



Episode 781: What Trump Needs to Hear About Foreign Policy

Guest: Scott Horton

WOODS: All right, look, it's like Trump week or something over here, because now we're going to do the episode in which we brief him as if he were listening. The sorts of things you would want to say – it doesn't even have to be Trump in particular; just imagine a situation where's a brand new president elected, and you've got to sum up what's going on around the world. And I'm going to give you a country or a region, and you're going to talk about it, where things stand, and what ought to be done. Now of course, what ought to be done is always some form of disengagement and so on, but we want to make the case for why that's the right thing to do.

So let's jump right in. I will get to countries other than Middle Eastern ones, because I think we should say something primarily about Russian. In fact, that would be the main place I'd want to go. But let's start with Iran, because Trump has been saying that we've got these terrible trade deals, but we also have this terrible Iran deal. He says it's one of the worst deals ever made. And I'm not exactly sure what he's gone on record as saying he would do. I know Ted Cruz said he'd tear it up on the first day. I don't think Trump has said that, but he's very, very unfavorable toward it. So what would you tell him about Iran?

HORTON: Well, yeah, first of all, I would say that at least at one point – I'm not sure how many times I've heard him say this, Tom, but he has said that, Well, a deal is a deal, and Obama made it, and she shouldn't have made it, but as long as it's a deal, I'm going to enforce it, and I'll enforce it like a hawk. And Hillary basically said the same thing, that – And I don't think that he really implied that he meant to sabotage it and see it fail either; I think he said, you know, we'll see what happens with it.

But so then the good news there is the deal is great. The deal is so awesome. The deal is they had this civilian nuclear program that sort of amounted to a breakout capability, which meant it was basically a latent nuclear weapons deterrent. They had a program that could have been converted into a bomb program and could have produced nuclear weapons. Now their civilian program – which was always safeguarded and inspected all along. Now their program has been so scaled back that it's nowhere near breakout capability. They don't even have enough uranium on hand that if they did enrich it up to weapons grade it would even be enough for a single bomb. And they've scaled down some of their facilities; they've turned off one reactor; they converted another to light water so it'll only produce very polluted plutonium waste that won't be fissile material. And they've expanded inspections beyond all reason, beyond all historical precedent.

And they swore to never make nuclear weapons. That's part of the deal that never expires, that they've sworn as a matter of policy that they'll never seek nukes. And truthfully and honestly, and I've read Gareth Porter and all the rest of them, and there really is no evidence they ever had a weapons program. There was some research done into nuclear weapons, but they never had a program to actually develop an atom bomb ever.

And so the deal really, the reason people hate it so much – I don't know about Donald Trump, but the reason everybody he's trying to impress with that line hates it so much is because it takes war off the table, because this fake nuclear weapons threat, or at worst this latent, you know, could-be nuclear capability, was their best hope for an excuse for a war, of regime change to get rid of the ayatollah. So that's why they're all upset, and that's why if you read Daniel Larison at *The American Conservative* magazine, he has great fun completely destroying every single bogus accusation against Iran on the question of their nuclear program.

So I would just tell Donald Trump, you know, the deal is great, the money that we gave them was their money anyway – We made them give us our sailors back for the money we were already paying them anyway. And by the way –

WOODS: Well, let me do a "by the way."

HORTON: All right.

WOODS: So what was that whole thing about, "Oh, and Obama gave them all these billions of dollars?" What's that really about?

HORTON: Yeah, so now that was a previous deal. That actually wasn't related to the nuclear deal itself of a year ago. That was a previous deal that was money that was seized – I don't know if it was by Jimmy Carter or by Ronald Reagan. I guess by Jimmy Carter back after the Iranian Revolution in 1979 or in 1980. And it was money that they had paid the US for a weapons deal, and the US then just seized the money and held it all along. And then there was some process – I don't believe it was the World Court, but it was one of these world courts of settlement of this, that, and the other thing – that had worked out, and America had basically settled and come to the agreement that we were going to give them this money back. And that was separate. And in fact, that may even have happened under the Bush administration, where that agreement was struck that they were going to get this money back. But it was their money.

And then at the last minute, they added an extra condition. If you want your money that we're giving you anyway, you've got to let our sailors go right now. So of course, you know, it raises the question of how did they get our sailors. Well, our sailors were screwing around in the Persian Gulf in some little, I don't know if it was special forces, but they were in small boats, and it was an Iranian island in Iranian waters where they weren't supposed to be. Whether they were on a spy mission, whether they were sent there deliberately to get caught in order to try to create some dissension by one faction or another inside the government, I don't know. Could've been – They said it was just a navigation accident, but they were only held overnight, and they released

pictures of them with juice boxes and apples and smiles, and they were all treated perfectly fine.

And in fact, it was — You remember when I was pitching you the nuclear deal on the show at the time, and people were saying what about all American prisoners in Iran and shouldn't they be part of the deal. And I was saying if that's really a concern, then let's get this deal done, and that will be the basis of a new and better diplomatic relationship with Iran, and we can get on with the hostages. Well, what happened? That's exactly what happened. John Kerry became buddies with Zarif — I forget his first name — Mohammad Zarif, the foreign minister of Iran, and so as part of the deal in the background they had a secret sub-negotiation for the prisoners, just like in the accusations that they were doing that. And then right as the deal was coming through, the sailors got captured, Kerry picked up the phone and said, I sure would like to have my sailors back, and they said, Yeah, and you guys can get that money a little sooner for us, huh?, and he said, All right. And so the deal was struck, which was a success. Unless you prefer war, that's, you know, absolutely progress.

And yet I think, also when I was on your show, Tom, I warned that — well, I warned somebody if it wasn't you — that even though this deal in and of itself is great, the Saudis might freak out. And that is what happened, and that's what has helped lead to the war in Yemen, is the Saudis are flipping out over their role in our order in the Middle East.

WOODS: Let's talk about a particular person, actually, before we go on to any other country.

HORTON: Sure.

WOODS: I'm hearing that John Bolton, which we've already known Trump has said nice things about — John Bolton may be part of the Trump team in some for or another, possibly as ambassador to the UN. What would you tell him about John Bolton?

HORTON: Well, I would tell him about John Bolton that Bolton is only half right. The UN is the problem to the degree that it gets us into trouble and obligates the United States to intervene — "obligates" the US to intervene in other people's affairs. And so the problem with John Bolton, Mr. President, is that he gets the whole criticism of the UN, the traditional right-wing criticism of the UN upside down, and he just simply says, They're in my way. I want to start a war, and I don't want to have to ask permission from the Russians, the French, and the Chinese on the Security Council before I start one.

And so that's the current right-wing nationalist and neoconservative sort of opposition to the United Nations, and it's really a perversion of — it's a funhouse mirror version of what Ron Paul would say about how it's a threat to our independence, and in fact, it helps us threaten the independence of everybody else in the world too. So that's what's wrong with it. So John Bolton is not a neocon; he's a lifelong right-wing nationalist, I think starting with the Goldwater years or whatever it is. He's not a former communist like a lot of these neocons, but he absolutely is blood brothers with them and has been at least since the '70s, has been best buddies with them.

And in the George W. Bush years, he was a major force in what Colin Powell called Dick Cheney's separate government that he created, and this is a huge part of the story of how they got us into Iraq, was Dick Cheney has a few guys here and a few guys here and a few guys here and a few guys here in all of the different departments and all of the best places on the staff in the Congress and this kind of thing. And so you know, he called Scooter Libby, and Scooter Libby made the government move in ways that nobody had ever really been able to do that before and drove Powell nuts. And Bolton and David Wurmser were Cheney's two guys that he had sent to the State Department to keep a leash on Colin Powell and his right-hand man, Dick Armitage, who was more loyal to Powell and his interests.

And he's also, they call him the classic "kiss-up, kick-down" kind of guy who always picks on his subordinates and sexually harasses all of the women who work for him. And you can just tell by looking at him, blabbing on Fox News with all of this belligerent BS, what a scumbag he is. He'll sit there and tell you on and on and on about how powerful Iran is in the region now, and of course they never say, Yeah, but that's your fault. You're the guy who lied us into war against Saddam Hussein for Iran. And I don't know what he'd answer to that. He'd probably admit it. He's a frank-talking enough guy; he'd probably say, Yeah, that much is true, but still – But he's a dangerous guy. I wouldn't make him any kind of diplomat, that's for sure.

WOODS: Yeah, okay. Well, I think we all feel that way about him. It's just unbelievable that anybody would want to have anything to do with this guy at this point. But let's talk about another place here, and let's go – I'm going to give you a couple that I know you could do a whole episode on. But no one's going to expect me to talk about Yemen, but I know you want to do an episode on Yemen. Give me the two-minute briefing, because that's all Trump would give you.

HORTON: That's true.

WOODS: Two minutes to tell me about Yemen and what I should and should not do there. Ready, go.

HORTON: Uh, yeah, Mr. President, Saudi Arabia is no ally of the USA, and everything horrible going on in Yemen is all Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton's fault. And the fact is as soon as Obama came into power, he started bribing – he and Hillary, his Secretary of State, started bribing the dictator of the country so that they could bomb al Qaeda with drones. He took all the money and guns we gave them, and he picked a fight with the Houthis up in the north, waged four different wars against them, made them more and more powerful each time that he picked a fight with them and lost.

Well, then the Arab Spring came, and there was a huge movement to overthrow Saleh – that was his name, the previous dictator – and Hillary intervened. And she eased him out and replaced him with the vice president and held a one-man fake election, literally. If you type in "Hadi ballot" in your Google Images it will come right up. There's one man and one name on the ballot, and Hillary said this was the advent of democracy or the advance of democracy in Yemen. And the problem with that is everybody hated Hadi, and Saleh, the former dictator, he took a bunch of army divisions with him when he left. And guess what. He went and made an alliance with his old enemies, the Houthis. Then they came down out of the north and captured the

capital city and kicked Hadi, the new guy, out of power. This was in the end of 2014, beginning of 2015. And then Saudi Arabia launched a war, and Barack Obama helped them do it, and he's been helping them do it all day, every day since then for 20 months now.

And this is the poorest country in the Middle East – or in the Arab world, anyway. I don't know; you have Somalia across the street there. But it's an incredibly poor country. They have for a long time been very dependent on foreign food imports because of previous International Monetary Fund shenanigans and who knows what from before that. And so there's just massive famine.

And the Saudis are deliberately bombing civilian targets. I talked to a reporter from *Rolling Stone*, Matthieu Aikins – He's a solid reporter, *Rolling Stone* aside, I promise – from other venues too. And he went, and he just saw where the Saudis were just devastating civilian targets in the northern towns where the Houthis were based out of, and bombing marketplaces and bombing businesses and factories and civilian targets all over the place – hospitals. They just recently bombed a massive funeral, killed 300 or 400 people, including all different leaders of different factions who could have been available to negotiate and reconcile, and they were all slaughtered.

And the whole thing is abetted by the US, because first of all, we sell them and give them the planes. But also, it's American contractors who are over there doing all the maintenance. It's American spies, military and civilian and contractors probably too, who are doing the intelligence and helping them pick their targets. And then it's also American guys who are even helping them with their planes and programming in the coordinates to the targets and all that, and I have heard, Tom, from two different very credible sources that American pilots even sit in the backseats of these F-15s and hold the Saudi princes' little hands all the way to their war crimes, where they go and fly – oh, and when they stop and do refueling, midair refueling from American planes. And plus, our ships, the US Navy is helping enforce the blockade there.

So this is exactly what Russia is doing to Syria right now, bombing a bunch of civilians and provoking a bunch of crocodile tears on TV for them. And yet that's America's policy right now. And I swear that this is true. Anybody, go Google it. It's the official version of the history of this story according to the newspaper of record, *The New York Times*. This story was no exposé; it came from the Obama people, and they said they only did this to "placate the Saudis" – *placate the Saudis* – after the Iran deal, which secures Saudi's interests. It makes extra double super sure that Iranians aren't making nuclear bombs.

And the Saudi military is much more powerful than the Iranian one. They have the advantage in every way. And here we're securing their interests, but they don't like it, and so to make it up to them, Obama helps them launch a whole other war – and a war whose mission is to put Hadi back in power, which is an absolute scientific impossibility. Cannot, will not, shall not ever happen. And then we give them nothing but diplomatic cover to just keep the war going and keep the war going, no matter how much people in the UN and everywhere else call them to come to some kind of cease fire. So at this point it's a war without end, 20 months and counting. And why are we doing this? No good reason.

And look, we're fighting – at the same time the CIA is drone bombing al Qaeda, the rest of the Air Force is flying as their air force. Our US guys are, you know, working with the Saudis, and the rest of this alliance are fighting for al Qaeda against the Houthis. And you know what? I've talked as bad about Rand on this show as any other, Tom; I should say Rand Paul really did a great thing and tried very hard to stop the most recent arms sale to Saudi over this war, and he said on TV – Rand Paul, not Ron. Rand Paul said on TV, Hey, Wolf Blitzer or Jake Tapper or whichever it was – Hey, man, if we keep this up, we might put al Qaeda in power in the capital city of Sana'a – do you understand? This must stop right now. And that is not hyperbole. That is absolutely the danger of what's going on here. You could call it high treason if you want to, because that's what it is.

WOODS: I want to move over to Russia in just a minute, but let's first thank our sponsor.

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All right, now again bearing in mind – not only can we do an entire episode on Russia, you've asked to do an episode on Russia. We haven't done it yet. Again, bearing in mind we're just thinking in terms of a quick briefing – Obviously Trump's instincts are in favor of working out some kind of arrangement with Russia, and there's already been a kind of an overture to him from Russia where there's some feeling that maybe there'll be the possibility to restore some kind of normal relationship with the United States. So presumably you would want to encourage these instincts. What specifically would you say?

HORTON: Yeah, and as I've told you before, this is the one place where I think there is a real qualitative difference between him and Hillary. And it's not that he's perfect or anything, but she is absolutely the worst on this, so we should really be thankful she's being deprived the opportunity to set our Russia policy from here forward, Tom. I really mean that in the most explicit kind of a way. She could have gotten us all killed, I think.

And really the reason why, Mr. Trump, is because all of this is her husband's fault. In the 1990s he launched NATO expansion just so that he could get the Polish vote in Illinois. It's just domestic politics. And of course it was also corporate welfare for Lockheed to get rid of a bunch of – you know, to standardize Eastern European militaries on American and NATO lines. So it's the hugest corporate welfare check ever for Lockheed. And Bruce Jackson, their guy, actually helped create the committee for NATO expansion to come up with excuses, the same guy that came up with the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq in 2002 – Lockheed vice president.

Anyway, so they pushed it and pushed it and pushed it, and all the wisest gray beards then said don't do this, and they did it. And Warren Christopher, who was the Secretary of Defense, who's a real genius wonk, kind of a national security weirdo in there, Dr. Strangelove-type – He said, like, this is over his dead body. He did everything he could to try to stop Bill Clinton from doing this, because what Mr. Kennan, George Kennan, who invented the containment theory back in the '40s, he said what's going to happen here is we are going to provoke a Russian reaction with expanding our NATO military alliance into their neighborhood. And then all the people

who now are telling us, Don't worry; it'll be fine, are going to be the exact same people saying, Oh look, Russian aggression; that's why we need NATO, is to respond to Russian aggression – which is exactly what has happened.

And so from Bill Clinton through George W. Bush and Barack Obama, all, virtually all problems between America and Russia are America's fault, just full stop. And George W. Bush brought in the Baltic states – Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia – which is directly on the Russian border, and he talked very loudly and had the rest of NATO talking very loudly about bringing Ukraine and Georgia into NATO as well. And the Russians had just – In fact, there's a Wikileaks State Department document – Is it Wikileaks? It's a State Department document where they say, Nyet means nyet – and this is the American ambassador, says, Hey, so Putin made himself really clear that we better effin' not think seriously about doing Ukraine in NATO, that this is a red line, and he means it kind of a thing. And this is exactly the fire that they're playing with.

And now in Ukraine the USA has overthrown the government in Kiev twice in ten years, and this is like if Russia overthrew the government in Canada twice. We would go to war. The USA would go to war. We wouldn't even screw around with it. That would be it. And that's what we've done there, the Orange Revolution of 2004 and then the Maidan Revolution of 2014.

This is all aided and abetted by the US, and they're caught red-handed. The Russians intercepted their call and put it on YouTube. And there's Victoria Nuland, Robert Kagan's wife, the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, on the phone with Geoffrey Pyatt, the ambassador to Ukraine, and they're plotting the coup. It's as plain as day. You might remember the headline was "F*** the EU," because Victoria Nuland used a bad word, and so CNN went, Oh, tee hee hee, she used a bad word. But what was the conversation? The conversation was, Hi, Geoffrey, it's me, Victoria, calling to plot the coup in Ukraine. And that was what they talked about the whole time. There's no question about it. They were picking the new government and talking about bringing in the vice president and a guy named Serry from the United Nations to help glue this thing together and make it all happen. And they did it. And the head of strat for George Friedman said this is the most obvious coup in world history. And Ray McGovern and everybody else agrees that that's exactly what it was.

And so when they did that, that's what provoked the Russian seizure of Crimea, which to them is like the Alamo times a million. They lost hundreds of thousands of men – hundreds and hundreds of thousands of soldiers died fighting the Nazis in Crimea in World War II. So I'm from Texas, and the Alamo, it really is kind of a big deal, especially for people whose families go back a ways. We're talking a few dozen guys died there, okay, and they really had no business. They were trespassing. This is the Alamo times a million. Crimea is Russia's like Houston is America's, and basically Khrushchev in a drunken fit in the middle of the night in the '40s, this communist dictator of the USSR, had "given it" to Ukraine, but it didn't matter, because everybody answered to the Kremlin anyway.

And then I would note the Russians were perfectly happy leasing their naval base and having a peaceful agreement with Ukraine, about that naval base at Sevastopol in Ukraine, until America overthrew the government in Kiev for the second time. And

at that point they seized it. But despite what hype you might hear on TV about how Russia invaded Crimea, no one was killed. Not one person was killed. The only shots that were fired were over the heads of some Ukrainian soldiers who were told, You guys better turn around, pal, and that was the end of that. That's it. So yes, under international law that's not supposed to be how you do it, but then again, it wasn't legal what America was doing in Kiev, overthrowing the government there either.

And then Syria we've talked about, but I think the bottom line in Syria is why did Russia finally directly intervene there, and it's because America was helping al Qaeda seize the Idlib province, which put them in a position to directly threaten Damascus, and Putin finally said, That's it; you cross my line, I'm not going to help you help al Qaeda put Jolani or Ayman al-Zawahiri on the throne in Damascus. Sorry. So it's all America's fault. Bill Clinton, George Bush, Barack Obama's fault, 100%. I'll give Barack Obama partial credit for only being horrible and not getting us all killed, which he would have done if he had listened to his advisors, who wanted to escalate and escalate and escalate in Ukraine and in Syria as well.

WOODS: We did an episode on Syria, you and I already, not too long ago, so I will link to that at TomWoods.com/781. So let's leave Syria to that episode. But let's say something in conclusion about drone warfare in general that's enjoyed bipartisan support. Even Bernie Sanders supports that. What can you say about that in terms of what its goals have been and what its actual fruits have been?

HORTON: All right, well, part of the goal is to just kill suspects so that then there's not a question of what you've got to do with these guys if you catch them somewhere, which is the big thing. And so it's a cheat. They say that they only use these things to go after al Qaeda and dangerous terrorists where they could not otherwise get them. But they're not trying to capture them; they're just trying to kill them. And that's been shown over and over.

And the two most important cases — No. The two most important cases for the theory of US law, not the two most important cases. The two most important cases for the theory of US law are Obama's drone murders of Anwar al-Awlaki and his son, Abdulrahman, who was only a 16-year-old boy. Both of them American-born American citizens, which actually doesn't matter. They're US persons; they're 100% protected by the Bill of Rights, even when they travel overseas. And they could have been captured. Certainly the boy wasn't a terrorist at all. The boy was out looking for his father, full stop. He was not a terrorist in any sense. He was trying to stop his father and bring him home, and they just murdered him simply because he knew too much, apparently.

In fact, you know, they say it was an accident; they were trying to kill the guy next to him. But John Brennan, the current head of the CIA, he was the head of counterterrorism in the White House at the time, and he said he didn't believe that. Well, then I don't either, thank you very much. If he says I don't have to, then good. I think that they deliberately targeted him, and I think it was because he knew too much about his father's prior relationship with the FBI and who knows whatever else. I guess Emptywheel probably knows.

And this is a whole new thing, man, to have an American president have American citizens assassinated by spies and/or military forces like that overseas and claim that it's legal, claim openly in the newspapers to have the authority to do it, as Obama has done. He should have been impeached and removed and convicted and sent to prison for murder, simple as that. Has no authority whatsoever to do that. I mean, you're the constitutional law guy. What the hell do I know?

But anyway, in Pakistan they did kill a lot of old CIA guys, but to what good – Pardon me. Old al Qaeda, core al Qaeda guys, but to what good effect? I don't really know. I mean, it seems like a lot of them, if they didn't have safe haven in Pakistan, they fled home to Yemen and helped spread the al Qaeda problem back to Yemen and back to Somalia and back to Libya and places like that. And at the same time that they were killing al Qaeda guys in Pakistan, they made a deal with the Pakistani government to kill their enemies too: not the Afghan Taliban that America fights, but the Pakistani Taliban, which is a separate group and only has a beef with the Pakistani government.

And so the US got involved in that fight and ended up further destabilizing, only making the Pakistani Taliban more powerful, and further destabilizing that state, which is really four countries just barely held together with military power and bubblegum and string, and is sitting on a pile of nuclear weapons and is sitting next door to their avowed enemy state, India, that they fought I think for six wars since the end of World War II era. So it's been incredibly dangerous, and the Pakistan-India border is the most dangerous place in the world right now, and the fight over Kashmir. You know, dollars to dimes that that's the next place there will be a nuclear exchange in anger on the planet Earth, will be there on that border, and America has done everything but try to negotiate some sort of just settlement and peace between India and Pakistan. Instead, we arm them both, and then certainly in the case of Pakistan, we bomb the hell out of it and destabilize the hell out of it too.

And then I talked about the drone war in Yemen. I guess I left out how it really only made al Qaeda more and more powerful the whole time they were bombing it. Now they're bombing it and fighting for it at the same time.

George Bush took a local matter that had nothing to do with al Qaeda, and he turned it into an al Qaeda-linked insurgency in Somalia with his invasion of 2006. Christmas 2006 he hired the Ethiopians to invade Somalia, and they turned that place upside down, and the war that they caused there, they had extremely bad weather anyway, but there was no capitalism there, Tom, to ameliorate the effects of the famine because of the war. All of the markets were closed. All the fields went fallow. Whoever did have a crop couldn't sell it to anybody. Nobody could travel; no one had any money. The entire system of distribution of food broke down, and hundreds and hundreds, maybe a million people by now, starved to death there. And again, all because of America and their intervention. The actual drone bombing are actually only a small part of that Somalia war, but they have time and time again killed innocent people: men, women, children burned to death, bodies torn apart, worst kind of nightmare you could imagine at the hands of the Democrats there with their drones.

And then Afghanistan has had a drone war as part of the war in Afghanistan all along. And the war against the Islamic State in Iraq and in eastern Syria had a drone component all along too. The Air Force, especially in Iraq, has been absolutely

bombing the bejesus out of them since August of 2014. And in fact, AirWars.org, there's a guy named Chris Woods who just does an incredible job of keeping track of all the casualties. And the numbers can be deceiving too, because numbers are just numbers. But they're a clue to the amount of chaos and devastation that America spreads around with these drones.

And we've got whole new drone bases going in in Central Africa to help spread the Boko Haram problem around, the insurgency based out of Nigeria there. So they just keep – I mean, it's basically like in *Fantasia*, where the sorcerer's apprentice, he's got the hatchet and he's trying to cut up the brooms, and basically to kill the brooms because they keep bringing in the water, and he doesn't know the spell to make them stop, but then every time he cuts them up they just turn into more and more and more, and then they're bringing in more and more pails of water and flooding him even worse. And that's America's foreign policy right there with these drones basically, is it seems like a useful tool today, but the consequences – I mean, never mind the morality of it, but in American state craft terms, it seems like a useful tool, but then the blowback is always –

Oh, I could have mentioned – Zazi, who was – the following terrorist attacks are not FBI put-up jobs. Most of them are, but these aren't. Zazi, the Afghan who's living in Denver, was going to blow up some stuff in New York but got busted in the plot, thank goodness. The Times Square bomber, Faisal Shahzad, he was a Pakistani-American naturalized citizen, had an advanced degree and a professional job and a big house and a wife and a life and an American dream going on. He went home to Pakistan. He saw his family, where he's from, their neighborhood devastated by American drone strikes, and he joined up the Pakistani Taliban, and they taught him how to make bombs. And luckily his was a big failure, but that was the Times Square attack of 2010. Before him was the underpants bomber, who was blowback from the drone war going on in Yemen, who was sent by one of the al Qaeda guys there. And I'm sorry, I've got more. And in fact, Orlando, he invoked the drone war too, the Orlando shooter, Mateen, did.

WOODS: You know, Scott, it occurs to me that – It's a good thing I bothered to look at my notes here – I might have actually skipped the most important thing, which is ISIS, because that's where Trump just goes all out, We've just got to pound them; we need a military response – whatever. He's thinking in terms of that. In other areas, you can at least interpret some of what he says as favoring some kind of disengagement, but not here. So now let's say you've got his ear. What do you say to him about this? He says, Look, these people are uncivilized; they're barbaric; they're terrible; they're causing all kinds of problems, and we've got to go smash them. Why would you say that's not a good idea? Doesn't that seem – you know, they are bad guys, so what's the problem?

HORTON: Well, I would say, Mr. President, as you know, this is all George Bush and Barack Obama's fault, and every bit of American intervention over there – and really, if you want to go back to Bush, Sr. As you said, Mr. President, if we hadn't screwed around over there at all in the last 25 years, never mind 15, we'd be better off. And you're exactly right.

All we can do is make things worse, and right now it's literally a battle of ten armies over there. You've got the Peshmerga; you have the YPG among the Kurds – two different major factions of Kurds fighting. You have the Iraqi Shiite army, the Iraqi Shiite militias; you have Iraqi Sunni militias and Iraqi Turkmen militias, who are allied with the Turkish government, who is also backing al Qaeda guys in their war against Assad, but Assad is also fighting his army against the Islamic State with help from Hezbollah and Russia and Iranian Quds Force. So what's that? 13? So which sides are we supposed to take in this thing, and against which, and when, and for how long in a row before we have to stop and stab our new ally in the back and turn him back over to the tender mercies of our enemies again, or whatever it is? The whole thing is an absolute disaster.

And by the way, the Islamic State is already dead and gone anyway. They're losing Mosul right now, and even if Barack Obama called off the air power this instant, it's still on. I mean, they're basically nothing but a militia anyway and on the run as it is. They're going to lose Mosul, and then very quickly they're completely surrounded by enemies in Raqqa, and then they're back to being a militia again. And if anybody thinks that an American occupation can just fight off Sunni insurgencies until one day they all just go away or something like that, I'll remind you that we've seen this movie before, just in the last decade, and it doesn't work that way.

And so the thing is, it's always a good time to stop intervening in Iraq. I don't want to – There is no "one last intervention." There is no, Okay, just two more weeks of this and then we'll stop. Just stop. Because everything we can do is just like a government intervention in the economy. All you're doing is creating a distortion that's going to end up blowing back. Let it be their problem. Say sorry, by all means. One billion apologies for George Bush and Barack Obama and everything they ever did to you guys, but now our best way to make it up to you is to just stop. That should be the Trumpian foreign policy for Iraq and Syria.

WOODS: All right, so those are – so we've talked about some countries, talked about Islamic State, talked about the drones. But what about just the overall picture, the overall American empire project? Here's a guy who claims to be a nationalist, and he's opposed to globalism. Maybe he'd be receptive to a Scott Horton anti-empire message. What would that message be?

HORTON: Yeah, well, I would try to phrase it to him the way a right-wing nationalist would like to hear it. "A right-wing nationalist is never afraid to get into a war if he has to. Come on, let's go kick some butt," and all of that. But all this do-gooderism isn't worth it, and that's the way the Syria war, the full-scale Syria attack in 2013 was stopped, was attacks from the right. And you know, I really can't stand this, but it's true: that American conservatives said we're selfish, we don't want to launch a war to help those lousy Syrians, screw them, we're not going to do them the favor of invading their country for them. And you know, it's stupid, but I guess whatever. If I have to say my lines, then I'll say, "Donald Trump, shouldn't we stop wasting our money helping people by burning them all to death like this and turning their societies upside down and inside out?"

Why in the world would anyone think that the middle part of North America should be the dominant force in the Middle East, in Western Europe, in Eastern Europe, in the

Pacific Ocean, in the heart of Africa, where the Army is now moving with their massive Special Forces pivot there, since they're left out of the Pacific pivot. And you know, that's a government program, the Army.

And it's crazy. And also it's a betrayal, frankly, of the people who sign up to fight for this country in the military, who almost all are, you know, broadly speaking, right-wing nationalists like Donald Trump, who believe that they are fighting, one, to protect Americans' lives, and/or two, their freedom, somehow, from threats. But who do not sign up to be the armed sociologists of the world out there performing experiments in better governments in other people's societies. And when they get their legs and their genitals blown off on a mission out there, righting a Humvee around in some God forsaken valley none of us will ever hear of in Afghanistan, on the far side of the world, in exile on the far side of the planet Earth from here, it's stabbing them in the back.

If we're taking care of our soldiers and supporting our troops and all of that, then that means the civilian part of the government and it means the democracy part of the society, the American adults who approve or disapprove of these things, that we live up to our promise to the military people that we will only put them in harm's way when it's absolutely necessary. We're not going to throw their life away, because Hillary prefers this Sunni militia to that Shiite one or vice versa depending on the country.

And so that I think is a good way to attack the empire from the right, that Dick Cheney, he says deficits don't matter, but that's just not true. And it's also not true that we can be a free and a great country here at the same time that we're trying to be a great empire around the world. Those entire concepts are enemies, at loggerheads with each other. Unless the people between San Diego, California and Bangor, Maine all just exist to be fodder, tax fodder and cannon fodder for an empire. But we thought the deal was we're born free and we allow this government to exist to protect our rights, to protect us, and that's it. And so if intervening in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Mali, and Nigeria, and Iraq again, and Syria, and Ukraine for Christ's sake, all up in the grill of Vladimir Putin where we don't belong — I forgot how I started that sentence. But all that clearly is weakening us. It's putting us in an untenable position for the long term. And it's a gigantic waste of trillions of dollars.

And the reality is that Donald Trump is not really any sort of libertarian at all, or even really a Pat Buchananite, because that would at least imply that he reads and stuff like that. And the thing is, Tom, he's said before in his big foreign policy speech, it was actually introduced by an original neoconservative, Zalmay Khalilzad, and he said — he began his speech by saying, "America is overextended. Overextended, I tell you." And so, but here's what we're going to do: we're going to turn the American economy around so that we can afford to be overextended, and then it won't be quite so over; it'll just be extended, and it'll be great.

And that's what Donald Trump thinks is greatness, is really the same thing that William Kristol thinks is greatness, what they call primacy or hegemony, and it just means imperial domination. And as they put it quite frankly, Zalmay Khalilzad actually helped write up the defense planning guidance in 1992 that said we will build such a powerful

world empire that no one will ever even consider trying to challenge us. It would be too expensive, and we would bomb them before they got anywhere even near started trying to build up a military that could oppose ours. And never mind the nukes out there in the world. But that's what they're trying to do, and that's why the constant demonization of Russia and the constant demonization of China and of Iran and, for that matter, of Cuba and North Korea, because it doesn't matter whether they're powerful or whether they're little guys; no one is allowed to tell America no, ever, or we'll kill you, and we'll starve your people to death. We will bomb them to death. And that is our game.

And you know, I don't know what Trump thinks America really is, but if he thinks it's a place and not the title of a military force, then I don't know. He's not from DC, so it's possible that somebody could get through to him with these type of talking points. I don't know. I'm sure there's somebody who could say it in more of a right-wing way than me to try to get him to get it.

But the real problem here is the realization that we all have, is that he's not even smart enough to know that he needs to be talking to our friends at Cato like Ted Carpenter and Doug Bandow, who are both, you know, could get a security clearance, who could be the National Security Advisor or the Secretary of State. He's not talking to Andrew Bacevich; he's not talking to Paul Pillar or the guys at *The National Interest* magazine. He doesn't even know who these guys are. He doesn't even read Daniel Larison. He doesn't even read Pat Buchanan. I mean, if you were Donald Trump, isn't it the one thing you would read, is Pat? He doesn't even read Pat. He doesn't know anything.

And so you stick him with someone like James Woolsey or, God forbid, they're talking about bringing in Stephen Hadley, the guy that funneled the Niger uranium forgeries into the pipeline to start the Iraq War. They're talking about bringing him on maybe to be Secretary of Defense or something. I mean, personnel is policy. That's what they say, and that's absolutely true. Look at the first Bush, Jr. administration, as I said, the way Dick Cheney set up that separate government and what they were able to accomplish to no good end.

WOODS: It seems like an awful lot of trouble to go to just to want to change things by 4%, you know? I mean, that's what that sort of team would amount to. We'll change foreign policy by about 4%, and that's about what it should be. Instead of the total overhaul that we obviously need, and that in his more lucid moments Trump seems to be groping toward. But then he turns around, and he's got Bolton and Woolsey and horrible people around him, and he's calling them great guys – and Tom Cotton – and these are wonderful people. These are not wonderful people. Did you hear – Are you listening to the other sentences that you're uttering and then contrasting them with what these people say?

HORTON: Right.

WOODS: So you went to all this trouble so that you could get some more right-wing hangers-on into the Washington power structure? That was what it was for? Really?

HORTON: And you know, I really like highlighting Bandow, because Bandow speaks in Donald Trump's language, as far as — Don't misunderstand me, Doug. I don't meant the one syllable thing. I mean the part about our allies are a bunch of free riders, and what are we really getting out of this? It's not just imperial domination. They're all a bunch of welfare dependents, and let's look at that end of it, right? That's more of a conservative or right-based opposition to the empire, and that coincides with what Trump says about the Germans and the rest of them in Europe. And the Asian allies as well. "Why are we still paying their bills?" he asks all the time.

And so Bandow is basically Trump, only brilliant. Bandow thinks the same things, only you read his articles in *Forbes*, and you go, Wow, this guy is really an expert on all this stuff. And he literally used to work for Ronald Reagan, so he has just a great resume. He's just brilliant. He would be a perfect National Security Advisor. And Ted Carpenter at Cato also is absolutely great, and again, could get the job, presumably could pass the clearance no problem, and I think could be a Secretary of State.

Paul Pillar, who is very, very sorry he lied us into Iraq War II, he could be the head of the CIA. Or he could be somebody important on the National Security Council to try to protect Trump from the crazies. Paul Pillar, I need you to protect me from the crazies. I want you to be my Deputy National Security Advisor. How hard is that? And yet he's never even heard of Paul Pillar. That's the part that's really killing me here, because I think those guys probably would say yes if he offered them the job, and I think that actually, Tom, there's only about a handful of guys who are good on this stuff and who could get the job, who could qualify for the job. And so in other words, it would be very easy for Trump to figure out what I have just told you, and yet he is not going to be able to. His son-in-law is going to pick his cabinet for him.

WOODS: Then list it out. Let's list it out. Give me the half-dozen people that — realistically now — it's plausible that he could choose.

HORTON: All right, so I would say Bandow for National Security Advisor, Carpenter for Secretary of State, Pillar for head of the CIA, and Bacevich — which, I know Bacevich wouldn't do it, but we're fantasizing here anyway. Bacevich for Secretary of Defense. And —

WOODS: Could there be a role for a Jim Webb anywhere?

HORTON: Mm, possibly.

WOODS: He's a Democrat. That would be reaching across the aisle.

HORTON: Yeah, yeah, no, maybe find a place for him on the National Security Council or something like that. I could maybe see that. Or you know, I don't know, man. He's a wishy-washy kind of guy. I'm trying to think off the top of my head. I just heard something horrible about him the other day, in fact, but I can't remember what it is, so I can't say it.

WOODS: Okay, okay. All right, well, I mean, these are good people. I would be thrilled — I mean, you and I have nits to pick with each of these people —

HORTON: Oh sure.

WOODS: – but for heaven's sake, I would take them.

HORTON: Well, yeah, I mean, Paul Pillar, you know, he really did lie us into war with Iraq, but you know what? He's pretty damn good too. And over at *The National Interest*, there are probably a few more names I'm not thinking of. There are a couple of writers from *The National Interest*. And probably I would like Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, who are the realists, but they're politically radioactive –

WOODS: Oh yeah, there's no way.

HORTON: – because they wrote the book, *The Israel Lobby*.

WOODS: Right. When I had Stephen Walt on my show – I'm sure you've had – Have you had him on your show?

HORTON: Yeah, yeah, I've talked to him a few times.

WOODS: Yeah, he joked about how he decided to write this book when he decided that he was quite content not ever having a government job after that.

HORTON: Right, yeah.

WOODS: (laughing) And then he decided, Okay, I guess I can go ahead and write the book.

HORTON: Yeah, and you know, that's going to be a big problem for Donald Trump too, is because he doesn't know nothing about nothing. And it's funny to hear peace mongers try to give him all this credit for saying that he would like to negotiate a deal in Palestine or something like that. He doesn't know the first thing about nothing. He doesn't know what the West Bank is a bank of at all. He doesn't know if it's a bank with an ATM or – Is that a bank of a river? What river? He doesn't know anything. He just heard that that would be a great success of a deal, because what a big white whale of a deal to get, is something over there they're fighting over in the Middle East or whatever. But then everybody read him the riot act and said, Hey, stop acting like Palestinians are humans and have rights or anything like that, and he said, Oh, okay, sorry, I'll tell you what we'll do: we'll move the embassy to Jerusalem, the universal, eternal, undivided capital of Israel or whatever.

So I think anybody who had their hopes up that he was going to be any kind of fair broker when it comes to the occupations in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip in East Jerusalem are going to be sorely disappointed. Although it can't have been very many people convinced themselves to believe in that. But what happened was when he said, Yeah, I don't know what's wrong with being evenhanded, all the neocons completely freaked out. So then when the neocons completely freaked out, that made it seem like there was really some substance to what he had said, but it wasn't really. He just likes land deals, you know what I mean?

WOODS: Yeah, yeah, and the thing is I think we're inclined to think if the neocons are upset about something, that's because there's real substance, and —

HORTON: Yeah, but it's not like he has a real position about Palestine —

WOODS: Yeah, and of course —

HORTON: — and those guys deserve their own state some day or whatever.

WOODS: Right, what we need to remember is that the neocons go ballistic over nothing; over the tiniest little grain of sand out of place they go ballistic. So it doesn't mean that Trump is like Pat Buchanan or something; it just means the neocons are extremely paranoid and they go completely overboard. So anyway, listen, we've covered what I think we should cover. Oh gosh, we've been going on forever (laughing).

HORTON: But hey, you can add in my longer answers too; I don't care.

WOODS: No, why the heck would I do that, right?

HORTON: Well, I don't know, man. I do go on and on; I know.

WOODS: Yeah, but I let you — Look, you can teach this stuff, and when you're on the show, I like to just sit back and let you talk to the audience, and that's what we did today. So that's the stuff — Now, what you of course need to do —

HORTON: Oh, can I tell you the worst thing about what happened yesterday?

WOODS: Tell me the worst thing. And by the way, yesterday — bear in mind this isn't going to run until Friday.

HORTON: Well, yeah, I mean on election day there Tuesday. Well, first of all, the best thing was Hillary Clinton lost, ha ha. But the worst thing that happened was "other Hillary Clinton" won: Liz Cheney. And Tom, I'm here to tell you, man, you might even put in sound effects there — like [sinister sound effect]. She is the most dangerous person in America now. She's only in the House of Representatives, but I wouldn't sell her short. She's as smarts as a whip; she's as evil as her father; she's a true believer. She writes the books — He tells her what to say; she writes the books. She is 100% Daddy's girl, and she's only, like, 50 or something, and we're going to be stuck with her for the rest of our lives. She's in the House now; she'll be in the Senate in two or four years or whenever the next Wyoming Senate race is, and then we are all just doomed. She's never going away. She's guaranteed to be absolutely horrible on every single thing, no matter what. And effectively. I mean, she'll be the chair of the committee in no time, I'm telling you, man. It's on. On.

WOODS: Well, I'm sorry; I'm sorry that everybody had to hear that, but it's need to known.

HORTON: I am too, right?

WOODS: Yeah.

HORTON: I hate being the bearer of bad news, but I've been carrying this thing around on my shoulders. It's weighing me down, I tell you.

WOODS: Yeah. Well, let's just say you've learned to cope with being the bearer of bad news, right?

HORTON: (laughing) Yeah, okay.

WOODS: (laughing) Okay? All right, I want people to make sure and visit Scott in particular at LibertarianInstitute.org, which is a very worthy project that is deserving of your support, so do check out LibertarianInstitute.org.

HORTON: Thanks.

WOODS: And Scott, thanks for our chat today. Let's get you back on; we'll talk about one thing at a time next time.

HORTON: That sounds good.

WOODS: All right, good.

HORTON: Thank you very much for having me, Tom.