

Iran's \$30,000 Troop Bounty STUNS Trump

| Larry Johnson & Lawrence Wilkerson

Larry Johnson and Col. Lawrence Wilkerson discuss Iran's announcement of a shocking offensive now that the MoU is officially dead. Trump is lashing out as the news about the state of the US Navy gets worse and worse. <https://sonar21.com/> <https://www.youtube.com/@UCewRbK22LRnNi6N3EcGjbow> PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #usnavy #trump

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. It's Danny Haiphong. As you can see, I am joined by former CIA analyst Larry Johnson and former Chief of Staff Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson. Now we go over the latest developments here. First, we begin with Iran has given the United States just a couple of weeks now to meet its demands, or it is going to shift to an offensive posture and launch a timely and precise military attack. This is according to Iranian officials. They are demanding that the United States go back to the MOU demands. Now, Iran has also placed a \$30,000 bounty on U.S. soldiers, according to Tehran's army chief. Iranians who kill or capture U.S. troops will be awarded this amount.

This comes as The Wall Street Journal reports that Iran has devised its plan for this offensive, which includes accelerated missile production and cutting the seven main undersea internet cables in the Persian Gulf, as well as potential ground incursions. Now, the news keeps getting worse and worse for the U.S. Navy, with another U.S. warship suffering major problems. This time, the destroyer USS Benfold suffered a generator failure on July 24th, leaving the crew in the South China Sea for four days without power in the blistering heat. Now, the USS George Washington, another aircraft carrier, is supposed to replace the USS Lincoln in the coming days.

But sailors on this ship are also reporting deplorable conditions, including images being sent to families such as these with the food, as well as huge plumbing issues with toilets and other very necessary amenities malfunctioning. So here is Donald Trump. He says there are no talks right now going on between the U.S. and Iran and that the blockade remains in full force, despite the fact that the MOU has expired, and war could very well be on the way because of it. So how are we doing with you, Larry? Your reaction, especially to this news of a bounty on U.S. troops now and the fact that this MOU has expired and Iran appears ready to go on the offensive in order to meet these demands. What do you make of this?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I don't think much of their threat to go on the offensive. They said, "In weeks." How many weeks? Two weeks? Three weeks? Five weeks? Eight weeks? You know, when you leave it very vague like that, I don't take that as a serious threat. If they say, "By the end of next week, do this or else," all right, that's a serious deadline. So what they've offered is a very squishy deadline. But, you know, Iran's sitting in the catbird seat right now. They are not isolated, as Washington, D.C., and particularly Scott Bessent, want to believe. I put up an article last night at sonar21.com that goes into this in pretty great detail, why Bessent's—you know, he's already announced that he's launched Operation Economic Fury.

And then he's now going to launch Operation Really, Really Economic Fury, or a Bigger, Bigger Economic Fury, something like that. The problem with that is he's operating from a set of assumptions that, A, Iran has no alternative but to use the U.S. dollar. Two, Iran is completely blocked in. Their only access to the outside world is through the Strait of Hormuz, and the United States has this massive blockade in place. Well, the facts are otherwise. Unlike 2015, when Iran was effectively surrounded, including Russia and China, it signed on to the JCPOA sanctions. Now those don't exist.

Yeah, those JCPOA sanctions are still in place, but Russia and China told the United States and the United Nations to go pound sand, that they weren't going to abide by them. They've opened up significant trade relations. In fact, it was within weeks of the JCPOA being walked away from by Donald Trump that Russia and China moved quickly to establish and begin joint military exercises with Iran. The planning for those exercises started, I believe, in July of 2018. Trump had walked away in May of 2018 from the JCPOA. So you already had the beginnings of military cooperation between Iran, China, and Russia.

That cooperation has expanded significantly to economic cooperation, as well as provision of military equipment, essential military equipment, as well as intelligence to Iran during the war with the United States. So far from being isolated, Iran has now got more open borders and more trade opportunities today than it had 10 years ago, because it can go north through the Caspian Sea, west through Tajikistan, over the east, the new Silk Highway, and then across the border with Pakistan. Pakistan has opened six land routes into Iran. Now, all this comes up against the United States. They said, "Oh, we're going to have this blockade."

We've got a wall of steel. Well, the entire U.S. military is in a state of near disaster. We have seen it now. It's not just the reports that the Abraham Lincoln is short of food and that sailors were trying to commit suicide. It's across the Navy. I've spoken with the mothers of two sailors and one Marine: a mother whose son served on the Tripoli, another mother whose son just came off the submarine—I didn't get the submarine's name—and the mother of a Marine off the Boxer. All told the same damn story. Their kids came home losing between 10 and 30 pounds apiece. Their kids had terrible food. No mail. The support system sucked.

It didn't matter whether you were on something like the Tripoli, a destroyer, or the Boxer, which is a Marine amphibious ship, or a submarine. And we all know it applies as well to the USS Abraham Lincoln. What happened is some moron or group of morons at the Department of War, back in the day when it was called the Department of Defense, said, "You know what? We got these four fast combat supply ships. We could save \$30 million per ship if we just get rid of two of them." Oh, great idea, guys. Because those four ships supplied basically all the ammunition and the food and the hygiene products that the ships need.

And you've got to have the fast combat ships to keep up with the aircraft carriers and destroyers, et cetera. Yeah, so they got rid of those. So they cut the force in half. And then we got the warehouses where they stored all this stuff that they were going to deliver. It got blown up in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. Whoops. So now they're short across the board. And yet they're expected to go out and conduct intercept operations at a time when you got sailors lining up to commit suicide. And, oh, by the way, I forgot to mention, before that Tripoli deployed, they decided they don't need any chaplains on board. Let's pull them off. So, in other words, Donald Trump and Pete Hegseth have created a tremendous shit show.

#Danny

Hmm. Yeah, Colonel Wilkerson, to you, you know, there were reports earlier this week that the USS Lincoln's problems in particular are tied to the fact that the U.S. also lost its supply and logistics centers because of Iranian strikes in Bahrain. Now they've been shifted all the way to Diego Garcia, which has led to part of the problems that Larry mentioned, but certainly can't contribute to all of it. But your thoughts on this and this Iranian bounty? It seems like it reflects two differing directions on where this war is headed and where the U.S. and Iran are in this war. Your thoughts? You want to hear some differing directions? This morning, about 4 a.m., and I did a little checking, I think it's valid.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I got this video of Pete Hegseth, Secretary of War, Defense, whatever, charlatan par excellence, giving a talk. And it was typical Hegseth in terms of exaggeration, propaganda, lies, and so forth. But I listened to it a second time, and I wrote down the main points. And as he went through his remarks, he was describing, allegedly, and he said he was describing Iran and the condition of Iran post this massive, massive strike campaign that the United States has been executing. First of all, he said Iran's ballistic missile capacity was destroyed. Then he said, furthermore, its ability and its industrial base, such as it is, to build more ballistic missiles is completely destroyed. Third, its entire industrial base for making anything from drones to missiles to missile carriages to warheads to whatever is gone.

"We destroyed it. Totally destroyed." Then he talked about the usual things. The Navy is totally destroyed. The Air Force is totally destroyed. The leadership's morale is at the bottom. They cannot fight much longer. They are defeated. I left out quite a few things he said, but they were all in that cast. And I listened to it again, and I looked at my notes. I said, "My God, this is the most bizarre psychological warfare campaign I have ever witnessed out of the mouth, certainly, of a SecDef, SecWar, whatever the hell we want to call him, charlatan." What he was doing was describing to a T, as Larry just very graphically illustrated much of, the state of the United States military across the board.

And, of course, the state of the conflict across the board. That's what he was doing. So I had to listen to it again. And then I remarked to myself, "My God, this man is telling the truth, but he's telling the truth about us rather than about Iran. This is the most warped psychological warfare campaign ingredient I have ever witnessed. Has he gone mad?" But that's what I heard. And you could not list a more cogent major issue list of items describing another country involved in a war that better fit the big country involved in the war—indeed, the country that started the war, the United States of America. So my question was, "What gives, Petey? What gives?" But I agree with everything Larry said, plus.

#Danny

Yeah. And Larry, you know, you mentioned Scott Bessent talking about how essentially the U.S. is making Iran's economy scream. Well, Iran, you know, 30,000 U.S. dollars is a very large amount when we're considering this bounty that the Iranian military has just put out there. It's a big amount when it is converted into Iranian rials. So talk about your reactions to this bounty that was announced, and what is it, do you think, it says about this war? Because right now it seems like the United States that is hesitating, you know, in terms of restarting any attacks. You just have Trump with his antics talking about how the Strait of Hormuz is U.S. territory and all of this, right? No real concerted action right now. It almost feels like there's a pause button that's been pressed. So your thoughts?

#Larry Johnson

Well, I think it's a little bit of a ham-handed psychological operation. A, you don't have any U.S. troops on the ground. The odds of putting U.S. troops on the ground, I would say, are slim and none, for no other reason than just the logistical obstacles of doing it. I'm not saying that they wouldn't potentially seriously entertain trying to do it, but just overcome the logistical obstacles, such as: are you going to deliver them via parachute, or are they going to be on an aircraft of some form that lands on the ground and they jump off? Because it's truly not going to be an amphibious operation, because we can't get our damn ships into the Strait of Hormuz.

So, you know, offering a \$30,000 bounty for something that's not out there at this point, it's like offering a \$30,000 bounty for a picture of the Loch Ness Monster, okay? Because it's fictional. But I think it's part of their psychological operation against the United States. Because what Iran—I don't think Iran necessarily set out to do this. I don't think they may have believed that they would accomplish this. And this I'm talking about is the depletion of critical U.S. weapons systems. Now, following up on the wisdom of Ambrose Bierce, a Civil War soldier, veteran, and then later a journalist, known for being somewhat of a misanthrope, he described war as God's way of teaching Americans geography.

Or at least he's credited with saying that. It's not clear if he did. Well, it's turned out that this war has taught me a lot of other things going beyond geography. And one of those is that 80%—I'll take that back, I've got to be precise—78% of the Pentagon weapon systems, the critical systems like Tomahawks, JASMs, etc., rely upon rare earth minerals, five categories or five types of rare earth minerals, or four minerals and tungsten being the fifth, that are controlled by China. Gallium is a particular one. In other words, if we want to produce weapons to stock our military, both Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, with weapon systems that can be used in combat, we've got to go begging to the Chinese, and the Chinese have figured this out.

Wait, we're selling them rare earths that they're going to then turn into weapons they're going to use against us? Eh, we're going to stop that. We're not that stupid. And so China stopped it. Here's the United States completely stymied, with, you know, the Congress just appropriated several billion dollars to Lockheed Martin. Hey, you got a bill. We need some 14,000 of those PAC-3 missiles as soon as possible. Guys, don't hold your breath, because it's going to be years before they get that. Not months, certainly not weeks. So here you have the United States exposed as a military weakling.

And from Iran's standpoint, I think part of their strategy, maybe not stated in public, is to continue to stress and attrit U.S. capabilities. Because, tell you what, the longer those ships are deployed out there, the more combat ineffective they become. They don't become better; they degrade. It becomes worse. And the problem of the logistics supply, they haven't fixed it because they're in denial. You've got Hegseth saying the families that say this are liars, that they're peddling fake news, as does Donald Trump. He says, hell, they need to stay longer.

#Danny

Yeah.

#Larry Johnson

God almighty. We've never had such a chorus of jackasses in charge of this country in my memory.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Danny, the visit to Lincoln and the appearance on her flight deck by Admiral Bradley Cooper will go down with George Bush's mission accomplished on his carrier. Only in the Navy, it will be judged as even more nefarious because he just went out there, landed on the carrier, did a couple of tours of this and that, and came up and said everything was great, defying everything Larry just said, all of which is true, all of which is valid. I'm hearing from parents too, and this is unconscionable in this particular instance. This is a four-star Navy admiral in charge of the entire Central Command, and he is, first of all, in Israel's back pocket.

All you have to do is check out the many times he has been there, the many times he's done the tour there, the many times he's gone over to the Foundation for Defense of Democracies or to some other Israel affiliate in Washington, the many promises he's made to the Israeli military, to know that, like Tony Blinken, who is Bibi Netanyahu's alter ego assistant secretary of state, Bradley Cooper is in charge of the North Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Oman, and the Strait of Hormuz, Navy admiral. Only he's not in charge of any of that. Unconscionable appearance, and mark my words, it will go down with George Bush's appearance.

#Danny

Yeah, well, certainly when it comes to the U.S. Navy, it is quite something that Cooper, who has also been rumored to have been conniving with Israel for another possible strike, is also the face of this naval disaster.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And Danny, it's two in a row. It's two in a row because the general before him was also of the same stripe. So that's how much of a lock Israel has on our appointment to command that combatant command.

#Danny

Yeah, Larry, you know, the Washington Post is now characterizing this as a quagmire. Do you agree with this? And what do you make of this whole notion that Trump is actually bragging about no negotiations? Because, as you said, the longer this blockade goes on, the worse the situation gets for the U.S. Navy. It does seem like something that will have to be addressed eventually, right? Or maybe not, right? Your thoughts.

#Larry Johnson

Well, Trump bragging about it reminds me of the guy that lost the Boston Marathon race, finished last, bragging about his last-place finish. Not something to be real proud of, but I guess you could say, "Oh, I'm proud I finished. It may have taken two days." You know, what we see with Donald Trump, someone completely divorced from reality, completely enabled by sycophants who, you

know, if you refuse to tell him the truth, or if they do tell him the truth, he refuses to listen and punishes those that have the audacity to tell him the truth. You know, look, we've talked about the Navy, but we're looking at this problem—let's call it the mental health problem—of the U.S. military. It goes across all branches.

Last November, one of my buddies, a recently retired officer, West Point grad—he's actually the president of his West Point class, so not exactly some low-life complainer—he sent me a copy of the letter that Dan Driscoll issued last November to all commands, all officers, and NCOs. And it said very simply, "You are hereby ordered to have daily contact with your soldiers. Make sure you speak to everyone to ensure that they're okay." Huh? Huh? You're telling me that the situation is so bad within the Army that they want to make sure that the officers are talking to their troops so they don't kill themselves? Which is exactly what the letter was for. This means you've got a crisis. And to my knowledge, that order has not been rescinded. Cyber Command up in Fort Meade, Maryland.

Apparently five suicides, I don't remember if it was May or June, but that created some discomfort and alarm. And then the officer I mentioned, the West Point grad, as president of his class, when classmates die—and we're not talking, you know, he's not an old guy like Colonel Wilkerson and me. He's really the age of my son, in his 40s—he's got to figure out, do you list guys that commit suicide, do you list them as combat casualties or something else? And he's saying he's having to deal with an uncomfortable number of those kinds of issues and dealing with distraught families on top of it. So, you know, we're not looking at here as just one isolated problem. Oh, it's the aircraft carrier. It's screwed up. No, it's Abraham Lincoln. It's the Tripoli. It's the Boxer.

What was the other one? The Bataan, the one that went four days without air conditioning and working toilets. And then the submarines. And it's across the services. And when you get a problem like that, you know, the old saying, news like that doesn't get better with age. You deal with it. But that's not what we have going on here. We have denial. Trump denies it. Hegseth denies it. Everything's great. It couldn't be better. Brad Cooper denies it. And, man, they keep denying that, and it will bite them in the ass. Whether it's a failure on deck of one of the carriers where planes are crashing because crews are either so tired or so unfocused, it's going to lead to some losses. And completely avoidable, but it's just this complete failure of leadership that we're seeing right now.

#Danny

Well, Colonel Wilkerson, I want your comments on the regional situation now because earlier this week, at the beginning of this week, Trump actually threatened to bomb Oman because he's unhappy with the country's negotiations and deal, although there is no official deal right now between the two countries on the Strait of Hormuz. Also, today, the UAE is saying that their sirens are up. There are reports that it could be Yemen, or it could be Iran firing missiles at the UAE after this MOU has expired. And, of course, as the continued aggression of Saudi Arabia brings more and

more consequences to the Saudi regime. So, your thoughts on this, Colonel Wilkerson, the regional situation and how it's all spilling over now that the Iran war is, I guess, the come-to-Jesus awareness moment of the Washington Post turning into a quagmire. Yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, if you look at the operational level, tactical level up to the operational level, what Iran has succeeded in doing very clearly is they've got a two-front campaign going with essentially the principal character, if you will—I won't even call them a country anymore—in the middle being Saudi Arabia. You've got Al-Ansar, the Houthis, on one side, in the Red Sea, and then you've got Iran very formidably on the other side. And increasingly, you've got Iraq and people in Iraq who don't particularly care for the Saudis either, and are helping. And you've got some real disturbances going on in Kurdistan, so-called Kurdistan, in northern Iraq.

And you've got a situation over in Syria which looks like it's developing really kind of weirdly. I won't pretend that I understand all the components of it, but you have Russia being amenable to having a different kind of presence on the coast of the Mediterranean there, both for their airfield and their port facility, and apparently having made a deal with Jolani to that effect. While at the same time, Jolani is talking with Netanyahu, and I'm quite confident Jolani is not taken in by Netanyahu, and that most of this is just gaining time or trying to gain a little bit of insight into what's planned.

And then on top of all that, you've got Erdogan looking down on all with some violence aforethought, particularly the Kurds, who seem to be not so much in Kurdistan, where the deal seems to be holding. But you also have attacks on Barzani there, which are coming from whom? Are they coming from Iran? Iran has said, no, not coming from Iran. So whom are they coming from? Are they us playing, again, a duplicitous game with the Kurds in northern Iraq? Who knows? But there are a lot of characters playing in the region right now, none of whom seem to have a coherent game plan. And all of them seem motivated principally, and I include Turkey in this, by Israel and what they see Israel doing and what Israel might possibly do in the future.

And so anything that's happening there, even in terms of this new entente that's been formed with Saudi Arabia at the center of it, is mostly directed against Israel and will be seen to be that way if it ever comes to any kind of hot combat or real pressure put on anybody. And then you've got Jared Kushner going and essentially listening to Bibi, and having Bibi essentially tell him that he's not going to adhere to any of the things Kushner is sort of pro forma telling him are the agreements that have been made with regard to disarming Hamas, with regard to what Bibi is doing, which is continuing to kill the Palestinians every single day, almost every hour, even those in Gaza, but certainly those in the West Bank and certainly those north of Jerusalem.

And Bibi not doing anything about it, and calling Trump at night and telling him, "Now, I'm telling Jared this, and I'm telling my audience this so that it gets into the press, both your press and my press, but I'm going to back off of it just as soon as I'm reelected. But I have to say these things,

including I'm killing people now in Lebanon who aren't Hezbollah. They are Lebanese citizens I'm killing. And I'm moving my lines ever so smartly northward. I'm doing all this because I can't stop and expect to be elected. But I'll stop it just as soon as I'm reelected. I guarantee you that, Mr. President." And if Trump believes that, he's dumber than I think he is. So we have some real ingredients brewing in the region that could make this an even more serious and more widespread conflict than what it pretends to be right now. And it's bad enough right now.

#Danny

Yeah, Larry, your thoughts on the regional situation. You know, Donald Trump also weighed in on the so-called Mecca Defense Pact, saying he's very happy to see it, that they have recently and finally signed the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement. Shows the Middle East is coming together, how countries will be able to defend themselves in a more meaningful way. Congratulations to the great leadership of the three nations mentioned. It's a big, bold, and important first step. Wow. What does he mean, important first step? But your thoughts on the regional situation.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, well, I think that agreement—I call it the METO agreement, you know, Middle East Treaty Organization, METO—it's about as useless as tits on a boar hog at this point because, you know, number one, who are they going to defend against? Now, they've already issued a joint declaration that an attack on one is an attack on all. Sounds a lot like the Article 5 of the NATO treaty. Yet Yemen's been attacking the Saudis on almost a daily basis now for two, three weeks, and Pakistan and Turkey have not lifted a finger to say, "Oh, yeah, we're going to go take on those Houthis." So, again, it begs the question: who are they going to defend against?

Then you get the issue of interoperability. Turkey's largely a U.S.-based technology foundation for its military, as is Saudi Arabia. Pakistan's largely a Chinese-based system. So integrating those two should be quite interesting. And then, apart from the language issues of getting them to work together, you know, just figuring out what kind of communication systems are they going to operate with. So it gets into—they're talking about conducting joint exercises. Well, you know, in my experience, the earliest you could ever conduct a joint exercise is 12 months after you make the decision to do it, simply because of the planning that's involved in getting those and pulling those off. And usually it's more like 18 months.

So unless they started planning this several months ago, you start the clock running a couple of weeks back, you know, we're looking next year at the earliest, maybe next year from November before they could actually conduct a joint military exercise. So I don't know what they do in the meantime. So, yeah, this whole—and the fact that Trump came out and endorsed it—I find pretty, you know, potentially disturbing, because if Trump thinks it's a good idea, there's got to be

something wrong with it, or there's some other nefarious purpose afoot here. But again, this gets back to suggesting that the Turks, the Pakistanis, and the Saudis, or at least the Turks and Pakistanis, are unable to project military force outside of their country.

And I would argue, not really. Turkey could do it in neighboring Syria. But beyond that, having airlift capability to move a significant number of troops, they don't have that. So there are some logistical limitations that are naturally imposed on the process. And then it gets back to their experience. What are they capable of doing? We've already seen that the Saudis are incapable of defending themselves against the Houthis. And even though Pakistan reportedly has deployed some troops with air defense systems into one of the Saudi air bases, they don't appear to have been very effective in stopping Houthi attacks on Saudi oil infrastructure.

#Danny

Yeah. Well, your thoughts, Colonel Wilkerson, especially on the idea that the United States—it seems like Donald Trump and the United States right now, there are reports that the Defense Department is considering scaling back its U.S. military presence, especially with all the decisions that need to be made about whether these bases are refilled. But then you have these antics, like threatening to bomb Oman, which seem to be incredibly counterproductive, even looking at this from a U.S. empire perspective, given that Oman is the other side of the Strait of Hormuz that you would think the United States would want to curry favor with. Well, threatening to bomb Oman certainly won't do that. And that's the second time during this war that he's done this. Your thoughts on that?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, let me just say this about the Entente. I agree with Larry. I'll make a wager. I know I don't have much life left, but in my lifetime, this Entente will move against no one in unison. No one. The only exception, if it were ever to present itself in a massive sort of way that they could get away with without taking too many casualties, would be taking action against Israel. For all the reasons that Larry mentioned and more, I don't think that'll ever happen either. As far as Donald Trump goes and what he's trying to describe now, much like Hegseth was doing in that bizarre talk that I referred to earlier, what Donald Trump is trying to do, the same way that he has done many other things, but none as egregious as this, is to shape reality through his rhetoric.

And he uses all manner of rhetoric, both pro and con, and angry and peaceful, and you name it, in order to try and shape what is happening. He's going to fail. He's going to fail objectively because the facts on the ground are going to so defy what he's saying, which is why you see his poll ratings dropping like rocks. I mean, I saw a Pew the other day that put his approval rating at 26%. I don't think you'll find it above 30% anywhere in any poll that's been done in the last week or so. It's tanking. It's falling apart for him. And it's falling apart to a certain extent, not quite with the alacrity and speed, for Trump, but for the Republican Party as well. And the midterms are how many days away?

So a lot of this rhetoric is for domestic consumption, but it's not going to work, I don't think. And I mean, that means we're in for some sort of really rude surprise, I think, with regard to the midterms, if they develop the way that I right now think they're going to develop. But this is a—this is just a farce, what's happening right now. The lies that are being told by all the principals. Look at what Bessent is talking about. Bessent is lying through his teeth. Look at the bond market. Look at Japan and the strength of the yen. Look at what's happening to those people who for years have told me, "We know we're going away demographically. We know we have problems. But our post office accounts are really flush, and we're doing fine. We're living good. We're living good." The high school closed.

The junior high closed. Don't have any kids in the street anymore. But me and Grandma are living good. Me and Mama are living good. They aren't living good now. The yen is collapsing. This whole scene is partly, if not largely, our creation. That would have happened anyway with this inexorable movement from the East and such, but it didn't have to happen so precipitously. An Asia scholar recently wrote, and these were his exact words: "The dogs barked and there was Ukraine. The dogs barked and there was Japan." Look at where Ukraine is right now. Look at where Japan is right now. And who taught the dogs to bark?

I know who taught the dogs to bark. I didn't need him to tell me: the United States of America, because we did all this. And we're doing it even more intensely now that we realize we don't have anything left but the Western Hemisphere. And I'm not even sure we have that. You know, they started with Venezuela. They're going to move on Cuba. They're going to move on Denmark, maybe some other places that are localized. But in essence, we wouldn't lick a flea in our own hemisphere if it really wanted to object and join forces with some of the other fleas. So we are going to retrench. That's what we're saying right now.

Listen to Colby, listen to the other people who are speaking in the voice of and for the Pentagon. We are going to retrench, and we're going to retrench because we are being licked from Ukraine to Japan, and our allies know it. And they're in a quandary right now, particularly South Korea and Japan. And if I'm throwing people in here who really count, the Indonesians also. One of the biggest nations in the world, 300 million people almost, vast country, good Navy. Really worried right now about where the Pacific theater is headed. And it's all because of us. We're screwing up from one end of the world to the other. You can't make this stuff up.

#Danny

Well, Larry, this is what Donald Trump is doing in his time, not addressing anything that Colonel Wilkerson just said, but talking about how the Strait of Hormuz is now a new U.S. territory. Now, Larry, I want to ask you, what is the point of this kind of social media propaganda messaging, if we can even call it propaganda, since the effectiveness is very much in question? But nevertheless, Donald Trump does this almost every day. You know, the timing seems pretty impeccable. Usually

it's in a time of a pretty grave crisis. This one being, I guess, the expiration of the MOU. Not much going on with the war. U.S. Navy, as you outlined, not doing too well. Why does Donald Trump, though, make these kind of comments? They seem so far afield.

#Larry Johnson

Well, he thinks all he has to do is gaslight the American public, and they'll believe it. And surprisingly, a number do.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah.

#Larry Johnson

I mean, that's what's sort of shocking. But he is, and I don't know if he really believes it himself. If he does, he's engaged in confabulation, you know, saying something completely false and believing it's true. Because, you know, you follow the logic of it. Well, if we control the Strait of Hormuz, why isn't all of the commodities, not just oil, but liquid natural gas, urea, sulfur, helium, why isn't all that starting to flow out? Well, it's not flowing out because we don't control the Strait of Hormuz. And because the United States has basically instituted a blockade, I think to some degree Iran is allowing that to be used as an excuse to keep some of the other economic assets bottled up inside the Strait, inside the Persian Gulf, in order to put more pressure on the global economy.

Now, that pressure is growing. And we saw with, like, even the stock market today in the United States is down. Why? Why? Because of the rising yields on the U.S. bonds and the rising price of oil slash gasoline, diesel, aviation fuel. The one thing that is now starting to hit, because up until, say, about a week, two weeks ago, most countries and major countries were able to mitigate the loss of oil that was coming out of the Persian Gulf by drawing on their own strategic reserves. Those reserves are now basically empty. There's no more, you know, if Mother Hubbard goes to the cupboard, the cupboard is bare.

So now the actual effect of the shortage of 20% to 25% of the world's supply of oil is now starting to hit the markets, just starting. And that is going to lead to a spiraling effect. You're already seeing it in Europe with diesel. Diesel's gone up dramatically. So this is global. This is not isolated to one geographic region. This is now a global phenomenon, and it doesn't matter how much processing various refineries want to do. They simply do not have enough supply of the oil that was coming out of the Persian Gulf that's now no longer there. And it's just that simple.

And, you know, I wrote about Bessent as well with his delusional nonsense that the Strait of Hormuz isn't important because we're just going to build pipelines, go right around it. You know, liquefied natural gas doesn't travel through a pipeline. Urea and sulfur do not travel through a pipeline.

Helium does not travel through a pipeline. Yet all of those, you know, when you're looking at urea and sulfur, that accounts for 30 to 35% of the global supply. LNG, 25% of the global supply. Helium, 40% of the global supply. If you're telling me that you're taking that quantity of things, essential items, out of the global supply and the economies are still going to work well, sorry, you are mistaken.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And just to amplify that, Danny, the programs that we work with, the World Food Program and others who provide food to the Global South principally, but elsewhere too, in emergencies, are now estimating that it ain't going to be 50 million people that are on minimum rations and starving to death. It's probably going to be 60 to 70 million people. And all what Larry just said is a big byproduct—or not a byproduct, but a big instigator—of this massive starvation.

#Larry Johnson

Hmm.

#Danny

Yeah, great, great points. Really important. Well, I want to ask you, maybe Colonel Wilkerson, if you want to continue here, talking about the state of the U.S. empire after all that we've just covered with Iran. You know, as Larry said earlier, Russia is not wasting any time to, you know, intensify its key trade with Iran, especially even in things like dual components and other things to help it resupply militarily. But China, as it was reported on across the Western mainstream media, has also intensified its Ice Silk Road through the Arctic Sea alongside Russia to essentially create another key trade route that bypasses U.S. influence altogether. So what do you make of the state of the U.S. empire as a whole, Colonel Wilkerson, now that the Iran war is in this very curious place? And as you said, the United States militarily has had its butt kicked essentially from Ukraine to Iran. Your thoughts?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, Putin is allowing this to be built that way by the Chinese, but this is really a Russian initiative. Russia has been working on it for some time. The 53% of the soon-to-be, if not already, navigable Arctic—the so-called Northwest Passage that runs in the south route—runs along the coast of Russia. Fifty-three percent of that is along the coast of Russia, as I just said. China was invited in by Russia because China had been pressing ever since they became an observer at the Arctic Council. They've been pressing for more presence in the Arctic, and of course, we compelled Russia and China to come closer and closer and closer. So now China is naming this their Maritime Silk Road, the first one.

It's actually going to go by water rather than by land, which is an exception for China, because one of the things they were trying to do, and are doing in large part, is to get commerce off the empire-dominated realm, the oceans, U.S. territory, and get it on land, Chinese territory. But this is an interesting development because we've been up there for the last five years, six years if you count the submarine patrols and such, trying to assess what's happening, trying to figure out how serious they are. And we have determined that they are deadly serious and will probably be in consonance with the water becoming navigable by almost any type of commercial ship very shortly, if not already, at least a good portion of it. But we are way behind the power curve.

About all we have is an occasional broken-down icebreaker or borrowed icebreaker from Finland or from Norway, and that's not much, and submarines. We're way behind the power curve on this, and we don't like it, and so look for another conflict arena developing quickly between us and Russia-China, and it'll be along this Maritime Silk Road. All to say that this inexorable power I keep talking about is moving, moving, moving. And it's benign inexorable power for the most part. China does not push bombs, bullets, bayonets, and sanctions out in front of its BRIs or alongside the flanks of its BRIs. What it pushes is many trillions of dollars in development and aid and assistance. And people like it. People are more or less receptive to this kind of development. There are some problems on the flanks at times.

There are problems in South America and elsewhere when China is a little bit too out front about it. But basically, they're succeeding. And we don't like this at all. And what we should be doing is developing a whole panoply of diplomatic maneuvers to accommodate this, to assist it where it is truly beneficial, especially to people who wouldn't have anything if it weren't for that, and to maybe be diplomatically antagonistic about areas where we think it impinges on our real security interests. But basically, cooperative and collaborative, not challenging it, not falling back, as it were, into our own redoubt and telling the world to go to hell while we beat up on people like Cuba and Venezuela and so forth. That's not the way to deal with it. But that's the way Donald Trump has chosen to deal with it.

#Danny

Yeah, well, I'll pull this up. I don't know if you all saw this report. Of course, this is the South China Morning Post, but it is a Chinese study. Nearly 200 country studies show that China's Belt and Road Initiative cuts debt and corruption in countries that engage with it. Data analysis spanning more than 20 years across 197 countries and regions challenged the debt-trap diplomacy narrative. So in this study, it was found that a significant portion of debt actually in these countries is cut when they do invest in Chinese infrastructure. And here you see some of those graphs in the study. But Larry, your thoughts on this and the state of the U.S. empire? You know, same question to you, now that the world is in the situation that it's in regarding these wars.

#Larry Johnson

Well, the steps that—it didn't just start with Trump—but what Trump has been doing with Bessent and others, every effort to, quote, save or strengthen the American empire backfires and has the exact opposite effect. The imposition of sanctions on Russia following the start of the special military operation, when they invaded Ukraine back in February 2022, has inspired Russia and China to accelerate their development of alternative financial systems. And as a result of that development and the creation, they've actually created the infrastructure. China's stopped buying U.S. bonds. It's getting rid of U.S. bonds. It's buying gold. Gold now has surpassed the U.S. dollar as a reserve currency, in terms of more people having invested in gold from foreign governments than they're investing in U.S. dollars.

So what the United States has done is basically created a demand for not just one or two countries, for 100 countries to want to build up their economic relations with China and operate outside the realm of the petrodollar. And so these counterproductive policies—and we just saw it yesterday with Trump vis-a-vis Iran. Instead of talking to Iran as a friend, Trump threatens to bomb him. Yeah, I mean, you know, for Christ's sake, you know, this is how you conduct your public diplomacy, by threatening to blow people up. And then what, they're supposed to sit back and say, "Oh, we're sorry. We shouldn't have thought about that or done that"? Give me a break. So this is—the United States is busy shooting itself in every possible appendage it has, including the crotch.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

That's next. Yeah. Yeah.

#Danny

Yeah. Well, in our final five or so minutes here with you two, maybe Colonel Wilkerson, your thoughts now on the Ukraine front? Any updates you have there? There has been very little activity from the Trump administration publicly on addressing anything that's going on there. Just more reports from Russia striking Ukraine and, of course, the much-hyped Ukraine sending more and more drones into Russian territory.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, I think it's basically over. We're waiting for the fat lady to sing, and the fat lady's married to Zelensky. So something's got to break here sooner or later. I just hope it doesn't break adversely with respect to an actual attack on NATO, either facilities in a NATO country or maybe even more pinpoint strikes and devastating strikes on NATO facilities inside Ukraine. As you were talking, I was thinking about the other aspect of this. We're looking at, as that Asia scholar was predicting, we're looking at the policies begun in my administration, but only in the sense that they were kicked in the butt by 9/11, just as Bibi has been kicked in the butt by October 7th. We don't have a really good investigation there yet.

They were started by Bill Clinton, and they progressed through every single president since, with a minimal hiatus with Barack Obama, as he tried to toy with some of the things he could have done to stop some of the initiatives, but he didn't. And then given a real kick in the butt, especially with regard to Europe, by a wink and a nod under President Joe Biden. We are paying the consequences for what Clinton started, what kicked in the butt big time in the George W. Bush administration, and everyone's been doing ever since, with Biden even having a Secretary of State who could have been Netanyahu's Secretary of State just as easily, probably was in de facto, and a National Security Advisor who went right along with that.

So we have built this crisis everywhere. It is growing to gargantuan proportions now, all on our own. Major help. I can't even begin to emphasize how much major help came from CIA, SIS, as it used to be called, MI6 now, and Mossad. Major help, sometimes even out of the realm of presidential approval help. Still going on, still happening today, as the intelligence services, with their billions of dollars of assets and their absolute, almost sacrosanct operating environment in terms of their own leaderships, oftentimes doing things their leadership doesn't know anything about, we are building more. And it's not going to be conducive to our future at all. And no one's doing anything to stop it, as Larry pointed out. It's just rolling on like a juggernaut.

#Danny

Well, Larry, your final words. I know you do have to head out, so you can certainly do that. And, Larry, you can offer your final words here.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, no, I think what's going to unfold in the coming weeks is going to be an economic crisis, which is going to further limit, put constraints on what Donald Trump can actually do on the foreign policy front. He's going to be so busy trying to put out domestic fires, he's not going to have time to think about the foreign policy dimensions.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I agree with that 100%. I don't think he can think about the domestic situation now other than, God, what do I do?

#Danny

Yeah, certainly we are heading toward a crisis, and we didn't even get into the fact that there's this curious development that I'm not too knowledgeable of, but the reports are that U.S. diesel crack, the gap between diesel and crude oil, has just hit a record \$102.20 for the first time in history, meaning that prices are likely to go up in great numbers, especially with regard to food, which was something I think is already happening, and something that I think both of you have talked about on

this program too. So, a lot to watch out for. One of the things we need is, we need a steel mesh net trap on all exit routes for Scott Bessent. Yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

That Bessent guy is going to be running.

#Danny

Yeah, Soros' guy there. Well, gentlemen, it was great to be with both of you. I want to make sure everybody knows in the video description below is Sonar21, Larry's blog, as well as Transition Protocol, which Larry helps co-host. I also help contribute to that. So subscribe to that channel too. Also, hit the like button before you go. That helps boost the show in YouTube's algorithm. I want to thank all the moderators, viewers. I want to thank the single super chatter here today, Farzana Deem. And I want to also let you know that all the places to support this channel are in the video description below. So do check those out: Patreon, Substack, and more. But Larry Johnson and Colonel Wilkerson will be back with me, I'm sure, very soon. Tomorrow, I'm on with Pepe Escobar, same time, 1 p.m. Eastern time, August 19th. Until next time, everyone, take care. See you next show.

#Larry Johnson

Thanks, Danny. Later.