistic. I've been calling these things right since 10 weeks before the war. If I get this wrong, I get it wrong, but so far I'm doing pretty good on this.

Donald Trump wants a Middle East peace deal that is comprehensive in nature. He believes the Iranian regime is the source, the funder, the director, and the armory for every current conflict in the region that most people could name. And you cannot possibly get to his vision for the Middle East without taking them out.

So what does that look like? I don't know. I think we will occupy Kharg Island. I don't think you're going to have further boots on the ground except possibly very selectively—special forces for some reason.

I don't think that's the thing. The boots on the ground are the Iranian people. Yes, they need to be armed. Yes, there are things we have to do for them. I don't have insight into what the president is planning there.

It's been my experience that the president has planned out every jot and tittle of this second term in elaborate detail at Mar-a-Lago years before he was reelected. So I have a lot of confidence here.

If we can just get across that hump—if you can just get to the point where the Iranian people feel confident enough—you run out of Twelvers at a certain point.

Iranian government statistics say more than half of Iranians are now irreligious. Iranian government statistics say that of 75,000 mosques in the country, 50,000 have closed in the last several years.

Iran is not uniformly in sync theologically with the ayatollah, and my guess is that at some point you get to a lower level of soldiers and policemen who aren't with them either.

I don't know what that number is. I don't know how many people we have to blow up. But I think Donald Trump is committed to blowing them up until we get to that number that will start switching sides in the street.

We saw a report this morning about key local leaders in Kurdistan actually calling for the return of the Shah. That's encouraging. I think we're going to see a lot more of that.

I believe Donald Trump will see this through to its conclusion—whatever reasonable measure that takes. It's not going to be an invasion. He's not going to be George Bush. But I think he's going to win. I think we're on track for victory.

If we are, we can look forward to an Iran that in 20 years is a first-world democracy and one of the major contributors to the global economy, as well as a paradise of freedom, relatively speaking, for its part of the world.

I think it's going to be a beacon of hope. And I think Donald Trump is going to be seen in retrospect, in Frank Gaffney's words, as a liberator.

[01:01:28] **Frank Gaffney:** Powerful presentation, as always, Rod. Your optimism is especially welcome after some grim tidings from our other contributors.

But this is about trying to make sure we understand both the reality and the prospects. That's what this situation report is intended to accomplish. I think we've set the stage for a final quick round of Q&A, if we can.

I'd invite you to comment on each other's responses to a couple of questions in the time available.

I'd like to start with this proposition: we seem to have a general consensus that leaving the IRGC/Basij—or the ayatollah's regime—in place, even if greatly diminished, without most of their capabilities to terrorize the population and control them, is ill-advised; would not be finishing the job, as the president was urged to do by families of the fallen; and could be extremely dangerous—especially to the extent that apocalyptic, messianic vision will govern and may in fact inspire attacks here inside the United States that we have not seen yet to date, thank God.

So let me open this up, perhaps to you, Marty, because I don't think you commented on this specifically.

And by the way, I'm sorry to say I did not get the message that there was a particular credential that you wanted me to mention. Let me see if I can find that quickly: that you are the director of the Iran Freedom Initiative at the Middle East Forum, as well as an Iranian opposition leader and a man who served as the chef de cabinet, as the French would put it, of the Crown Prince for two decades.

I apologize for not getting that right the first time around. Marty, over to you.

[01:03:38] **Mehrdad “Marty” Youssefiani:** Yes, we do have consensus that fundamentally the world has got to move beyond the regime. There's absolutely no question that the Iranian people have cried out for that.

It's a matter of calibrating and making sure what the costs are, minimizing damages to infrastructure so the rebuilding can be as smooth as possible. But having said that—sadly—these are the costs of war.

It is heartbreaking to see that the regime has forced the people and the world to choose between regime continuation versus regime change through kinetic action. So yes, we agree on that. It's a matter of how to do it.

I believe attention needs to be given to the political process—offering political patronage or whatnot for the transition—so that the key elements of that very colorful, certainly not monolith polity can come together and work toward what needs to be done.

We heard the Kurds were engaged by the administration to step forward and possibly offer boots on the ground in that part of Kurdistan—the western region of Iran—as well as other Iranian ethnicities joining as well.

We must somehow engage the good remnants of the regime. The upper echelon that cannot be done business with, I think, are not only being decapitated now, but their numbers are thinning.

But one element that needs to be factored in—many people may not have focused on it specifically—is within the IRGC. It's ironic that the top tier, many of whom have been

taken out over the years, are the generals who have fattened up. These are the generals whose sons and daughters are driving Mercedes-Benzes and Ferraris in Dubai and elsewhere. They were possibly the exit ramps.

What has happened with the decapitation of multiple layers is that we're now facing mid-level layers who joined the IRGC maybe two decades ago, and joined because of ideological commitment.

So I worry that the next layer of the IRGC may in fact be more militant. That's what needs to be carefully looked at.

Some of the language being offered needs to include certain strategic amnesty programs, so these people cannot feel cornered to fight to the death. These are some of the things that need to be offered in the political solution, and conversations like this are enormously important in factoring them in.

[01:07:07] **Frank Gaffney:** Thank you. Rabbi Wolicki, how do you think the government of Israel is seeing this specific question of finding people inside the regime who are able to be trusted? Is there any possibility of that as you see it in Israel at the moment, or is it really scorched earth?

[01:07:27] **Rabbi Pesach Wolicki:** I don't have any inside information. But when I mentioned Ambassador Danon's words, he basically said Israel will not tolerate a situation where it's a cosmetic decapitation but the structure of the regime remains intact.

I love what Marty was just saying. I learned so much from it. But what Trump loves about the Venezuela option is that it prevents chaos and holds things together—the trains run on time. You don't want it to devolve into chaos. You don't want the MEK running around with their weapons. You don't want this turning into Iraq. There's something to be said for that.

But the problem is empowering the same criminals who've been running things until now. That's the problem.

Therefore this amnesty—granting some sort of amnesty—matters. If you say we're going to get rid of every single guy who was part of the regime, then they're going to fight to the end, and you're inviting chaos.

You need to incentivize whatever better angels are there to cooperate, even if it means that you are overseeing things and everyone has to behave themselves as you transition to something better.

To the Israelis, the goal is removal of the Iranian threat. But the Israelis understand better than Westerners—who always think in economic terms—that removing the

Iranian threat means staring down and defeating Twelver Shiite apocalyptic Islam. That has to happen. Americans always fail to understand how strong these ideologies are.

And what Marty was saying about as you go down the layers, you get greater and greater adherence to the ideology—that keeps going as you go further down. When you get to the street thugs of the IRGC, they're the most ideological.

So the further down you go, meaning what you hope will happen in other regime changes—like a military coup—that's not going to happen from IRGC people. They get more ideological as you go down.

So even if there were moderates at the top willing to play ball with the Americans, there might be a mutiny from within the IRGC by the more ideological ones who don't like that and see them as sellouts.

So it has to be some sort of amnesty situation, as Marty is suggesting. The Israelis have not been open about what they want in regime change. They've been more open about what they don't want. I'll leave it there.

[01:10:02] **Frank Gaffney:** David Wurmser, could I ask you about some of the comments I cited from Sam Faddis? In addition to the ideological dimensions and theological orientation, he's talking about a command structure and military capability that does not lend itself to easy neutralization, even if some of those dead-enders come along—unlikely as that seems.

What are your thoughts about that, David, and the prospect of being able to end the war short of literally eradicating basically everybody in these 31 units that Sam describes as composing the capabilities we're up against?

[01:10:49] **Dr. David Wurmser:** I agree with Sam that it's a layered structure and intertwined. We saw that initially in the Soviet Union as well. You only need to watch *The Hunt for Red October* and you see how intertwined things are deliberately.

So it's not going to be easy. I do share Rod's optimism in the long run here. But there is this real conundrum of the intertwining.

And there's also the conundrum that after 47 years, as we saw with the Soviet Union, there are people who are nominally part of the party but went on to become directors of the water plant—or whatever—who we're going to need.

A lot of work has to be done by the Iranian opposition to identify capable technocratic types that need to be tapped and survive.

Now, all that said, I want to seize on one thing Marty said: Iran is stripped of defense and it is vulnerable at the end of this. If the regime survives, that turns it into an endless strategic competition that will be deadly for everybody involved. It will be a nightmare.

If the regime doesn't survive, you will see ambitions. You've already seen them expressed by the neo-Ottoman Muslim Brotherhood Turkish government—talking about seizing part of Iranian territory, supporting Azeri separatism, working to raise the threat of Kurdish separatism in order to crush Kurdish separatism.

You've got a lot of really big problems. And it opens doors, which is why leaving a weakened Iran is in some ways a very bad result. At the end of the day, we have this Sunni threat rising. We have this reinvigorated civilizational threat to the West that you see in Europe and so forth.

It's not really Shiite Islam as much as it is Sunni—taking and seizing Damascus. There is this volcanic rise of a strategic threat and we need to organize in the region. Where Iran goes after the war stops is a critical strategic question for us.

It can't be a hostile country that's just weak. That leaves a lot of dangerous scenarios.

We ought to help Iran get back on track to become part of the civilized world and join the West. That is where we strategically ought to go in the long run.

And yes, there's going to be a very delicate balance between who stays technocratically in power and who doesn't.

But at this point, I see the top and mid-upper levels of the IRGC surrendering, and as a result I think you're going to see a much more broad-based collapse eventually here.

[01:14:15] **Frank Gaffney:** Rod Martin, I want to ask you—as the resident optimist at the moment—what about this problem, potential problem of IRGC elements, Hezbollah units, sleeper cells, assassination squads—whatever you call them in this country? Is it something that you think is a distinct prospect out of all of this, and are we prepared to contend with it?

[01:14:41] **Rod Martin:** I think we need to be very, very careful, and I trust that Homeland Security is being very vigilant. But the truth is, we've now had a couple weeks to see what they can do, and they haven't done much.

So I think we may be past the worst threat. If I had been them, I certainly would have attacked anything in sight shortly after the bombs started dropping, and they haven't.

So who knows—maybe there's a sleeper threat and they kill us all in 20 years—but my guess is we should be a little more concerned about what the Chinese have been infiltrating here, and perhaps a little less concerned than we all were about what the Iranians have done.

Not DHS—they need to be every bit as concerned and make sure it all gets tamped down.

I want to circle back to what David was just saying, with which I wholeheartedly agree. There's just not a Delcy Rodríguez here, and we have to understand what Delcy is.

Delcy is unique because they're nearby, and they have no defenses, and we just demonstrated—took their breath away—that they have no defense. Individually. Forget as a country.

Each of the leaders of the Venezuelan government individually can be taken to a prison cell beside Nicolás Maduro by Donald Trump at any moment, and that's a wonderful concentrator. So yes, Delcy is super cooperative and I imagine she will continue to be, and eventually we'll get to an election there and elect an appropriate government. It'll probably look a lot like an oil-rich Argentina before we're done.

But Iran's harder. We can't reach out and grab them in the same way—or we probably would've reached out and grabbed some of these people. We can kill them, but taking them one by one the way we did with the Maduros is another thing.

So we actually have to get rid of these people. Yes, we will absolutely end up working with a lot of the technocratic types in Iran.

We learned how not to do this in Iraq. We learned how to do this in Germany. And for all of the initial talk of de-Nazification, we ended up hiring a lot of Nazis because they weren't real Nazis—or at least they were willing to pretend they weren't—and we needed them to run the water plant. That worked out, especially after the Soviets turned their sector into East Germany.

It will have to be part of the solution here. David's exactly right: we've got to have amnesties, we've got to have accommodations. I think the president has made clear that's available—anyone who lays down their arms, we're going to have to come to some accommodation.

And Marty, I'm so proud of what you guys have pulled off. I really think Reza Pahlavi could be the Juan Carlos I of Iran—the man who takes them from a terrible dictatorship into a constitutional monarchy that is truly free. I'm very hopeful that's where we're headed.

[01:18:19] **Frank Gaffney:** That's a perfect segue, Rod. Marty, I was hoping you might take the last few minutes of this to say a word or two about how the Crown Prince—at least what you've been preparing for just such a moment as this—and how, in your ideal world, the transition involving the Crown Prince might come about and play out.

[01:18:49] **Mehrdad “Marty” Youssefiani:** Sure. Thank you for that. Yes—to be clear, I do not speak for him. However, having served him and knowing him well, and understanding the core philosophy and goal and mission that he holds in his heart, it is exactly what Iran needs and desires—and certainly the streets.

There's no question that they've called his name. That includes those who may not necessarily be constitutional monarchists, but those who think the symbolism he offers is something that can be helpful to the nation to heal.

Now, whether a constitutional monarchy can happen—we all desire and hope it will have an opportunity in Iran. But the point here is that we believe ultimately Reza plus pluralism is the way to do it. That will strengthen his brand—his capacity to serve selflessly.

Part of the challenge is that one's political supporters get ahead of the game and perhaps express more enthusiastic energy than is required. But that's a universe we all know you cannot control.

Again, the key is: no matter who has the opportunity to serve in that transitional role, there must be a big "P" next to the name and the brand—P as in pluralism, inclusion, and making sure the rainbow coalition—the big tent—can offer to a nation that is heir to a 3,000-year civilization and, if you will, an original melting pot because of the various nationalities and cultures that have been brought into that Iranian civilizational code.

So pluralism is key, and we must—and will—remain optimistic, as Rod said here today.

[01:21:23] **Frank Gaffney:** Wonderful. Marty, thank you so much.

Thanks to each of our presenters. I think this has been a very bracing situation report, as we promised. It has been replete with sobering elements—many things to be mindful of as we try to navigate through a transition.

My principal takeaway personally is very strongly that there does need to be a completion of the mission of eliminating the threat from the Iranian regime. And I associate myself with those of you who have said that can't happen as long as you're dealing with some of the same people—or not so much the people necessarily, but certainly the ideology, the proclivities, and the agendas of those who have brought the people of Iran to this desperate moment through their Sharia-supremacist and messianic program.

That does have—unfortunately there's no getting around it—an apocalyptic character to it. For that reason alone, it seems to me President Trump must be encouraged to stay the course and to finish the job.

Thank you to Rod Martin, Marty Youssefiani, Rabbi Pesach Wolicki, David Wurmser, Josh Hammer, and of course to all of you for your contributions to this program—especially, I hope, to disseminating it when our colleague, the inimitable Oleg Atbashian, finishes producing it, which he will generally accomplish here in a few hours.

So thanks once again for listening. I hope you'll stay tuned for more of these important Victory Coalition briefings and the admonition that there is no substitute for victory, which animates it.

God bless you all. God bless America.