

US C-17 in MOSCOW? EXPOSED CIA Op! |

Larry Johnson

Former CIA analyst Larry Johnson blows lid off the secret CIA mission that flew to Moscow and why Russia and Iran were very much aware of what was happening when the US C17 landed on August 25th. <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 #russia #cia #trump #ratcliffe #iranwar #ukrainewar

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. As you can see, I'm joined by former CIA analyst and geopolitical analyst Larry Johnson to go over the latest developments. Well, Larry, I wanted to get right to it with you about this, the C-17 Boeing that went to Moscow yesterday with John Ratcliffe, apparently the CIA director, only him on the plane, or at least him and whoever follows him. And there have been so many reports about what actually happened that I wanted your take on what you believe happened. But here are some of them. Some say that Russia actually rejected a U.S. request to pressure Iran into reopening the Strait of Hormuz, believe it or not, reportedly telling Iran that the threats and sanctions on Russian entities would have limited consequences, per two supposedly senior Iranian sources.

None of this has been verified yet. And then there have been other reports that say that Russia briefed Iran that CIA Director Ratcliffe delivered this message, with the U.S. asking Iran to, again, press on the Strait of Hormuz and warning Russia that they would be punished if they did not, in terms of these sanctions and Operation Economic Outcast on Iran. So, Larry, right to you: what exactly happened here? Others have said, like Newsweek and the Western mainstream media, hilariously, just spinning also their own ideas about what happened, threatening maybe Russia around escalating in Ukraine, mobilizing 300,000 troops. There's so many theories, but what do you believe happened, and what do you know, if anything?

#Larry Johnson

Well, the only thing I know is what I can observe, right? So first, why the C-17? That first struck me as odd because the CIA director has his own plane, and a C-17 is really a cargo plane, a very large cargo plane. Well, it does make sense that that plane was also carrying the vehicles that Ratcliffe and his security detail drove in the streets of Moscow. I guess they could have wound up with Russian vehicles, but that's not what they did. They went, you know, maybe from their own security

standpoint, they didn't want to put Ratcliffe in a vehicle that was where the Russians, you know, probably would have bugged it and had control of it. The claim that this was some sort of United States going over to warn Russia—the Russians wouldn't have let him in the country if that's what he was doing. They're not interested in listening to the United States about any of that.

That's number one. I really think it was more with Ratcliffe explaining and reassuring the Russians now that there has been a change in policy by the United States vis-à-vis Iran. Because what did we see in the preceding 24 hours? They had the Independence Day celebrations in Kiev. Take your pick on how you like to pronounce it. The British Prime Minister was there. I think Ursula von der Leyen was there. Europeans made a show. They showed up. What wasn't there? The United States. Huh. You think that's a coincidence? I don't. So I think probably Ratcliffe's job was to go and meet personally with the Russians and assure them, yeah, we are—we're pulling out of this. That's one possibility. As far as the claim in the Wall Street Journal that they're warning them about, you know, not to invade Poland, Russia's not going to invade Poland. That's just sheer nonsense.

#Danny

Larry, Trump is describing this as semi-routine. But I'm wondering, why was it so secret? Usually, when U.S. officials go somewhere, it is something that is planned. And the United States, the White House, Washington, they will make it known that it's happening. Even if something like this, if they wanted to be a little more secretive, they don't have to say the exact date, but they'd say, okay, he's going now. But then none of that was said until now, where Trump says, oh, semi-routine. What does this even mean? And why all of the secrecy and intrigue around it, do you think? Well, it wasn't semi-routine.

#Larry Johnson

It wasn't even semi-routine. We've never—you know, I think the last time a CIA director went to Moscow for talks was when Bill Burns was in place as Biden's CIA director. So, you know, it's unusual, highly unusual. It does appear that there was an element of planning to it, though, by virtue of lining up the C-17, and with the C-17 getting the cars loaded on board so when they hit the—you know, when they hit Vnukovo, I think it was, where they flew in, that once they're on the tarmac of Vnukovo, the cars come off and off they go, driving to downtown Moscow. And that would have been an interesting drive because, you know, the Secret Service agents or the security detail for CIA normally aren't accustomed to driving in Moscow. You know, it's not a difficult drive, but you got to know where you're going. You got to know which turns to make and which, you know, ramps to take in order to make it down to the Kremlin.

#Danny

Here is what Russia said about it. They haven't said very much. It's not many details, but this is what Ukrainska Pravda, the Ukrainian media outlet, reported from The Washington Post. Peskov said

to them that, when asked about the visit, Dmitry Peskov, spokesperson for the Russian government, said it was related to contacts between security services. Larry, can you read between the lines about what any of that could mean? Again, a C-17, as you said, it's an interesting choice of plane, given that, yeah, they could have the vehicles on there, but I'm guessing they could have a lot more on there as well than just the cars. Exactly. I thought, I don't know. What do you think?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, no, I think it was, you know, the number of cars in his motorcade, that looks like about the right amount that the C-17 could hold. I mean, it's, you know, it's sort of an uncomfortable way for Ratcliffe to travel because, you know, maybe they have a package they can put on there that has, like, reclining airline seats. But usually, on the C-17s, they have these sling seats. But, you know, yeah, I guess they do have the capability to put, let's call it, conventional airline seats in there. Still not the most comfortable of accommodations, not getting, you know, first-class food. And, you know, it certainly isn't Qatar Air or Emirati Air, you know.

#Danny

Now, to the Iran situation, Larry, and how this all ties in. You know, there have been some reports—they're all conflicting. Some have said that the Trump administration is considering canceling Operation Economic Outcast. Others are saying that this trip was actually about Operation Economic Outcast and trying to push Russia with threats of more sanctions. But what do you make of this Operation Economic Outcast in general, and how it fits into how the Trump administration is behaving now? Marco Rubio is also saying, yeah, we're not going to strike Iran right now, but we withhold the right to, but we're just going to focus on economic warfare. Right. Well, why would the CIA director go all the way to Russia in person and issue threats about sanctions? I'm curious if you believe that there could be any truth to those reports.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, no, I discount that as well. I mean, this is not Operation Outcast. This is more like Operation Outhouse. Because what's in an outhouse? Well, it's completely full of feces, which is what Bessent announced yesterday. The effort's intended to target countries that trade with Iran and use dollars as the basis of trade. Well, Russia and China are using their own currencies, and they're using CIPS, not SWIFT. So right away, the sanctions, potential sanctions against Russia or China, are irrelevant. The United States is not going to touch their financial assets because their financial assets on this front aren't involved using the dollar. Plus, they're using CIPS. The Chinese developed the cross-border interbank payment system, which is a form of digital payment, or way to move assets digitally.

So this was Bessent making it. It's like he's threatening to attack people, but he doesn't have a weapon to attack them with. So that's where, you know, I think there is a collective yawn. There are

only two countries that trade significantly with Iran. They could potentially be hurt by this, but those are Turkey and Pakistan. And Turkey and Pakistan both—I mean, yeah, Turkey and Pakistan both—Pakistan relies upon natural gas, and Turkey relies upon the natural gas as well and some oil. So they're not going to sacrifice their countries to obey the United States. Absolutely not. So that's why this was Bessent making threats that were, I think, everybody else saw as meaningless threats.

#Danny

Now, Larry, I want to go—just before we move on from this, I want to go over some of what—maybe point by point, especially on the—we talked about the Iran scenario, but I want to go over some of these other—it's funny that the mainstream media have actually, and have in some parts, been controlled by the CIA. But in this case, they have no idea what exactly happened. So they're saying—this is Newsweek saying—there are five possible reasons what was said in Ratcliffe's visit. And I want you to comment on this one in particular: Putin warning Putin against mobilizing 300,000 troops to escalate mobilization in the Ukraine conflict. This has been said by Zelensky and many others in the mainstream media. What do you make of this? Is there any truth to Russia amping things up on the battlefield and in the conflict? And would the CIA director go all the way to Russia to communicate concern about this? Yeah, heavens no.

#Larry Johnson

I mean, that is just so patently absurd. Number one, why does Russia need to mobilize? They just announced at the end of June—that's the first six months of their annual recruitment—that their target was over 200,000 new people signing up, volunteering. That's what they got. They got 200,000. So the second half of the year, they're going to get another 200,000. They don't need to mobilize. The notion of mobilizing is you're suffering a shortage of troops and you need to bring them up, except Russia's got enough. If they need more, they do have reserves. They could call them up. They've got at least, I think, 10 million reservists. So, you know, that's not a problem. No, this is just more mindless propaganda out of the West.

#Danny

All right. And how about warning against escalation and to kickstart Ukraine peace efforts? Again, all of this is basically saying the same thing. There's also a warning against Moscow's threat to NATO. What threat are they talking about? What would Ratcliffe and the CIA even—you know, I thought the CIA was in the business of escalation, Larry—but your thoughts on this possibility here?

#Larry Johnson

Well, you know, the other explanation related to that was that Russia wanted to test NATO. Test NATO? What the hell do you think they've been doing for the last three years? NATO has been fighting a proxy war against Russia, using Ukraine as cannon fodder for that effort. NATO military

planners have been intimately involved with training and deploying with Ukrainian units. So all of a sudden now Russia is going to make a gesture at NATO by putting troops into Poland? Well, how's it going to get there? Are they going to go through Belarus? I don't know. This is just silliness. It's an example of bad propaganda. Because I think the way Russia looks at it, they're doing just fine crushing the Ukrainian army, who has been backed by NATO. They're crushing them on the battlefield. They're crushing them in Kiev. And they're crushing them in Odessa. And they're crushing them on the Black Sea. Where else do they need to go crush?

#Danny

Well, my theory, Larry, and I'm curious on your thoughts on this, is the way that this was done did seem a bit like there was, what do you call it, like a fire underneath the behind. Like there was a real emergency and they had to go to communicate. But I actually—everyone in the mainstream media, in the Western mainstream media, viewed this as the CIA going to be, you know, to lay out ultimatums and to threaten Russia. I could very well see it as the opposite, that this was actually more of an emergency on, oh, you know, things aren't really going well.

Every single option in almost every single situation—section of, I guess, what you could call the U.S. foreign policy establishment—is out of options, out of answers, and everything that Russia might be involved with, whether it's Iran, the relation with Iran, the war in Iran, and the Ukraine conflict. And maybe there were some attempts to communicate, as you said, some, I guess, more good-faith kind of gestures, which... you know, I'm curious about your thoughts.

#Larry Johnson

Well, let's look at another possibility: that Russia, during recent ground operations, has captured CIA personnel, and Ratcliffe is there to try to get them out.

#Danny

Yeah, that's a very— that's a good, that's a good point. And that would not be reported on, because I have actually not heard anything about that. I mean, you get reports from, you know, alternative sources, Telegram channels from the region, et cetera, talk about mercenaries. But in terms of CIA personnel, the CIA has been very mum about their activities, despite all of the public information that we know now, where the CIA is operating directly in Ukraine in all sorts of ways in directing the so-called war effort. But maybe talk about that. Talk about how has the CIA been involved to the point where they are getting captured? Because I think that might be a surprise.

#Larry Johnson

Well, if they have forward advisers, both working with drone units and with units that were going to be involved with the counterattack, or units that were supposed to infiltrate behind Russian lines and

carry out sabotage acts, you know, that maybe that's—now Trump has finally issued a stand-down order, so we're going to stop that. And actually, if you're going to Moscow to tell them that we've stopped all this nonsense.

#Danny

Well, it's been a very difficult time for the CIA, actually, and for U.S. intelligence. And I wanted to pull up this report because it came out at the exact time that Ratcliffe went to Russia, where a new report from NBC says Iran inflicted billions in damage to U.S. intelligence sites across the Middle East, including buildings and surveillance equipment across the region that has undergone unprecedented damage to the CIA and other U.S. spy agencies. Talk about that. I know, for example, that during the heat of the 40-day war, Iran did hit, I believe, a CIA installation inside of Saudi Arabia. But maybe you can go into more detail about what exactly is being referred to here.

#Larry Johnson

Well, it's not just one thing. Iran reportedly destroyed over 19 different radar systems and communication systems that were scattered from Kuwait down to the UAE. I know in one instance, with respect to, I think it was Kuwait, Bahrain, they had some kind of radar, which was a specialty military radar that was connected to spacecraft. You know, it helped with communications in part, but something—it went beyond that, because I was told it literally had cost tens of billions of dollars. I mean, it was a very expensive system.

But more importantly, it was a system tied into our satellite network and satellite warfare. Anyway, when that got taken out, it caused a lot of consternation at the Pentagon, I'm told. So you've got this extensive damage to U.S. infrastructure throughout the Persian Gulf. And it all promised beforehand to the locals, whether it's the Kuwaitis or Bahrainis or Qataris, "Oh, don't worry, we got your back. This will be a piece of cake. They can't touch us." Boy, Iran did more than touch them. They gave them the full-body massage.

#Danny

Yeah, that's for sure. That's for sure. Well, there's also, Larry—where is it? Where is it here? Oh yes, this I wanted your comments on. Because as everyone's eyes are on the CIA in Moscow, Iran and Russia have signed a \$25 billion agreement for new power plants. This is a pretty big slap in the face also to Operation Economic Outcast, including Iran's largest nuclear power plant to date, with Pezeshkian set to meet Putin next week in Kyrgyzstan. So, Larry, talk about this. What's significant about this, especially with regard to the Russia-Iran relationship, as there's all kinds of scrambling by the United States to try to isolate Iran? This seems to be a big blow to that.

#Larry Johnson

Well, yeah, I mean, look, look. The U.S. attempt to isolate Iran is living in the past. As I made note, back when the JCPOA was signed in 2015, you got China and Russia. They signed on board. They were with the United States and said, "Yeah, we're with you. We'll enforce those sanctions." Not today. When the U.S. and Europe went back to do the snapback sanctions on Iran, under trying to resurrect the JCPOA, Russia and China said, "Count us out. We're not having any part of this. We're done." They walked away from it.

So that's—the United States doesn't have complete control over the sanctions environment. In fact, it's just the opposite. So, there is—they've got the free trade with Russia, going north-south through the Caspian, free trade east-west with China, free trade with Pakistan over six land routes, and Pakistan's pretty adamant. They're not going to abide by these, what they view as arbitrary U.S. sanctions. So here's the United States trying to pressure Iran at a time when Iran has walled itself off from those pressure points.

#Danny

Yeah. Yes, and here is Mohammad Ghalibaf, head of parliament and envoy to China, who directly thanked China for its principled statement rejecting illegal sanctions, saying that the Iran-China comprehensive strategic partnership is rooted in mutual respect, win-win cooperation, and a shared vision for a multipolar world. This relationship needs no one's permission. And, Larry, what's striking about this to me is that Ghalibaf is almost writing how China would write about it. So there is a deep synergy, I would say, between—

#Larry Johnson

Iran and China, not just in—yeah, very much so—but even how they view what these relations will look like and what they will bring. Yeah, no, very much so. You know, this is like I said, this is—it's not like, uh, I was talking with Robert Barnes earlier, and he had a good expression for it. The United States is treating this like it's just different currencies. You know, the Iranians are trading with the Chinese in a different currency. But that's not it. Let's think of the financial systems as being on railroad tracks. Well, the U.S. track is a smaller gauge than the Russian track. The Russian track is this wide, and the U.S. track is this wide. Well, so the Russians and Chinese are now driving on a different track that they've taken. Iran is no longer having to ride with the United States and the U. S. companies. Iran is free of those companies now.

#Danny

And can you respond to, you know, there have been some criticisms, especially about China and how it's dealt with oil imports, saying that maybe China has gone along with the game around these, you know, the oil, by reducing imports. It's actually helped the United States manipulate the markets, the oil markets, et cetera. But I'm wondering what you think about this, because in my estimation, it seems like China has only continued to violate what the U.S. says is its authority to

dictate who Iran trades with, and hasn't abandoned Iran in any degree. But your thoughts on this? I've been seeing it go around, especially as we start talking about the strategic reserves in the United States going, going, going downward to nil.

#Larry Johnson

No, no, look, it is—this is a classic case. I don't want to use a family analogy because at least if it's in a family analogy, there is some element, usually, of mutual respect. But, you know, or think of a father and son. There comes a point where the son becomes independent, and if the father is still locked into viewing the kid as dependent and small, there's no foundation for a relationship. And that's sort of what Iran has now done, or is being done to Iran by the United States: that the United States is treating Iran like it's a child, that it has complete control over Iran and its assets and resources.

And the opposite is true, that the United States is now running up against the limits of its power. It could only tell Iran sort of what to do, maybe if it was in the, you know, like the U.S. port. But Iran's not operating in U.S. ports. And Iran's not going to U.S. banks. And Iran's not picking up U.S. dollars. It's working entirely outside that system. It's on a whole different set of railroad tracks. So Bessent's operating, "We're going to enforce sanctions based upon this on Amtrak that runs from Washington to New York." But this is not—this is the Trans-Siberian Railroad, okay? Completely different. And the lack of U.S. control over that is, you know, it's going to drive Trump crazy.

#Danny

Yeah, and I would say, you know, with Russia and China's relationship with Iran, it's essentially the opposite. And I think this is what's important, is that it's so much the opposite that, well, Russia and China are not going to punish Iran for doing what it did, defending itself and, you know, causing a major disruption to the global economy, which does have an impact on both of them to some degree—some benefits, some disadvantages. But nevertheless, both Russia and China will just do what's best for them and maintain a relationship with Iran.

So it's interesting to see that we see all this misdirection, people looking at what is China doing or not doing versus the real crisis, which is that it's the U.S. that's trying to manipulate the markets. It's the U.S. trying to buy all of this time. And I'm just wondering, Larry, it seems like the move right now for the U.S. and the Trump administration is to try to extend this no-war, no-peace scenario up until the midterms and then, you know, whatever, get back to determining what they want to do after the midterms. Will Iran let that happen if that's the case? And do you believe that that's the case?

#Larry Johnson

No, I don't believe it's the case, and I believe that the U.S. faces some real prospects of blowback if it tried to pursue that course of action. Now, where the United States is going to really have some problems is with the price of diesel and gas. That is going up, and there's nothing that the United States can do to stop it. It's already, if you go out on the West Coast—let's see, the number I saw was over \$6, \$6 a gallon for diesel. Well, compared with what we'll see here, a little too precisely. Yeah, it's \$6.41 a gallon.

#Larry Johnson

So, and compare that: the price last January of this year was \$4.12. So it's up more than \$2, \$2.38 a gallon. And that's likely to go higher.

#Larry Johnson

But it's got the highest percentage increase out west. The second highest, let's see here, is the Gulf Coast: Texas, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana. And then the third highest is the Rocky Mountains. Rocky Mountain High. Yep.

#Danny

Yeah, and even in New York City, where there's usually higher inflation, runaway prices on most things, but gasoline actually usually stays on the lower end. It's \$5.72 out here, and that's almost \$1.70 more than what it was prior to the war, which is really expensive for New York, given everything else about New York.

#Larry Johnson

I don't want to minimize the cost of gasoline, but it's not what you'd call the driver of the economy. Diesel and aviation fuel are the drivers of the economy because they are important both for transporting people and transporting things. Also, diesel is important in agriculture. You know, a lot of the mechanical activities around farms, ranches have to be done with diesel tractors. So this is a potential big hit on the U.S. economy. But it's not confined to the United States. It's global. This thing is hitting the globe, not just one part.

#Danny

Yeah, and the dollar system makes that even worse, given, yeah, the high diesel prices at this level in much of the world is catastrophic immediately. And yeah, \$5.70 in New York City for diesel, absolutely catastrophic for commerce. Right. Larry, now, how about let's go to Ukraine. Recently, Ukraine's ousted Defense Minister Fedorov has said that Ukraine is slowly losing the war. It seems like every time—and this is from Meduza, begging us to not let Russia shut them down, the Russian

opposition—but it says Ukraine's leadership has no overall vision for how to win the war against Russia, said Mikhail Fedorov.

He told Reuters, "Corruption and the slow adoption of new technology are also holding the country back." Larry, what's going on in this conflict? It seems like every time somebody's ousted or leaves or what have you from the Ukrainian government, we get a bit of truth, or maybe the alternative side of the mainstream media spin on the conflict. So what's going on, and how is this conflict pressing also on the United States, the Trump administration, to move, to act, to change its ways, if at all?

#Larry Johnson

Well, they can't. Ukraine is losing. That's simple. And when you get this kind of loss, it's a military loss, it's an economic loss now, with the loss of Odessa. So Ukraine's effectively isolated. And they're not getting the money, weapons, or supplies they once were. So I think this situation is going to grow more desperate for them with each passing month. I think Ukraine's going to have trouble surviving as an intact government through December.

#Danny

Here's a question from the audience, actually. Is there any way at this point that Russia would seriously entertain any ceasefire talks until Russia has the entirety of Ukraine's Black Sea coast? Thank you for the super chat. That's a good question there. What's your thought?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah. Russia is going to press. They've already shut down Odessa. They have effectively cut off—I mean, it's economic strangulation now for Ukraine. They've lost the grain. We're seeing, in fact, future grain prices in the United States, they're up, markedly up because of the cutoff in Ukraine. They're not going to get any more military shipments coming in. Their only land-based lifeline is through Poland, Romania, and those are sketchy at best. So what you're looking at is that Russia has got Ukraine in a real bind because they're hitting Ukraine, not just economically, shutting down the Black Sea, but they're hitting the transportation nodes from the air. They're hitting key logistics hubs from the air. And then on the ground, they are pressing forward at a very, very rapid pace. So, you know, this is not good for Ukraine.

#Danny

Yeah, definitely not good for Ukraine at all, Larry. Well, you know, with the conflict in Ukraine, let's talk about all the news right now. Wildberries has just been hit, supposedly destroyed another Wildberries facility. What do you make of this continued hyping of Ukraine's drone attacks? There was a story, I believe, I don't know if it was the New York Times or another, talking about how

advanced Ukraine's software technology is that's keeping them in the war and keeping them, you know, pressing forward and pressuring Russia by bringing the war back to them. How long can this go on? And is there a breaking point for how long this media spin and narrative can continue?

#Larry Johnson

Well, it can go a while. I think it can go on for at least a good another year, maybe. But the reality of what Russia is doing on the ground, in the air, it's starting to take a toll. And, you know, setting fire to a Wildberries facility is not a critical logistics hub for Russia. And the Ukrainians keep forgetting, they score a hit on one target like this, or let's say they hit six of them. Russia is a huge, huge country. And Ukraine didn't have enough bombs to force Russia to surrender. Same can't be said for Kiev. You're going to see now, I think, greater, more airstrikes. It's like the more Ukraine strikes targets, civilian targets inside Russia, the greater the response of the Russians in the ensuing wave of rockets, missiles, and drones.

#Danny

And then, you know, in the 10, 15 minutes that we have, Larry, maybe take a broader perspective on the state of these wars. What does the Trump administration and the United States' posture, especially around the Ukraine conflict, but similarly now almost adopting a kind of similar position with Iran? Trump just said that he's in no rush to continue talks with Iran. Seemingly the posture toward Russia as well, given that after Anchorage and the debacle there, the United States was very quick to stop talking to Russia because they weren't getting anything they wanted. What do you make of the current posture of the United States in these wars and what it says about them?

#Larry Johnson

The United States needs to talk to Russia, whether or not—well, again, we start off talking about Ratcliffe's sudden trip to Russia. The good news is there are still some channels of communication open. Three years ago, I was told by Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov that he said, "We don't have anybody to talk to." So now, I would argue, there is somebody for the Russians to talk to. That's the good news.

#Larry Johnson

But there are limits to what can be done diplomatically from Russia's side, because Russia has made it very clear: these are our demands. This is what we need to see. And to the extent that the United States refuses to accommodate those, Russia and the United States will stay outside the negotiating orbit.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. And Larry, the actions against Iran, the action against Russia, many see as targeting China. Xi Jinping is supposed to come to the United States next month. There's this whole economic ouster operation against Iran that many also believe is meant to target China. Yet the United States is very hesitant to name China, to go after Chinese institutions. What does that tell you about the overall situation regarding the trajectory of why the U.S. is continuing these wars in the first place?

#Larry Johnson

Who holds the power, baby? You know, that's the ultimate power play. The fact that we've got to be worried about what are the Chinese going to do to us? Because, you know, we've acquired quite the reputation for doing to other countries what we wouldn't put up with if they did it to us. But now China is asserting itself as really a global power, not just a regional power. I'm just fascinated by this disconnect in the United States when it comes to China. We've got such a built-in bias, and some of it's racist, and we don't appreciate what the Chinese have accomplished in the last 30 years. In the history of the world, you've never had a society transformed as Chinese society has transformed in the space of 50 years, or 54 years. Go back to 1972. It's an astonishing change.

#Larry Johnson

And they're sort of feeling their oats as a new political power. But they're not going to give that up. You know, they're not going to surrender and acquiesce to the United States. I still think there's some strong parts of Chinese culture where they can be assertive, or they can appear to be placid, but they're still actually being assertive, or they can be genuinely giving up. And I think what you and I are seeing here is they're going to be more on the assertive side. Polite, but assertive.

#Danny

Right. Yeah, well, I think that's 100% true. Even when I go to China, people will tell me, you know, there is a culture of being very, uh, you know, very friendly to foreigners, very much like, uh, even like deferential maybe to foreigners. And, um, and a lot of that is, yeah, politeness. But at the governance level, I think what we're really seeing is China will act very professionally always and diplomatically always, but never let go or relinquish its overall interests. And also, I think more and more so within its capabilities, its interests in not just its own, what's happening inside of China, but also the kind of environment that China needs and China wants to see in the world so that its growth and the growth of others is not impeded. And I think we see that more and more now, especially with Iran. Despite people's criticisms, China has been an incredible lifeline to Iran throughout this whole period.

#Larry Johnson

Not just lifeline, orchestrator. I would argue they've been orchestrating this whole thing with Pakistan and playing a quiet behind-the-scenes role, but a role that actually goes beyond the

relationship with Iran, that they've been instrumental in encouraging the Saudis, the Turks, and the Pakistanis to form that new alliance.

#Danny

Yeah, and this is actually a question I forgot to ask you from earlier, but it's also a very broad one. Now that you are not in the, I guess, the dark walls of the CIA, but have experience, what do you make of its overall state? Because the CIA has been viewed for decades and decades and decades as incredibly powerful, of course, incredibly malicious, with a huge record of being an engine for destructive U.S. foreign policy endeavors everywhere, including in the United States. But what do you make of its state now, given that no presence in Russia, no presence in China, or at least very little presence in Russia, no presence in China, from what I know of.

Iran has been very vigilant in, you know, minimizing and reducing the CIA's ability to do anything there. And then, of course, in the rest of the world, while, of course, there are many places in the world that are not in the positions of those countries that have a more difficult time, right? We also see, I think more for the case of Ukraine, a huge difficulty in being able to enforce and assert U.S. interests via the CIA. And I'm wondering what you view the CIA's overall situation, power, role right now as being in 2026, given the state of these conflicts.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, it's still, you know, I, I, I think it needs to be disbanded and start over. It has been too covert-action dependent. That's what I mean by that: activities designed to overthrow or weaken other governments. That has been almost the exclusive activity of the United States over the last 60, 70 years, since Vietnam. And I've seen that we're reluctant. We keep getting in our way. As an example, we've got this contradictory policy. The United States says it's fighting a war against terrorism. Great. Yet, going back to the 1980s, we have the CIA funding these radical Islamic groups that are Sunni-based that end up both carrying out terrorist attacks against us, but we use them in roles to try.

We use them in the Balkans against the Russians, again, using Islamic terrorism as a way to try to weaken Russia. At the same time, the CIA was funding Chechen rebels that were tied into radical, again, extremist Islamic groups. We've had the United States—and that was in the '90s, going to the 2000s, 2010s. Again, the United States is funding ISIS and al-Nusra and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. That goes into the second decade of the 21st century, you know, 2010 to 2019. Again, we're funding radical Islamists, and yet we claim we're fighting a war against radical Islam. So you've got that contradiction throughout the CIA. And

#Larry Johnson

You know, they need some of these to call them out and say, "Well, stop. You can't keep doing this." And when we were doing it to, you know, weaken Iran, this was targeted primarily at Iran and at Russia. And you go back over the last 60 years, Iran and Russia were the primary targets of it. And, you know, now we're finding the limitations of that power. And everything that, again, the CIA operations in Ukraine were designed to weaken and destroy Russia. And now maybe a reckless visit with Putin would say, "Okay, we give up. We're done. We surrender."

#Danny

Yeah, I definitely don't want to minimize the CIA's influence over U.S. foreign policy, or the deep state's influence, for lack of a better term, over what Washington and someone like Donald Trump ends up actually doing. But as you say, yeah, it's the actual outcomes that come out of CIA policy, if we can call it that, I feel like are getting more and more, I guess, disrupted by this changing world. And I think, you know, even just the relationship with Israel too, as being—you would think that the CIA would see a lot of Israeli influence as being, you know, almost—I don't know if that's your experience in the CIA too. Well, is there a conflict there ever, or is it just completely aligned with this kind of thing?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, the United States basically says it doesn't spy on Israel. And I know that we've had, you know, one of my CT classmates, Susan Miller, she was a chief of station in Israel. And Susan's a nice lady. I mean, I knew her as a nice girl. She was in her early 20s when I worked with her. And she's now old enough to—she retired after 40 years. But, you know, we don't control Israel by any stretch. So they do their thing, and we're sort of watching, looking in from the outside. We could do more, but it's been a policy decision to not do more.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. And just for the, you know, when it comes to the CIA, I could see there being a lot of alignment with Israel, if not fully on the overall designs in the Middle East. But also, I could see a power struggle that I just don't see really right now. You know, you would think that the CIA, being the CIA of the U.S. hegemon, would want to be looking like it's in control rather than the Israeli entity looking like it is completely and fully in control of what happens in that region.

#Larry Johnson

Yep. Well, Larry, I know we've got some— but your final thoughts. We'll stay tuned to see if there may be some developments. We've heard, I can't confirm it, Pakistani sources are saying they think

there will be an announcement of a deal within 48 hours: the U.S. lifting the blockade and Iran agreeing to, quote, open the Strait of Hormuz. I remain skeptical of that. We'll see. But yeah, I need to jump because I got another hit.

#Danny

Yeah, sure. Yeah, well, before you go, that would seem to require Iran dropping the entirety of the MOU, which doesn't seem likely given the state of the whole region and what have you.

#Larry Johnson

I agree. I think they're hard over on that.

#Danny

Well, Larry, we'll see you next week, though. I know we already got an appointment for next week for another show, so see you then. All right, my friend. Thanks so much, Danny. All right. See you in about a week's time. Bye-bye. All right, everybody. That was a great program with the one Larry Johnson. In the last few minutes that we have here, be sure to hit the like button before you go. That helps boost the show and YouTube's algorithm. You can catch Larry's work at sonar21.com and at Transition Protocol in the video description below as well. All the places to support this channel are in the video description too, at [patreon.com slash dannyhaiphong](http://patreon.com/slashdannyhaiphong). Substack. I do write articles too periodically when I get the chance.

And I am doing some after shows for members on YouTube, Patreon, Substack—some after-show takes as much as I can periodically. And those are for members only. So this channel stays public. All the information on it stays unpaywalled, no paywall here. But if you do want to support, you will get some extra takes from me that you can find on Patreon, Substack, and become a YouTube member in your community posts. So everybody, tomorrow, 2 p.m. Eastern Time, Scott Ritter rejoins the program, and we will go over the latest developments then, August 27th. Until next time, hit the like button. Be sure to— I want to thank here Robert Glasser for becoming a YouTube member.

I want to thank all of the moderators who are in the chat today, and all the members. I see you, Mark Bulmer, and a few others. I want to thank—if there was any moderator in the chat, was there? I believe there was. I don't know, actually. I hope there's a moderator in the chat. Make yourself known. If not, thanks so much for all of your support. Hit the like button before you go. Check out all the stuff in the video description to support the program: Patreon, Substack, Buy Me a Coffee, all of it. See you tomorrow, August 27th, 2 p.m. Eastern Time. Scott Ritter. We will continue the conversation. And thanks, Ware. I see you, moderator, as well. Oh, there's others. Nasir said you're a new mod. Thanks. All right, everybody. I'll see you again tomorrow.