

Larry C. Johnson & Col. Larry Wilkerson: Russia Says 'NO DEAL' to NATO

#M3

Hi everybody, today is Friday, August 22nd, 2025, and our friends Oh Wilkerson and Larry Johnson are back with us. Welcome! Hey there. What happened? What happened to Monday? Good lord, this week is blitzing by. Yeah.

#M2

These weeks, for me, really do go by. I'm going to be dead before I know it.

#M3

Let me start with what Donald Trump tweeted two days ago. Here is what he said: "It's very hard, if not impossible, to win a war without attacking an invader's country. It's like a great team in sports that has a fantastic defense but is not allowed to play offense. There is no chance of winning. It is like that with Ukraine and Russia. Crooked and grossly incompetent Joe Biden wouldn't let Ukraine fight back, only defend, defend. How did that work out?" What is he trying to say, Carl? I'll start with you. What is he trying to say? It's somehow dangerous, the way that he's picturing this situation.

#M2

I don't believe Donald Trump does these. I believe he has a cadre—perhaps a dozen, perhaps half a dozen, perhaps only one or two people in the background—who do this for him. I don't even know if they run them by him for approval, or run it by the chief of staff or someone else who might have the authority to approve or disapprove. But I don't think he puts these things out. If he does, he's just amplifying the fact that he doesn't know what he's talking about. I mean, read it again. It's totally confusing. It goes from one thing to another, to the back, to opposites. It's insane. It just says the mind that put that together, however deliberate it was, isn't functioning on a basis you and I would recognize as logic.

#M1

Yeah, I mean, look, they're pushing a narrative that is completely divorced from the facts. In 2023, the United States—our military—played a direct, active role in planning Ukraine's counteroffensive. Now, the generals—I think Cavoli was involved with that. I don't know if Donahue was or not.

#M2

Breedlove was, for sure.

#M1

Phil Breedlove, yeah. So... these guys are incompetent, grossly incompetent. They should be court-martialed because they launched this counteroffensive against Russian entrenched positions—three fortified lines—without using any kind of air power. How in God's name are ground troops supposed to penetrate reinforced, fortified lines without any air power? And, gee, surprise, surprise, the Ukrainian forces were chewed up. Well, that wasn't in a defensive posture; that was an offensive posture. So, I mean, just that one point alone illustrates that whoever wrote this—whether it was Trump or some lackey—they don't know what the hell they're talking about. And it's just flat-out ignorance.

#M2

Nima, they haven't even read their basic Clausewitz. I mean, listen to the words used there. As Larry just said, and as Clausewitz makes quite clear, the strongest form of warfare is the defense, not the offense—the defense. But there are so many other factors that impinge on this. Like, for example, there's a three—some people say, I say four—to one odds in terms of the population and the number of troops, therefore musterable. There's also a vast difference in the industrial capability if alerted and aware and functioning smoothly, which Russia's is now. Ukraine's is degraded to the maximum extent possible, other than total degradation.

There are so many other things at play in this. And to have someone pontificating like that from this new medium of, you know, whatever the hell he's putting it out on—Twitter or whatever—is absurd, especially coming from a leader of what is supposed to be the leader of the free world. It's preposterous. I mean, the previous presidents of this republic—even the dorks—certainly those like Eisenhower and Kennedy, and I would say H.W. Bush, Abraham Lincoln, for example, FDR, for example, must be rolling in their graves at what the White House has descended to in terms of leadership. I wouldn't even use the term.

#M3

Larry, when he's talking about attacking the invaders' country, I cannot imagine the Ukrainians being able to do that without the full participation of NATO and NATO fighters. You have long-range missiles, fighter jets, all of this intelligence coming from the United States and Europeans. How can they do that without NATO being totally involved in it?

#M1

Well, it's not just NATO. It's the United States. The United States is the key player in this. The Brits, for example, have the Storm Shadow missile. However, they need the intelligence targeting data that only the United States can provide, because Britain is not running around with the fleet of satellites that we are. So whatever's done to attack inside of Russia is, by definition, being done with the complete knowledge and participation of the United States. So Trump is playing a dangerous game in this regard. He's not listening to what the Russians are saying. I mean, while the Russians are pleased that they finally have somebody to talk to—because, you know, I think I mentioned to you when I was in Moscow in 2023, there was Pepe Escobar, me, and Sergei Ryabkov, the deputy foreign minister, chatting.

And Ryabkov said at the time, "Hey, we don't have anybody to talk to. There are no lines of communication between Moscow and Washington. Now there are." So the Russians are at least acknowledging that. Now, they're not always happy with what they're hearing come out of those communications, or with Trump's failure to understand what the Russian position is. So that's the positive. But Trump is really continuing to enable NATO's confrontation with Russia, and this is not going to dissuade Moscow from continuing offensive operations until, frankly, they defeat the Ukrainian forces.

#M2

And fundamentally, Nima, there has been a gross misinterpretation of munitions and of the impact of munitions. And it's partly because of our stupid, brain-dead media, and partly because people don't know. I would submit that even some of the leaders here—I'm not even sure I wouldn't include Putin in that, unless he's got two or three of his people right beside him to correct him and tell him, "Okay, you're making a mistake, but you're making it for political reasons, I understand." These missiles are meaningless. Bombs are meaningless. You can bomb somebody as long as you want, and try bombing a country of ten time zones. Try bombing a country with the strategic depth of Moscow. You could take the entire panoply of missiles that NATO, including the United States, would produce for the next year and send them into Russia, and you would not convince Russia of anything.

I'm talking about even these new hypervelocity missiles. They are a new dimension, no question about it. But the new dimension they bring is really when they're equipped with nuclear warheads. That's the only way air power—coercive air power—will ever defeat anyone: with a nuclear weapon. So all this brouhaha about Storm Shadows and ATACMS is just so much political garbage. It gives people in Moscow, Washington, and Brussels a chance to pontificate: "Oh, they gave them this, they gave them that, that'll shoot here, that'll shoot there, oh, it's so accurate, they can go deeper and deeper." You are not going to change the outcome of a war with that. The only way you change the outcome of a war is to grab the son of a bitch by the lower quarters, rip him off, and put him in the grave.

That's the only way you do it. This is all a tempest in a teapot. Unless you go nuclear. And then air power does have an overwhelming advantage. Now, we preached for a long time, and the Russians bought this in 2013 and 2014—we saw evidence of this—that a huge combination of these PGMs, all that you could put together, could have the impact of a tactical nuclear weapon. I'll give you that. But I'll tell you this right now, even though I hate to say it: a tactical nuclear weapon is not going to change the dimension of the war either. It's just going to piss a lot of people off and lead to an exchange of bigger and bigger nuclear weapons. That's the danger. Air power is oversold, completely oversold.

#M3

I think, Larry, that's why the Russian army so far hasn't gone that far in terms of bombing Kyiv, bombing the western part of Ukraine. That was the strategy. They wanted to keep the ground in the eastern part of Ukraine and just crush the Ukrainian army in that region.

#M1

Well, to Colonel Wilkerson's point, it's never been a part of Soviet doctrine. During World War II, the only side that was bombing civilian centers—well, there were two. The Germans were doing it in London and in some other European countries, but the ones who did it the most were the United States and Great Britain. I mean, we were bombing—Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, Frankfurt, Cologne—they suffered, they were devastated. And we were killing civilians. We did it in Japan, too. So, you know, and even today, I was having a conversation yesterday with some friends, both retired military.

But, you know, this whole subject of World War II came up. And actually, they didn't have a problem with it. And I was pointing it out to them. I said, guys, you know, the Soviets never did that. They stayed on the ground. And the Russians continue that, because the Russians actually have been very, very cautious about not killing civilians. Whereas the United States and Great Britain, like the Israelis, are happy to kill civilians. We see that as sort of a way to victory. And it's downright evil. But, you know, until we acknowledge that as part of our military tradition in the West, that we are completely careless when it comes to threatening the lives of civilians.

So what you see with the ground operations right now, where the Russians are—you know, people are warned, "Get the heck out of the city, we're coming." And I still hear this criticism from the likes of Jack Keane and Breedlove and others, Hodges, that, "Oh, look how terrible the Russians are. They've only advanced this little distance in three and a half years." I always look around and say, until you guys can figure out why the hell you got your ass kicked in Afghanistan, you should shut up. You don't have any room to talk.

#M2

Absolutely. And just to augment that a little bit, we're talking about a situation where, post-Nuremberg and particularly after segments of the Geneva Conventions, Dresden was a war crime. Cologne was a war crime. London was a war crime. And many would argue that Hitler had no intent of doing this sort of thing until the British, with Churchill's full approval, opened up with nighttime bombing of cities and really terror—what would be war crimes today. And Hitler responded by bombing London, and that's what Churchill wanted, so it would drag America in. So Edward R. Murrow would go up on that building and say, "I'm here tonight in London, and you can see the bombs falling all around on London." And all of a sudden, the United States was in the war. Yeah. Great propaganda.

#M1

Well, and you know, it shows how accidents—something that's not planned—can spiral out of control. The first bombing of London by the Germans was an accident. That was not their intended target; they got lost and dropped the bombs. But then, in response to that, Churchill ordered the hit on Berlin. And once Berlin gets hit, then the Germans respond. So this is a classic case where something that was not intended—completely unintentional—ignites something that's a big conflagration. And that's one of the dangers we face today with what's going on with NATO's involvement in the Black Sea, up in the Baltics, and in Ukraine itself: that somebody's going to do something stupid and accidental, and it's going to elicit a response from the Russians that will then spiral out of control.

#M2

Like a parachute operation on Kaliningrad. Yeah, yeah.

#M3

Colonel, does Trump really believe that if they go to fight the Russians, they can defeat them? Because the way he's bragging, you have to have something on the ground to back it up. It's not just about bragging. You have to understand the situation in Ukraine and then decide what you're going to talk about. But it doesn't seem like he knows the capabilities of the army. He doesn't know what's going on in Ukraine, and the combination of the two is disastrous. The outcome, the way he's thinking about it, is disastrous.

#M2

Well, let's just back up a little bit and say, if he puts those Marines in Venezuela, I'll give you a prediction right now and give it a 75% chance of coming to fruition: the Marines will get defeated. Now, there are a lot of reasons I say that, and I have a lot of respect for the Marines. I spent a lot of my military time with the Marines. I was the director of their war college. They don't have the sustaining power. They don't have the mobility. They don't have the backup logistics. If the

Venezuelans went to the mountains and challenged them to come after them, it would be another Afghanistan. So Trump doesn't understand that we are broken, and we're also broken badly in the military. I don't know if you saw the testimony. It was—what's his name? Glenn, Glenn, help me here—the kind of recalcitrant, outcast reporter, but he was interviewing—Glenn Greenwald?

#M1

Yeah, Greenwald.

#M2

He was interviewing the guy who got released by Hegseth from the Pentagon. I forget his name now, but he was sort of a deputy chief of staff or something like that. And he just ran through what our logistics and what our munitions position is right now. We have bled them down to the bottom. I wouldn't, in any way, shape, or form—were I the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the Unified Command Commander for Southern Command—contemplate putting Marines in the mountains of Venezuela. Not for a minute would I contemplate it, because you're going to have another Afghanistan.

#M1

Yeah, I mean, just, you know, the tactical challenge that Venezuela presents. So, you know, from the coast to get to Caracas, like from the international airport, which is out by the coast, you've got about an hour drive up through the mountains. So you're climbing, climbing, climbing, and then you get to Caracas, and it sits sort of like in a bowl surrounded by mountains. I mean, this is not—you know, that one road is like ambush territory all the way. OK? I mean, it's—you know, and we'd end up killing civilians. I mean, this is—you know, initially I thought this was a joke. And then, you know, I had missed the report that in May they removed the head of the National Intelligence Council because they had produced an assessment that basically, while there may be contacts or relationships between Tren de Agua and the Maduro government, the Maduro government was not directing the Tren de Agua.

And so they removed the head of the National Intelligence Council because he wouldn't say what the Trump administration wanted him to say. Well, that is blatant interference in the intelligence process. Now, it's true, the intelligence community fully opened itself up to this by its political behavior against Donald Trump, where they were cooking the intelligence and doing some other things. But, you know, our system right now is broken. There's no faith or confidence in it. And if Trump's stupid enough to try to launch a military operation against Venezuela, you know, it'll be the end of his presidency, because that's a tar baby he's not going to be able to get off his hands.

#M2

And even the age of Smedley Butler going ashore and, for capitalism—as he put it later—taking a Marine battalion and then cowing the capital city and its leaders into submission, is over. Yeah, yeah.

#M3

And Venezuela is somehow feeling the pressure. They're preparing for any sort of attack, and they're talking about the Bolivarian National Militia. They're preparing them for any sort of attack on the part of the United States. I don't know how serious that is, but that would be unbelievable.

#M2

If it's the U.S. Marines, it'll be different than the Bay of Pigs, but the result won't be much different. That's some rough stuff down there—Colombia and Venezuela—that's some rough stuff, as you probably know.

#M3

It would create some sort of chaos, Larry, by the way, in South America. I don't know how people here in Brazil are feeling about what's going on there, and you know, it's not just about Venezuela—the whole situation in South America, I think, would change if something happens.

#M1

It would reignite a level of anti-Americanism that we haven't seen since the '60s. And in the '60s, it was somewhat prevalent because of U.S. interference. I mean, when you go back and look, basically helping facilitate and maintain Somoza in power in Nicaragua, the CIA was closely aligned with Manuel Noriega after we took out Torrijos. Torrijos was taken out of the picture. I know for a fact that the former president—when the guy was acting president—he was a CIA asset. So the CIA had control of Venezuela for quite some time. The CIA's role in Brazil with the military coups, the CIA's role in Argentina with military coups—so, you know, the United States didn't exactly build a kind of legacy where people go, "Oh, man, those Americans are great. Let's have them here." You know, just the opposite.

#M2

And don't forget Allende and Kissinger in Chile. Yeah. Milton Friedman going down there and saying, "I can deal with this general. He's a good guy."

#M1

Yeah. It's been, you know, almost every—I don't think you can find a single country in South America or in Central America that hasn't had to deal with U.S. interference. So, but this is— you

know, we talked about this before, but Trump wanting to use military power to go after the drug problem is just counterproductive, because you can do it at home. It's very easy. Go after the money. Go after the U.S. corporations that are facilitating this activity.

#M2

And nobody's got the courage.

#M1

Yeah. But, well, it's not only the courage. It's that they're political donors to the Republicans and the Democrats. So, you know, you don't want to hurt your donor base. So, you know, go out and do this theater that is not going to stop the problem at all. You know, we did a—when I say "we," my partner and I—we were brought in on a case in Mexico a few, eight years ago. And it involved this aluminum that was being shipped into the United States. So what had happened was the United States had sanctioned this Chinese aluminum producer. So the aluminum producer then went to Mexico, signed a deal with the Knights Templar, one of the drug organizations.

They set up this yard where all the ingots coming in from China were then restamped as "Made in Mexico" and then shipped up into the country to U.S. manufacturers. And the only way we got onto it is one of the competitors in the United States was saying, "Hey, you know, we're getting undercut." The funny part of it was that factory in Mexico started advertising for someone to print labels for them. So we bid on the contract and won it. So we were on the inside of that operation. But it's just to illustrate, you know, this world between the drug world and the commercial world—man, it's like this. And the only way to tear it apart is to go after the money. You go after the companies, whether it's John Deere or Nike or Coca-Cola or Philip Morris. All of them, all of them are taking drug money.

#M3

Colonel, since you love Donald Trump's tweets, here is what he tweeted, picturing himself and comparing himself to Nixon. You see Donald Trump and Putin, Nixon and Khrushchev. What is he trying to portray? What is he trying to say, in your opinion?

#M2

Well, this is presidential superiority or presidential character—whatever you want to call it—by association. He doesn't have it himself, and so he's trying to create it by association. There are many more pictures like that circulating right now. I saw one yesterday, I think it was, with Eisenhower. He's trying to associate himself. I'm waiting for the one with Lincoln or George Washington. He's trying to associate himself with real presidential prowess, courage, decision-making, and so forth.

#M1

Of course, remember that in that picture, Nixon was the vice president then.

#M2

Larry, maybe you know, but I've heard both sides of this regarding J.D. Vance being the future negotiator with Russia. And then I heard the day after that it was going to be Rubio, which makes a hell of a lot more sense, cabinet-wise. But do we know who's going to be—it's not going to be Witkoff, apparently.

#M1

I have no idea. What I keep harping on is the fact that Trump doesn't understand what the Russian position is. He's maybe sort of starting to get there, but again, he continues to portray this as some sort of conflict between Vladimir Putin and Zelensky. That's not the cause of it. Or that this is just a land grab by Russia. No, that's not it either. Trump doesn't seem to appreciate that during his first term, NATO carried out more military exercises in Ukraine than had occurred under any prior administration. I mean, Trump was actually part of the problem, and he doesn't even realize it.

#M2

Yeah. It's like Kim Jong-un, Kim Jong-il, Kim Il-sung—Kim Jong-un keeps telling us, every time you exercise down there in the South and you bring B-2s into Guam and you bring carrier battle groups over here on both sides of the peninsula, you're threatening me. Right. Yeah. And we just keep on doing it. I will give us this: we've stopped it a little bit. But why haven't we stopped it, really? We don't have the military power to do it.

#M1

Yeah. Resource shortage.

#M2

Yeah.

#M3

Yeah. I would be curious to know. I don't know if you saw Larry's interview with J.D. Vance. He said that at 1 a.m. Moscow time, Donald Trump decided to talk with Putin. He called him at 1 a.m. What was that about? Do we know anything about that? What was the importance of that call?

#M1

Well, I think, one, it was Trump showing off to the Europeans, you know, number one.

#M2

I can get Putin up.

#M1

Yeah, Putin, take my phone call. You know, those clowns, they won't even call. But the other point was to make sure Putin understood what had been agreed upon among—well, I call them the European pimps. They are the Zelensky pimps. You know, Zelensky is like the one sole prostitute that this collection of pimps is putting out on the street to make money for them. But, you know, I think he'd promised Putin to keep him advised, so he was doing that. But, you know, the fact is, you just show—Putin is the hardest working president in the world, I think. Up at one, and then, you know, he's still up at night, and then he's up early, and he's taking meeting after meeting after meeting. So.

#M2

That's a wonderful metaphor, Larry. A wonderful metaphor. The pimping. I can see Putin as the only Interpol person present; the rest of them are all pimps.

#M3

Yeah. Colonel, here is what the NATO Secretary General said in the aftermath of those meetings, and the way that he sees NATO can support Ukraine.

#F2

It's hard to say exactly what the outcome will be, but clearly the U.S. will be involved. Clearly, we do not want a repeat of the Budapest Memorandum or the Minsk Agreement. These security guarantees should hold. And as I said, as a second layer on top of building the Ukrainian Armed Forces after the war, moving forward, NATO will be heavily involved there. We are already, of course, heavily involved through our command in Wiesbaden, which is helping Ukraine to stay in the fight now, but also to help Ukraine develop its armed forces as a sovereign, proud nation going forward after a peace deal. So NATO is proudly involved in all of that.

#M3

Yeah, the volume was so low, but what he was talking about—Colonel, I don't know if you heard what he was talking about. Yeah, I heard it. Your take—he was talking about how NATO can do more. Go ahead.

#M2

Well, he's talking into the very teeth of what Putin and Lavrov have said they won't accept. And like Jens Stoltenberg before him, he's bought and paid for by the Empire, and he just happens to come from Holland, I think, instead of one of the Scandinavian countries. And he wasn't around—at least I don't recall him—to support us so vigorously in the Second Iraq War, which is what got Jens into our bailiwick. "Oh, man, there's a politician who's really supporting us. Let's reward him." And then he becomes NATO Secretary General. They're cut from the same cloth. They don't listen. They don't think. They just pronounce. And they think the United States—this is the key—they think the United States is going to be behind it, because if they didn't think that, they'd be shivering in the dark.

#M1

Well, you know, it certainly appears that nobody on the Trump team even went back and looked at the proposals on security guarantees that were part of the March 2022 Istanbul communiqué. Remember, this was when Ukraine and Russia had actually reached a tentative deal, and it was then canceled and destroyed by the United States, with Boris Johnson being the point man to go over and destroy it. So back then, that agreement said, number one, the first part of the security guarantee was Ukraine's permanent neutrality and staying out of NATO—exclusion. The second was security guarantees with veto power.

So what that meant was that anything that was going to happen had to have a unanimous vote of the security guarantors, which would have included Russia. It actually included all the five standing members of the UN Security Council. Well, you know, so that would have required any military action in support of Ukraine to have basically the full blessing of the UN Security Council. Then it imposed limits on Ukraine's military, and it required territorial and legal concessions. Well, you know, this is not what NATO is talking about. NATO's talking about putting NATO troops in Ukraine, and Russia's made it clear: if you put those here, we're going to kill them. Very simple. Here is, Colonel, what Lavrov said on NBC.

#F2

Bottom line: there's no meeting planned.

#F2

President Putin said clearly that he is ready to meet, provided this meeting is really going to have an agenda—a presidential agenda.

#F2

So that's a big "if." There's no meeting planned, Mr. Foreign Minister. That's a big "if." You're saying there's no meeting planned right now.

#F2

Kristen, Kristen, Kristen, I am awfully sorry you're not listening. There is no meeting planned. And I'm not challenging this. But you cannot, I think, understand what I am saying. Putin is ready to meet with Zelensky when the agenda is ready for a summit. And this agenda is not ready at all. President Trump suggested, after Anchorage, several points which we share. And on some of them, we agreed to show some flexibility. When President Trump brought those issues to the meeting in Washington, with Zelensky present together with his European sponsors, he clearly indicated—it was very clear to everybody—that there are several principles which Washington believes must be accepted, including no NATO membership, including the discussion of territorial issues. And Zelensky said no to everything. He even said no to, as I said, canceling legislation prohibiting the Russian language. How can we meet with a person who is pretending?

#M3

It seems that there is no meeting planned.

#M2

Check out the contrast there, Nima. Here's a media representative who doesn't have time to finish a sentence and put a period. And here's a polished—maybe one of the most polished diplomats in the world—trying, and being courteous about it, to get her to listen to what he's saying. That's part of the problem we have: people don't listen. They particularly don't listen to a man who's giving them the logic of Putin's position. They just don't listen.

#M1

He does have a sense of humor. When I spoke with him in March, I told him, you know, I said, "Mr. Foreign Minister, I think they've got it wrong. You're not the Metternich of the 21st century. Metternich was the Lavrov of the 19th century." And he laughed.

#M2

That's like the story that I think I told you. Tenet comes over—George Tenet, who was DCI, he was at CIA at that time. He comes over to Powell, he shows him this transcript, and he says, "You're talking on a cell phone in the clear." And Powell says, "Where'd you get that?" He says, "From the NSA, of course." "Well, who's the conversation with?" "Well, it's with Sergei Lavrov. You're talking in the clear on your cell phone." And Powell looked at him and said, "You have no business whatsoever eavesdropping on my calls and recording them and putting them in the transcripts. I'm a cabinet officer of the United States government. You have no business doing that, but you're doing it. I understand that. And I will continue to do it, George."

#M3

I think, Larry, what Lavrov said in terms of the conditions—preconditions—before going to the meeting with Zelensky, they're so obvious. Everybody knows that. They haven't changed.

#M1

I mean, they laid it out clearly in 2022. Putin reiterated it in a speech to the foreign ministry on June 14th, 2024. So, I mean, you know, the Russians are consistent. They keep saying it over and over. And, you know, the key one is to at least allow Russian to be spoken and Russian to be used as a language, at least in Eastern Ukraine, because that is the primary language. It's not Ukrainian. And even Zelensky himself grew up speaking Russian. I've described his ability to speak Ukrainian—it's sort of like the comedian Bill Dana. This was before your time, Nima, but Larry Wilkerson knows what I'm talking about. Bill Dana played this character, José Jiménez, and he would go, "My name, José Jiménez." That's how Zelensky speaks Ukrainian, okay?

#M2

You couldn't make this stuff up. You really couldn't. You know, John le Carré wouldn't even make this stuff up.

#M3

Yeah, Colonel, it seems that Donald Trump, if he really wants to do something about the case of Ukraine, needs to make Zelensky understand the position of the Russians, which is so obvious, as Larry pointed out. Do you think that Donald Trump has the stamina—or, I would say, the willingness—to go in that direction?

#M2

I don't see it, because I think there's a part of his character that really longs to be accepted, especially by the person with whom he's talking at the time—unless it's just a little tiny ant, you

know. But if it's someone of some stature, or even someone with a lot of stature, and he's talking to them, he wants to be liked. And so he finds ways to get to that point, or try to get to that point. And it has nothing to do with good diplomacy. Larry—can he take Zelensky on? He did. At one point, we saw it, and I have no idea how that continued in private or proceeded in private, but he took him on and essentially told him what for. So we know he can do it if he gets provoked to do it. We just don't know how to get him provoked to do it. Yeah.

#M3

Larry, who's running the show in Washington? Is it the neocons together with European allies, or is Donald Trump trying to shake things up in Washington?

#M1

I'm not sure who's calling the shots. I know it's not Trump. And the latest example of that was the sit-down and the peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Where the hell did that come from?

#F2

Yeah.

#M1

I mean, it's not like that was a pressing domestic political issue, with the Armenian community saying, "Hey, you know, we need to do this." It didn't even appear anywhere in the presidential campaign. It was never articulated as something by Trump. But Trump comes in, and then all of a sudden, you know, he's presented with this opportunity. And, you know, this was a CIA operation, because what the CIA is involved with is they've got this plan to use the Caucasus as a wedge to try to destabilize Russia. So they go in and sell it to Trump as, "Hey, you get to be the peacemaker. You're going to get these two parties together. They're going to sign this." Meanwhile, Aliyev has been involved with helping support the Israeli attack into Iran. Aliyev's been involved with helping support the attack into Russia on the strategic air bases.

And then Aliyev paid the price on Monday when Russia hit the SOCAR oil facility, this oil terminal in Odessa, which apparently produces 15% of Azerbaijan's annual GDP. Okay? So, Russia had let it go up until that point because, you know, they're a neighbor, they're part of this CSTO, this defensive alliance, and now Russia sent a message: no, you're off the invite list, and they took it out. So, again, when you see that kind of play at work, that's not Donald Trump making the— you know, Trump decided, okay, I'll do it. But he's not the one that wrote the papers, that did the planning, or that was involved with the activities. That's within this deep state bureaucracy. And, you know, they have a completely different agenda from Trump.

#M2

I couldn't agree more. I think there's an unholy alliance right now between Mossad, MI6, and the CIA. And I think they're leading a lot of these actions, sometimes without their respective leaders even knowing that they're doing it—other than maybe there was a meeting where someone said, "I will get plausible deniability out of this meeting, so go ahead and do it." But it's really troublesome because there doesn't seem to be any real strategic purpose for it, other than the immediate tactical purpose that this triumvirate has—to do it because they can.

Another very disturbing development that I've been monitoring for some time now is that the CIA in particular—and I suspect this applies to the other two as well—has figured out how to get around the oversight process with the Senate and House Select Committees on Intelligence. They do this by essentially planning everything and then turning it over to the DOD for execution. Normally, the execution is carried out by SEALs, Rangers, Delta, or some other very clandestine operating force. And they don't have to report to the Senate or the House Armed Services Committees because those committees simply don't want to know what they're doing.

I think we're taking on some of these drug lords we're talking about taking on—you know, on the surface, if you will, now with the military. We're already taking them on. We're taking them on with our elements like that, who are planned with the CIA helping, and then they execute. It's paramilitary covert operations, is what it is. This has been going on for some time, and I know from talking with certain staffers that they know it's going on on the DOD side. I don't think the intelligence committees know it's going on. I don't know that there would be a Pike or a Church that would rein them in if they did know. I doubt it with this Congress, but it's not healthy.

#M1

Well, in fact, more to that point, there's a book out now—I think it's called *The Fort Bragg Cartel*—and it recounts that there have been a series of murders involving some Delta Force personnel at Fort Bragg, with indications that they were linked to drug trafficking. And so, one of the darker sides of U.S. involvement in places like Afghanistan, where all the heroin poppies are, or in Colombia, is that there have been cases where some members of the military have gotten embroiled, caught up in drug activity—just too much money to resist. And, you know, frankly, there's—what's the guy's name?

Sean Ryan. He's got a big podcast. He's a former Navy SEAL. He describes how he went to Colombia, man, was doing drugs right and left, cocaine and all that. I mean, you know, he got fully into the lifestyle and was dealing with drug traffickers. So it's not like this is just made up. Now, I don't know the extent. There have been some questions about the reliability of that book. It may have made some unsubstantiated claims, but it gets back to the broader point that trying to embroil the U.S. military—using military tactics against these drug cartels—is, you know, beyond dangerous. Yeah. It's just, it is going to take us down a path that we're not prepared to follow.

#M2

Yeah. There was a precursor to that book too, called *Inside Delta*, written by a sergeant major who actually was in Delta for a while. And one of the most disquieting parts about that is in Honduras and Nicaragua, where he thinks the CIA actually killed two of the military members operating with them because they were getting ready to blow the whistle on what the CIA was doing.

#M3

We know that the Chinese foreign minister went to India and they had a good meeting together with Modi, because he tweeted afterward that it was constructive and that it improved the relationship between India and China. The Indian foreign minister is in Russia talking with Putin. And Trump's trade advisor, Navarro—here is what he suggests: it's nonsense that India needs to buy Russian oil. Russian oil was 1% before the war started, as Scott Besson pointed out, and right now it's more than 41% of the oil in India. Navarro, Trump's trade advisor, says the path to peace in Ukraine goes through New Delhi. And they're going to put new tariffs on India on August 27th. In five days, they're going to put tariffs on them. It seems that somehow Donald Trump is going the way that we expected them to go before the talk, before the meeting happened between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. Are they going to put pressure on India, which Donald Trump himself confessed is not going to work?

#M2

This is one place where Donald Trump is right, I think. In fact, I could almost say I know Donald Trump is right. One in five people on earth is Chinese. One in five is Indian. I go through my stats—we are being isolated. We're not only being isolated by the power moving to the East, we're being isolated by what we referred to earlier, peripherally. And that is that people in our own hemisphere don't like us anymore, particularly in South America and Central America. And we've heard some of the recriminations emanating from the new leader in Canada. There are people who are going to stand up to us now. And that's what Modi's doing.

Now, is he doing this just tactically? That is to say, when Trump backs off on some of this stuff, like the tariffs and such, will he come back to the home ship, if you will? Maybe, maybe not. But if we keep treating him the way we have treated him, we're just forcing this alliance. We're forcing not only Putin and China together, but now we're forcing the next most—well, some would say right now, India is the most populous country in the world. We're forcing two of the most populous countries in the world, by a large margin, to oppose us, and to oppose us ever more viscerally and fundamentally. This is not good security policy, let alone foreign policy.

#M3

Larry, you're taking what the Colonel said and what Russia would do if they go in that direction. It seems that Russia is doing everything. Before the meeting, they were talking with the Indians, and after the meeting, they were talking. He called them. And right now, the foreign minister of India—they're talking. I think they're coordinating everything on how to respond to the United States.

#M1

Well, you know, my cynical view is that this was a clever ploy by Donald Trump to win the Nobel Peace Prize by attacking India and forcing India and China to reconcile. Because he can sit there and go, "I did that." You know, and actually... that's one of the few claims he could actually take credit for, I think, because he has—I think the technical diplomatic expression is—he's pissed off the Indian people across the board. He's paved the way where, in fact, the other day, it was the Chinese ambassador to India—just yesterday—who was making a speech saying, "There is no way that the United States should be allowed to bully India into not being able to buy Russian oil."

So when you have the Chinese ambassador in India defending India for buying oil from Russia, you know the world has changed. And I can't emphasize enough what a significant advance we've seen now in the status of BRICS and in its power. Just this year, this has been achieved largely because of Donald Trump's actions. Prior to the imposition of the sanctions or the tariffs on Brazil and then on India, neither Brazil nor India were actually really fully energized about, "Yeah, let's get this BRICS thing going." But after Trump hit Lula with that, Lula all of a sudden was leading the parade and saying, "Yeah, let's get out here, guys."

Let's go, Mr. Enthusiasm. And now the same with India. So BRICS is a real thing. I think Putin was quite clear that they're not setting out to destroy the U.S. dollar, but it's having the practical effect that when you've got economies the size of China, Russia, India, and Brazil trading in each other's currencies, they no longer have to go to the international market and buy dollars. So what does this mean? This means that the demand for dollars is dropping. What happens when the demand for dollars drops and you've got a big supply? The price goes down. The dollar weakens.

Now, the weakening dollar is great for a U.S. producer that's selling, you know, like California wines. Hey, now the French and the Germans and the Brazilians can buy all that California wine for less—they're not going to pay as much. However, it creates a real problem on the international front in servicing your debt, which is where the United States is sitting with 125%. It owes more debt than it creates in income—125% to 100%. So just put it in personal terms, in terms of your monthly expenses: if you're spending \$125 every month and you're only bringing in \$100, guess what? You're going to be going into the hole.

#M2

You just print the rest.

#M1

Yeah, just print the rest. So this relationship, what we're seeing between India and China, is of enormous importance because in the past, the West—and I would argue that a lot of the tensions that were created between China and India were a result of CIA operations designed to stoke those tensions, in the same way that the terrorist attack in Kashmir three months ago was carried out from Pakistan. I guarantee you there were intelligence operatives, either from the United States and/or Britain, involved with that.

#M2

You know, I was just thinking, as Larry was talking, if he wants the peace prize, he may get it primarily for forcing the Hindus and the Muslims in India to be united. Yeah, exactly. What an irony.

#M1

What an achievement.

#M3

Yeah. Colonel, Iran has closed off its western airspace as they're launching a large-scale, unannounced ballistic missile and air defense exercise. And we've learned that a United States Navy MQ-4C Triton drone has been spotted in that area, just gathering intelligence. The British Royal Air Force and other NATO and CENTCOM tankers are operating continuously over Jordan and Syria. What is going on? What is happening in the Middle East? What is in the mind of the Iranians? And what is, in your opinion, in the mind of the Israelis?

#M2

I think that Trita Parsi, in his article, was right. I think we're going to have a resumption of the war. And the more I look at Netanyahu's increasing peril in his own political situation—and it is increasing on a daily basis—the more I think that's going to happen, because that's the only alternative he has other than caving and letting his political coalition collapse. He's got to keep going, and he's got to keep going with even more and wider warfare in order to ensure that he has that kind of bugaboo to keep people together and on his side, and ultimately to bring the United States in. I think Trita's right about that, too. That's what he's going to count on: that, however reluctantly, the United States will come in.

Then the question becomes, in my military mind, how do we come in? Do we come in with just air power around the clock—carrier battle groups in the North Arabian Sea and out of Al-Udeid and other airports and air facilities in the area? What do the Iranians do in response to those facilities? Do they sink an aircraft carrier? All kinds of questions result from our coming in, even if we come in

only at an air power level. And they present a conundrum for us because, as we were talking about earlier, we do not have the munitions to do this, I would say right now, for longer than two weeks. Two weeks is about the extent that we could bring maximum power to bear from the air on Iran. Two weeks. Then it's over. Unless we want to put troops on the ground. And that's insanity.

#M1

Did you see that the DOD just issued a contract for \$2.3 billion to produce 150 THAAD missiles? Which may sound like a lot, but when you realize that you have to fire at least two THAADs at every incoming Iranian missile, that means all Iran has to do is fire 80 missiles and they've already exhausted the THAAD supply that's in the pipeline to be produced. But the problem is they can only produce about 50 a year. So that 150 is going to take three years to build, which means they've got 50. So all of a sudden now, all Iran has to launch is 25 missiles and they've exhausted the U.S. ability to supply THAADs. It's just crazy.

#M2

I recommend that interview to you, Nima, if you can locate it. If you can't, let me know and I'll send it to you. Because he tells you that we drew down the war stocks—the largest war reserve stocks, as far as I remember, in the world—that we have in Israel, for their beck and call and for our beck and call for that region. We bled them down to almost nothing. That's why we couldn't do anything more for Ukraine unless we did it through the Europeans. He says, we don't have it. We simply don't have it. And we've gone out, as he said, with express orders to the industry and said, I need this, I need this, and I need this. And they came back with projections. The projections are years.

#M1

Yeah, yeah.

#M3

Larry, how does Netanyahu have this sort of leverage on Donald Trump? The only supporter he has is Donald Trump. He's doing everything to support him so far. I've seen, when it comes to Israel—what's going on in Israel—he tries to intimidate those people who are against Netanyahu. He tries to do everything in the United States to support Netanyahu. What is it, in your opinion?

#M1

Well, no, look, Trump's had a longstanding association with the Zionists, going back to his real estate days in New York City, including his relationship with Steve Witkoff, as an example. Then on top of it, his daughter is married to a Zionist, Jared Kushner, and as you know, she herself converted to Judaism. But it's this extreme version of it, you know, where it's cloaked in the whole Zionist

ideology. So, I think that's part of the relationship. He's financially obligated to some, through Sheldon Adelson's widow giving him money.

And then it raises the question of, you know, what's in the Epstein files? Is there any chance that Trump is being blackmailed? Now, I would simply note that Bill Barr—William Barr, the former attorney general, who's certainly no friend of Trump's—said when he testified before Congress the other day that he never saw any information in the Epstein files that would implicate Trump. So, you know, who knows? But you've got to go back to where, you know, Trump's personal relationship with these Zionists didn't just start when he became president. It's been part of his life in New York City.

#M2

And, Nima, I would just say, you know, I'm in no position to prove this—probably never will be. But my experience in the George W. Bush administration, and to a certain extent the H.W. Bush administration, is that statements like the one Larry was just referring to with Barr need to be taken with a grain of salt, because these people—Democrat, Republican, MAGA, whatever—if they're in the top tier, they close ranks. When something like this happens, they will protect their enemies, so to speak—their political enemies—because they realize when you start pulling on that thread, and Epstein is one of these threads, and you pull far enough on it, you're going to drag everyone in: Democrat, Republican, all the people who are at the top of the heap, so to speak. I think, for example, Ehud Barak and William Jefferson Clinton are deeply, deeply involved in the Epstein business. And I don't mean just patting him on the back.

#F2

Yeah.

#M3

Netanyahu, in his recent interview, said he's going after the media. He says that the media, the algorithm, and everything are trying to go against them. They're attacking us, they're attacking Israel. And it seems that he's in favor of censoring the media, as he feels that they're supporting Gazans or Palestinians. But the reality in the United States is somewhat different. You see the new polls in the United States that show people don't feel that close to Israel and what Israel is doing. When it comes to Democrats and Republicans, many strongly or somewhat oppose Israel. Among Democrats, 66 percent; Independents, 44 percent; and overall, adult citizens of the United States, 42 percent. That's not such great support for Israel and what Israel is doing. I think, after all, the Trump administration should consider this support. These are the outcomes of what Israel is doing in Gaza.

#M2

Which one is that for?

#M3

The outcome of how public opinion is shifting regarding Gaza...

#M1

Who are you asking, me or Carl?

#M3

I'm talking to you, Colonel.

#M2

Well, I told someone yesterday, Gallup, Pew, Washington Post, New York Times—I don't trust these polls much anymore. I know from my own experience how Karl Rove, for example, could buy poll results. I watched him buy poll results. And Ken Mehlman was his main man doing it. And it's not just the Republicans; they all do it. The polls I like are the ones the Army does when it does them to prep the battlefield or something like that. You know, they do polling, they do very exquisite polling, and it's good. Usually it's at least FOUO, if not higher. So I do think, though, that things are changing—I think slowly but surely things are changing. I'm monitoring the Mormon Church right now.

The Mormon Church might be like the Methodists and the Presbyterians—a branch of each has completely divested from Israel. The Mormon Church has a movement going right now, mostly among those 40 and under, but they are pressing hard on the elders to disassociate, to disinvest from Israel. This is one of the largest portfolios of any organization in Israel in existence. The Mormons own almost a third of the state of Florida. They are a very wealthy church. If they were to do this, it would be a real blow. Larry probably knows this better than I do, but I seem to recall they were very instrumental in making South Africa's position more untenable because they withdrew their investments.

If we get more of this and we get more momentum to it—and the more momentum you get, the more and more and more—I think Israel's in trouble with its relationship with America. But I have to go back to what I've maintained all along: it's we who use them. So what does it mean? What do we say if, for example, this war with Iran goes as sour as I was predicting and we wind up with no tool in the Levant? Do we abandon that tool? Do we cut and run from that tool? Do we just let them go? Do we let them go into oblivion? What do we do? And what does Netanyahu do? He's sitting on nuclear weapons. Now, I think Iran right now, this minute, is a threshold nuclear weapons state.

And I know how North Korea tested underground, deep underground, and we didn't detect it. We detected the second one because we had the first one to kind of target on. They wouldn't have to test, though. My understanding, when I was working the AQ Khan network, is that computer simulation—I'm sure it's moved a long way in the last 20 years—is so good that you get about a 90% assurance if your computer system used to simulate a test tells you that what you've done is going to work. So what do we do if Iran pops up all of a sudden and says, "We're no longer a threshold state. We just left the NPT. Yes, we did. And we are a nuclear weapons-owning state. How do you like that, Israel?"

#M3

Yeah. Larry, when it comes to the situation in Gaza, it seems—I don't know how to put it—it was a game changer to see Colonel Tony Aguilar talking about what has happened in Gaza. Because right now, it seems on MSNBC and NBC, we have other people coming out. They didn't show their faces, but they're talking the same way. They're saying what has happened there—how Israelis are shooting Palestinians, Gazans, and even American people who are there to help. They're doing the same. How do you see these little changes, I would say, somehow influencing public opinion?

#M1

Well, it has helped shift public opinion away from Israel. But despite, let's say, the move and the shift in public opinion, it still has not yet translated into a lot of concrete action to punish Israel. You know, the BRICS countries—Russia, China—they've still got economic relations with Israel. They should cut that off immediately. That would hurt Israel. That would force it to change. The same for Europe: put a ban on Israeli exports. There's a lot that could be done to economically pressure Israel now, but they're not doing it.

Now, the Israelis—you know, the Zionist crowd—they're going to pursue their effort to try to clear out Gaza City. But in the process, they're going to end up getting the hostages killed, and you're going to have a lot more Israeli soldiers killed in ambushes and sniper incidents. So, you know, this thing is heading toward a conclusion; it's just going to make it worse. And then whatever takes place in the context with Iran as well is just going to exacerbate the situation.

#M2

No, I think Ramallah and Gaza City—if they do Ramallah too, and they've said they're going to—are going to be the precipitating actions that mean Netanyahu has to take on Iran. Because he's going to be in such deep kimchi for all the reasons Larry just enumerated. He's going to need another war. He's going to need a war that's going to bring existential circumstances. Then we'll really see what the United States is made of in terms of joining Israel or not. Yeah, yeah.

#M3

But I think, Colonel and Larry, the United States knows what would happen because they had the 12 days of war between the two parties. They know what would happen.

#M1

Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. You're implying that there's a learning process that goes on with the U.S. government? Dude, you are way too optimistic. I attribute that to your youthful optimism. Colonel Wilkerson and I have been around long enough that we're cynical old bastards, and we understand there ain't no learning, okay?

#M2

We went to the school of Diogenes, the ultimate cynic. I was reading the other day about Diogenes—I didn't realize this. I was reading up on him and I saw—whether this is apocryphal or not, I don't know—but supposedly he met Alexander, and Alexander respected him. I mean, by that time he was sort of known as the head of the skeptics' school. And so Alexander looked at him and said, supposedly, "What would you have?" And he said, "Get out of my light." The ultimate skeptic.

#M3

I think this is what's going on in the minds of the Russians: "Just leave us alone, United States."

#M2

Yeah, yeah.

#M3

Thank you so much, Colonel and Larry, for being with us today. Great pleasure as always.

#M1

It's always fun with Colonel Wilkerson. I promised to have a real aloha, but hey, you still made the effort. It looks good.

#M2

Well, this did come from Ala Moana Shopping Center. All right. Only one I have left. Sayonara. Sayonara. Sayonara. Take care. Bye.