

Lawrence Wilkerson: U.S. Arms Kurdish Fighters in Iran to Start Civil War

Lawrence Wilkerson is a retired Colonel in the US Army and the former Chief of Staff to the US Secretary of State. Colonel Wilkerson discusses how the reckless actions against Iran will transform the region and the world. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X /Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glenndiesen> YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@GDiesen1> Support the research: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glenndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We're joined today by Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, former Chief of Staff to the U.S. Secretary of State. Thank you for coming back on. I've been dying to get your take on what's happening in Iran. But first, you sent a text to a newspaper on the first day of the war where you said that how this war develops depends on many things: the actions of Russia and China, the shortage of vital munitions, the resilience of the Iranians, the actions of other actors on the ground, and the impact on energy facilities. You also mentioned what will happen to these critical straits — Bab al-Mandab, which can block off the Red Sea, and the Strait of Hormuz. And you asked how the American public will react to this war. So now that we're on day five, how do you assess it? I have to say, in terms of identifying the key variables, you pretty much — what's a good way to put it — you nailed it.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, first of all, I'd have to say I've developed some new variables too, in addition to those. But you introduced me as the Chief of Staff to the Secretary of State.

#Glenn

Oh, no—sorry, I meant yes.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah, that's right. You're absolutely right. That was my last position. But I just want your listeners to know that I spent 31 years in the United States military, a lot of that as a military planner—planning for war, particularly in the largest unified command at the time, the U.S. Pacific Command, which fed forces to Central Command. Back then, Central Command was just a tiny little blot on the map. We

gave them all their forces—or didn't give them to them, more often, because we didn't want to. Different business today. It's grown to be the most powerful command, arguably, in the Unified Command Plan.

And I say all that so everyone listening knows that I've been there and done that when it comes to Iran. I was there when the war started—like a World War I in the Levant—between Iraq and Iran, and we backed Iraq. I was there when we made the decision to back Iraq to defeat Iran, because we didn't like Iran after the revolution. I was there when they stood up to Iraq and were going to march on Baghdad. And then we entered the war ourselves with naval combatants in the Strait of Hormuz—one of which was hit by a mine and we almost lost it. Another one limped back after Saddam Hussein fired two Exocet missiles at it and hit it. And the *Bridgeton*, an oil tanker, was hit. The captain was very angry with us, and on and on.

All that to say, I know this region well—in terms of military action, geography, the difficulty of the terrain, and, shall I say, the nature of the Persian people, who are resilient to a fault and who fought that bloody eight-year war against our chemical weapons supplied to Saddam Hussein, and were going to march to Baghdad. The culminating act, as most people either don't remember or never knew, was when a U.S. Aegis cruiser at sea fired a missile or two at an Iranian Airbus with about 290 people on board—and we killed them all. That's when the Ayatollah said, "I'm throwing in the towel. I'm accepting a UN resolution on how to end this conflict, because I can't fight the empire too." And since that time, all to say, they've been trying to figure out how to fight the empire.

And that's the first thing I would say about the nature of this conflict. If you've read your Clausewitz, you know the one thing you need to do any time you're contemplating using the military to turn policy into violence is to understand the nature of what you're entering upon—the nature of the conflict. We do not. Every statement from Marco Rubio, every statement from Pete Hegseth, every statement from Donald Trump—indeed, every statement out of the administration, including that bimbo who's the spokesperson for it, that blonde bimbo—has indicated to me they do not understand the nature of this conflict. The leading factor of which is that we're taking on a people who are 3,000 years old, 90 million strong, 53 percent Persian, and who have lots of problems, but who will seal themselves into their very doom in order to give us a truly vicious headache.

And that's what they're embarked on, and they're not going to stop. They're not going to cease until the last one of them is dead. We can root out all the Kurds we want, try to hire them to fight for us and others like that in the region. And therein lies another disconnect in our understanding of this conflict—the nature of it. The objective of Bibi Netanyahu, for whom we're fighting this war, is chaos. Not putting in Tehran a regime that would run a reasonably quizzling state, or at least a state that got along with the United States and sold us the soil and everything else. He wants chaos—total chaos in the region—just like he tried to get in Syria, because it's his plan, and people behind him, like Naftali Bennett and others, to run rampant over the entire Levant from, oh, ready for this, Erdoğan, from Turkey to eastern Africa. That is Netanyahu's goal.

And oh, by the way, all the Arabs in between—that's what he's after. Don't think that when he dies or goes to jail or whatever, it'll stop there, because they'll still be doing it. Turkey right now needs to worry about, for example, intelligence assets of Mossad and other assets too, that are operating in Cyprus and southern Greece, preparing the battlefield, if you will, for when they march on Turkey. So the nature of this conflict, which I didn't necessarily touch upon in my earlier response that you quoted from, is that it has every potential not just to go regional but to go global—to link up with Ukraine, for example, with our efforts in Georgia, in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and all along the southern rim of the old Soviet Union—to destabilize Russia and ultimately to aim an arrow at the heart of China.

All of this is part of that. Every bit of what I just said, and more, is part of the warp and woof of the nature of this conflict. And we're crazy if we think it's going to be confined to a few days, a few bullets, and a few bombs, and then we're going to march triumphantly up the hill and say, "We have a new regime in Tehran," or whatever. First of all, Netanyahu is not going to permit that. And second, we're not going to be able to achieve it. So that's what I meant by those general comments—that, most importantly of all, we do not understand the nature of the conflict upon which we've embarked.

#Glenn

Well, how would you have planned it? I mean, not that you would endorse it, but if—again, from your previous roles in the US government—how would you carry out such an attack, if indeed that was the objective? And what would be the main risks, I guess? Where would your concerns be?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, the only answer to that question—if I were chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or advising him as I did with Colin Powell—would be: don't start this conflict. You do not want to use the military instrument in this way, in this region. Period. It was U.S. policy for 40 years not to use the military instrument from ground bases in the region. We're seeing proof of why that was the case right now, and I can't believe that Marco Rubio has been so delinquent in his duties. But I probably have to blame every secretary of state all the way back to Tony Blinken, Rex Tillerson, and a host of others.

The forms—the F-77s, the noncombatant evacuation operation forms—tell you where everyone is in your embassy: every American, every American citizen. You have to have their name, telephone number, passport, all those details. You keep that so you can evacuate them. We didn't. We didn't. And I'll tell you why we probably didn't—if it wasn't just crass stupidity on the part of Marco Rubio—because we didn't want to give a warning. We didn't want the Iranians to see the noncombatant evacuation operations taking place and realize, "Whoa, diplomacy notwithstanding, we're going to war because the Americans are about to attack."

So now we have a lot of American citizens stranded, and it's very difficult to get them out because the airports have been closed. You can't fly in, you can't get them out. So we might have some civilian casualties before this is over, and I lay that directly at the feet of the Secretary of State for an incompetent job—concentrating on too much other than his real responsibilities. So, all that to say, I wouldn't start. The military instrument is not the instrument to use in the Levant, period. That's my advice to you, Mr. Chairman. Please, under the new law—the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the DOD Reorganization Act of 1985—I have the same power you do to advise the President. So, you coming with me to the White House?

That's what I'd say to the Secretary of State. Pete, you coming with me to the White House? I'm exercising my right under Goldwater-Nichols. I'm going to advise the President. You coming with me? If you're not, I don't care, because I'm going to tell him, don't do this. Which apparently Cain did try—the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff did try to register some objections. I'm told they were based on munitions we don't have, particularly air defense missiles, on the danger for surface combatants in the region given the incredible array of missiles Iran has, and some other things like that. But he was not a happy camper, I don't think, about using the military in this manner.

#Glenn

I wanted to circle back a bit to what you said about Turkey, because this is an interesting element. This whole war is spreading so fast. I mean, we're only on day five, and we've already lost track of how many countries have been pulled into it and attacked.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Look at India, for example. They don't have 25 days on hand. It's about \$15 billion they've got to raise immediately just to meet the oil prices as they are now—and they're going to go higher.

#Glenn

So you're right. But pulling in Turkey—I think that would be a disaster. I don't think they could be pulled in, because they say they're not a participant. They deny that Israel and the U.S. are allowed to use their airspace. They don't like Iran attacking the Gulf states, but they're also not happy about America attacking Iran. So they kind of just want to distance themselves from the whole thing. But you were mentioning these wider ambitions of Israel in the region. When you had the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Huckabee, he was interviewed by Tucker Carlson. And, you know, Tucker Carlson asked, does Israel have a right to do this?

And, well... you know, more or less half the Middle East—if they can take it, they should have it. That was more or less the message, because God gave it to them, or something along those lines. You know, this must surely shock the region. And as you said, with Turkey, it's also trying to

reposition itself in the world. Again, America is not the only game in town. It's a multipolar world. They want to diversify. They don't want to join any anti-American groupings. But on the other hand, they have to look after their own national interests as well. So how do you see—do you see any pathways to Turkey being pulled into this mess somehow?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think they're already in it, really. I know what you're saying, and I know what their public stance has indicated, but I think they're already in it. They're very concerned about Israel stirring up the Kurds and arming them—which is happening, I think, in order to fight Iran—and then having that battle turn the other way. Because Erdogan does not like any Kurdish group being armed to the teeth, as Israel is apparently doing with these people. So I think they're already watching it very closely. They've got people on the ground, people in the area, people reporting back to Ankara. I just don't know where they'll go from here.

That's the question here, because Erdogan and Netanyahu apparently had a meeting that, I'm told, was really, really pure Netanyahu—convincing Erdogan that his future lay with the capitalist ingenuity, the energy, the bombast, the talent, and so forth of the Jews in Israel. I mean, Netanyahu is very explicit about this, especially when he's talking to other leaders: "You join with me and we'll own the Mediterranean—and much more than that. You join with me and you will have access to the highest degree of technological talent, the highest degree of AI skills. And don't you believe for a moment that the empire is that. We are. We are. So ally yourself with me, and you'll be on the cutting edge of the new Mediterranean world led by Israel and you."

He always would add that. I'm telling you how that works. And it's stunning that people keep falling for it. Not Trump, but Erdogan is supposed to be a little smarter than that. But I think he—and I'm not so sure about Modi—and Modi is almost as bad as Netanyahu in his desire to kill Muslims. So that's why he's been so supportive of what Netanyahu is doing in Gaza, on the West Bank, and elsewhere. But Modi's got a shock coming to him too, as I was indicating in my preliminary comments. India doesn't know what it's going to do now. Sixty percent of its oil comes through the Strait of Hormuz—sixty percent. China only has about twenty-one percent. And already they've only got twenty-five days on hand right now. Already the price of West Texas Intermediate and Brent Crude, the benchmarks, is going up.

And when I did the exercises in Beijing, in a much more cooperative world—with the Chinese, the Japanese, the Europeans—everybody was there. Lloyd's of London, MARAD, most of the shippers were there, looking and observing. It went to \$200 a barrel until... In this case, in the Strait of Malacca and off Ras Tanura in Saudi Arabia, which at that time had about 8.5 million barrels per day of productive capacity. That was a serious blow. That's what really sends prices up. And shippers wouldn't ship, and insurers wouldn't insure. So you had a real problem. And because of the

cooperative spirit in the world at that time, and very visible at this simulation, the Chinese actually went back to their MOFA—the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—to get permission to make a decision in this game.

It was so serious to them. Chas Freeman was there, and you know, he speaks Chinese—mannerly and fluently. They didn't know that. So Chas is sitting there, listening to everything they're saying and understanding it. At a later breakfast, when he revealed that he did, they were quite stunned and went over their notes to see what they'd said. All to say, we came to agreements on shifting oil all across the world. We shifted oil away from China toward Korea, away from Alaska and toward Russia. We moved oil because it was so serious. This is the only commodity on the face of the earth that every state extant needs. And we found that out in that game. As I said, the price went over \$200 before we got through.

I think we're looking at another potential for that—without the cooperative spirit in the world. I mean, tell me, what kind of spirit do we have in the world right now? Much of it is laid at the feet of the empire we're creating. But I don't know what it's going to mean in the long term, except I think a lot of people like Putin are going to make a windfall profit, and a lot of people like Modi are going to be sorry they ever said a word about anything, because they're going to be in tough, tough shape. I was told this morning by an Indian who knows India pretty well—knows business in India pretty well—and he said, this will be a tragedy of the first order for us if we really have to pay what's being forecast that we might have to pay.

On top of all that, let's look back at the empire. Trump made a promise. I think the promise actually started in his first administration, but it certainly recurred in his campaign for the second and in the opening days of the second. He made a promise to the American people that he would restore and fill up the strategic reserve—500 billion gallons, I think. Yeah, it has to be billions. That's the figure the security state says is essential. We're at 415 right now. He didn't put a penny in there. He didn't put a gallon in there. So we're sitting in a situation where we might have to ramp up production, might have to do all kinds of things to get what we need. And it's going to cost—it's going to cost majorly.

And it's all because he didn't bother to do anything to fulfill his promise to put the reserve back where it should be. So all of these things are shaping the nature of this conflict, making it, as I say, a much more serious exchange of arms, if you will, than anybody right now is thinking—probably even including Tehran. This is serious business. And the fact is, I know positively that nuclear weapons in Israel will be moved, that some have probably already been uploaded or at least put in the stages of uploading. I know that Netanyahu would not hesitate to use a nuclear weapon. That's another dimension to it. We have a really strange phenomenon here: two nuclear-armed states—one avowed, the United States, and one criminal, Israel—attacking a non-nuclear state.

You can't make this stuff up. This is extraordinary—what we've done. We're showing Iran that they made a huge mistake. They should have built a nuclear weapon, and then they'd be in North Korea's

position. They might be a pariah, but they'd be safe, and they wouldn't be getting pummeled with bombs and missiles. But there's another question I have for my military colleagues: how are you going to win this exchange of modern-day armaments that you were schooled in—majorly, or should have been—since the special military operation started in Ukraine? How are you going to do this when you don't have the munitions? From everything I'm hearing, Iran does. And you're not attriting what Iran has fast enough to keep up with the missile shortage you've got. And Iran is doing this very carefully.

They're not expending things rapidly. They're pounding Israel as they can. The very first time they fired something in there that Israel wasn't aware of, it was just a simple little drone, and they killed something like 22 people, wounded 60, six were missing—whatever the exact numbers were. And they were all civilians, which is not normally what Iran does. But when you've got a barrage coming in now, and Israel hides a lot of its military facilities underneath or alongside civilian installations on purpose—because it knows Iran doesn't like to hit civilian targets—you have so many imponderables here. And when I hear people like Hegseth and others, or Trump, bragging that we have more missiles than you can shake a stick at, well, I know how many missiles you have, Mr. President.

I can give you the total. You probably don't even know what the total is. I can also tell you that when they hit Bahrain—and Bahrain actually cheered, for example, cheered that Bahrain had been hit, the 5th Fleet Headquarters—they also took out, apparently, I've gotten pretty good word on this, the vertical missile launcher loading apparatus, the crane, and everything you need to load the verticals. It's a very complicated process, loading these vertically fired missiles on those combatants. So now they've got to go all the way to Diego Garcia, which is a pretty long trip there and back. All kinds of things are happening right now that lead me to believe that not only do we not understand the nature of the conflict, we simply don't understand our capacity to wage it.

And the president talking offhand about ground troops, and Hegseth talking about ground troops, is pure nonsense. You could put a million American soldiers in Iran and they'd disappear in five years. They'd either all be dead, prisoners, or lost somewhere. We put 12 million men into a 70-million-person country called Germany, if you will, and Japan with another 70 million. And that was a colossal effort that we only limited because we needed so many people back in industry that we counted on the Soviets, of course, to really take the bear mug on and do the damage. And they did. But look at the comparison—here we're looking at a 90-million-person country, a huge country, much larger than Iraq, and the terrain is much more difficult than Iraq.

And pretty good cohesion among the 53 percent who are Persian, if not most of the rest of them—especially since we did what we did, like bombing the school and killing the children. There's no better way to fuse a population against you. And for that matter, killing the religious leader who wasn't hiding, who wasn't down in a bunker—he was in his office, in his home, because he was ready to be martyred. And he was martyred, and he'll be remembered as a martyr. He's probably done more to bring the two major sects of Islam together than anything in a long time. So the nature of this conflict is going to eat us up. And they—Hegseth, Rubio, Trump—have no concept of it.

#Glenn

What you're saying is, there are so many strange things that have happened. For example, the U.S. spent all this time trying to convince India not to buy Russian oil, and now they wish they were buying more. But also this idea about the shortage of munitions—Trump went out on Truth Social and wrote that we have unlimited amounts of these weapons. And then, on the same day, they started pulling back, at least discussing sending the THAAD missiles and Patriots from South Korea to the war theater against Iran. So, you know, all of this—everything he says—is just nonsense. It's not valid.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

If you give me just one moment, because that's a very poignant subject. Nothing gives an ally less faith in you than when you're under duress—I've been there, I've done this—and you take the equipment designed expressly to defend them away and put it into another conflict. That says to that ally, "I can't trust these people." And right now, in this case, South Korea is debating. Every day they debate in their closed rooms—debating whether or not they want to stay in the alliance. And it's obvious why: they understand the only reason we're on the peninsula is to fight China, not to protect Korea. And they don't want to fight China. They've got a good relationship with China—it's a strong economic relationship. They don't want to fight China, and they know we're there to fight China from their peninsula. What does that mean for them? We're going to lose Korea. I predict we're going to lose them within 24 months, and this just sped that up a bit.

#Glenn

But on arming Kurdish groups, this is something the U.S. is now seriously discussing. Again, the ramifications are huge—it's a big topic because, first of all, what would this mean for the U.S.–Turkish relationship? If there's anything that will alienate the Turks even more, it's starting to build up the Kurdish groups. But this has also been done before. In 1991, President Bush encouraged the Iraqis to rise up against Saddam Hussein, and they were, you know, left on their own and slaughtered. Also in Syria, the Kurds were again used against Assad and then abandoned. So I'm not sure how well you know the Kurdish groups in Iran, or to what extent they'd be able to get them on board as frontline soldiers.

But if you have these four countries with a lot of Kurds—that is, Iraq, Syria, Iran, and Turkey—and the U.S. has now armed the Kurds in three out of four of those regions, this can't be good for the relationship with Turkey. This is a massive military power, by the way. And also, what will this mean for Iran? That's tied to it too, because a few days ago we were still pretending that the purpose of the war was to help protesters and stop ballistic missiles. Now this is about stoking civil war—

burning a country of 90 million people, with hundreds of thousands, if not millions, dead if they succeed in triggering it. So I guess the humanitarian way of selling the war was always stupid. We do it every time, and it works every time, so I get it. But surely that must be out the window now.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think it's unconscionable what we've done. So what's new, people tell me. People ask me in emails, "What's new, Larry? You were there. You saw how unconscionable we are under a whole series of presidents, especially since George W. Bush and 9/11." But I think there's a new tone and intent to this. And it's that way, I think, because we have, as I said, so little understanding of the region and so little understanding of the people. At the same time, we're killing them at a rate that's probably horrific once we find out how many are dead. Already, I'm hearing 150 or 1,000 or whatever in Iran.

With all the ordnance that Pete Hegseth says has been dropped, if that's all they've killed, then they're sorry shots. That's all I've got to say. Because there are people all over that country, especially where they're attacking. And we've already seen them kill children in a school. I think they hit a hospital now—they had nurses running out into the street. Not very good targeting, dudes. All to say that I don't think we care anymore. I really don't think we care. We've been taught—carefully taught—by Netanyahu, who doesn't give a hang about all the civilians, men, women, children, babies, dogs, cats, and everything else he's killing in Gaza and the West Bank.

Now, listen to John Hagee just a few minutes ago, right before I came on with you—the head of Christians United for Israel. Here's John Hagee up there, just like Huckabee, saying, "This is a holy war. This is a holy war. And you boys and girls out there, we're praying for you. We're praying for you. But you are on the right side. You are bringing about Armageddon. You're bringing about the return of Jesus Christ." This is a guy who influences a lot of Americans with his preaching about being on Israel's side, like Huckabee demonstrated in that traitorous interview he gave. But nonetheless, he told the truth—told the truth—on Netanyahu in particular.

So we've got all these different currents working right now. We've got Hegseth working on the U.S. Armed Forces at the rank level, with preachers and Christianity, taking their oath to God and Jesus instead of the Constitution. And we've got him working on the upper ranks by letting people go—this director of the Joint Staff, a three-star Navy admiral that he just let go. He's carefully vetting the military so that when January 6th comes again, the military will not stand on the sidelines. He's building the military to support whatever coup, whatever Trump has to do—whether it's a full-fledged coup, canceling the midterm elections, or something in between. He's building a military to do that.

And it's really alarming watching him do that. This is a perfect example of why, once we find out how badly enmeshed we are, we'll have to either withdraw or double down—and we can't double down, because we don't have the men and women to do it in terms of ground forces. And Hegseth has already talked about ground forces. We can't do that. The most we could put on the ground in

Iran is 400 or 500 thousand, and I don't think we could even do that—just as Netanyahu is finding out with this 90,000-reservist call-up. Lots of them aren't showing up. Tell me where 18- and 19-year-olds in this country would go, if we were to fully mobilize and they suddenly found out they were subject to the draft.

Mexico and Canada. We can't do this, Glenn. And yet we're posturing as if we can—even to the extent of going all the way and mounting an invasion. Iran—someone asked me, "Well, how would you ever do that?" I said, "Oh, you've got amphibious bottoms." We don't have many. The Marine Corps has been complaining for 20 years, and it's gotten worse every year. But there's enough—if we throw them all together, even the broken ones—and we sail them over there, and we put the Marines, even the broken ones, on these bottoms, we could probably, somewhere around Bandar Abbas or somewhere on the southern coast there, put a force ashore. It would be swallowed. Within six months, it would disappear. So that's where we are. And it's absurd.

Your question about the Kurds, which I really drifted away from, I dealt with them most closely in northern Iraq—Operation Provide Comfort—and then the absolute backing away from our promises to them. They said "never again," and started what has become, in terms of Iraq today, probably the most successful part of the country. Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, and other places up there—they've now got a good agreement with Baghdad about the oil. And the majors are back in, because they didn't want to go in before and mess with that Kirkuk and Mosul oil. If there was a dispute between Baghdad and the Kurds, the majors didn't want the lawsuits that might come out of that. So apparently they're going back in now, because that's been settled.

This will perturb that. This will disturb that major. So that's your Iraqi Kurds, who had come to a modus vivendi with Turkey. They were getting along pretty well because they said they would not rile up the Kurds in southeastern Turkey, they would not send agents into Turkey, and they pretty much lived by that. And Turkey promised not to invade them. They periodically invaded them and pounded them a little bit. In Syria, it's a different ballgame altogether. I think what best describes Syria is chaos for everybody—all the groups—except Israel. Israel has been busy going around and making sure every little foothold it consolidates is consolidated in a way that's defensible. So they're taking little pieces of Syria as they go along. And they don't give a damn about Damascus.

They'd like to have it and probably covet it very much, but they don't give a damn about it right now. As for the Kurds, where they overlap in Iran and Syria, I think that's the most dangerous group right now, because they haven't gone through the same learning process—such as it was—that the Kurds in northern Iraq have. So they're apt to try something just because they've got arms and they're free, or whatever. But I don't think they'll be very successful, because I think the Iranians have that sort of thing in mind. One of the reasons they got the helicopters from Russia—the latest shipment of major end-item equipment from Russia was helicopters, attack helicopters—I think the reason they got those was that they're the best weapon to use against these border infiltrators, if you will.

These armed people who are trying to overthrow the Iranian Republic are coming from places in the northern part of the Persian Gulf and up into Azerbaijan and Armenia. They're best dealt with using helicopters. So I think that's what they got the helicopters for. They anticipated this and said, "Okay, come on." That, plus the SAS—they wanted to take on the British SAS with these helicopters too, because warfare over the last decade or so has proven that's the best way to fight irregular forces like that—guerrillas who are actually working for a state. So I think the Iranians have thought this out. I really do. I think they've thought it out. No doubt there will be some surprises for them, but of all the contestants in this conflict, they've thought it out the longest and the best.

#Glenn

As you spoke, some contradictions came to mind. That is, the Iranian government is considered unacceptable because it's a theocracy—because the religious leadership holds political power. But at the same time, you have the U.S. Ambassador Huckabee saying Israel should control half the Middle East because God gave it to them. And also, we have to prepare for, well, you're fighting a holy war, you know, and pledging allegiance to Jesus—all of that. But it's a little bit the same with the nuclear weapons, as you also suggested. That is, we have to fight the Iranians so they can't develop nuclear weapons.

However, they said they won't develop nuclear weapons. Our intelligence says they're not developing nuclear weapons. They signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. They agreed to the JCPOA with additional inspections for transparency, allowing in the IAEA. And they're doing all of this while an illegal nuclear power—Israel—which didn't sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty and acquired nuclear weapons, demands that Iran be disarmed of nuclear weapons it doesn't have, or stop a nuclear program it doesn't have—a nuclear weapons program. It's all very bizarre to see these contradictions. But... throw one more bizarre aspect in there.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Trump destroyed that program, remember, with the B-2s?

#Glenn

Oh, yeah. It's obliterated. And also, in the White House press releases, anyone claiming it's not obliterated is spreading fake news. Now, on the other side of that... it's very bizarre. I don't think they've thought through the narratives yet either. I saw Rubio talking to a journalist—he was making the point that, listen, this was a justified war, we had the right to attack because the threat was imminent. So why would Iran attack you? Well, Israel would attack Iran, and when that happened, Iran would probably attack us. So that made it imminent. Now it's legitimate. And then they said, okay, so Israel started it, they pulled us in. "No, no, no, that's not what I said." It's pretty much what he said. They don't have the story straight.

At least in Iraq, as horrible as it was, they were hammering on about weapons of mass destruction. All the media were repeating the same talking points. There was a narrative in place. When that didn't hold up, you know, they had the fallback option of, "Okay, we're just spreading democracy." But here, there are actually contradictory narratives. It's like, "We have to help the Iranians—they deserve freedom and peace from a brutal government." And at the same time, we're bombing the airport, hospitals, schools, civilian residences. I mean, it's just... And to top it all off, even the Speaker, Mike Johnson, came out and gave a speech saying that Iran started this war.

They declared war on us. We never went to war—we had an operation. He didn't call it a "special military operation," but an operation. And now the Iranians supposedly started the war. It wasn't us; we were just bombing a little bit. He was also making the point that what they did is unforgivable—they attacked American embassies in Saudi Arabia and all. That's sovereign territory. But you bombed their schools, their hospitals—that's also sovereign territory. You should watch this; it's a crazy speech. It's the same kind of contradictions and the failure to construct a cohesive narrative for everyone to rally around. There's just nothing there.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

At least I'll say this for John Hagee: I find it really makes me ill to listen to him, but he says what he believes. "We are out there, you are out there, you are crusaders for Jesus Christ. We are going to win." And of course, what he means by "win" is the rapture—Jesus coming down to kill all the unbelievers and establish a thousand-year kingdom. All these people will be wafted up to heaven in that kingdom. But at least he's consistent, and he doesn't make any bones about it. These other people lie all the time, and the lies are piling up one on top of another. Rubio—if you saw that, you saw the same one I did, I guess—he's actually picking the questions because he knows which reporter is smart, or he knows which one to avoid.

So he's like, "I'm not asking, I'm not talking to you, you, you, you." He got so flabbergasted, I thought he was going to flip his lid right there on the spot. I wish he had. We can't keep our narrative straight—not just among people like Hegseth, Rubio, Trump, anybody speaking, that bimbo who speaks for the administration. Not only is that inconsistent, but the individuals themselves are inconsistent from hour to hour and day to day. But who the hell in America could make heads or tails of anything in terms of what Trump is really trying to achieve? And I think that's why you're seeing polls showing less than 29, 28 percent of Americans support this.

#Glenn

Well, he ran on no wars. Now he's doing exactly the opposite. But earlier you were discussing how, essentially, the world won't be the same again after this—perhaps. That is, how will this affect the relationship, do you think, between the Gulf states and the United States, or Israel and the United States, for that matter? Those are big questions.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah, those are huge questions. I think you probably need to start with how much of this—I've been taken to task by a number of listeners in the last 48 hours for not laying out my thoughts on it. I'm not even sure what they are. There are some people out there who believe—and some of them are in a position to know more than I am—that this is all about China, and secondarily Russia. That what we saw was an avenue of opportunity, if you will, that we could mask in things like Iran's nuclear program, ballistic missiles, and everything else we don't really care about. What we're actually trying to do is damage China—and along the way, Russia. And they cite as prima facie evidence of that the question: what did Russia and China do?

They signed a trilateral, not a bilateral—each with Iran—but a trilateral defense pact with Iran. That showed everyone they were in for whatever might come. Well, we're using this to go after China and, as I said, secondarily Russia. We're still agitating in Georgia. We're still agitating in other states along the southern rim of the old Soviet Union—Russia today. We're still trying to do damage to Russia that way. Tbilisi is the most obvious one right now, where the government's hanging on by the skin of its teeth. And that's a sound argument: if the great game is afoot again, and afoot in a way that shows some astute players, I just don't see the astute players. I see chaos. I don't see the great game being orchestrated by a czar in Moscow, a potentate in London, and someone else in the Ottoman Empire, or whatever.

What I see is chaos. And I see China and Russia ultimately benefiting from that chaos. Maybe not prima facie, in-your-face, or in this particular theater, but I think ultimately they benefit from it because they're winning. I'm sure Xi Jinping doesn't want anything to do with a hot war, but I'm also sure he wouldn't refuse an opportunity to do mortal damage to the empire if it didn't accrue to his disadvantage. One of the reasons he hasn't moved any faster toward economic sovereignty, if you will, over the world is because he understands how important the Western economies—particularly the U.S.—are to the global economy. And he doesn't want to do it precipitously or dangerously.

I was really surprised he just came out now with the new mandate that the renminbi is going to replace the dollar. He essentially said in that statement—I passed it by Chas Freeman, so I know the Mandarin was translated properly—he says, "We are the number two economy in the world." I think he's not boasting at all. Industrially, Chinese capitalism, technologically, militarily, and so forth—I think they're number one. The one area where they aren't paramount is finance. And then he goes on with the operative statement: "The only way we can do that..." I didn't want to do this—Deng Xiaoping is rolling over in his grave as I say these words—I didn't want to do this because I know how debilitating it is.

He's going to put the renminbi forward as the world's new transactional reserve currency—a replacement for the dollar. He said that in writing. So that means he's ready for the fight now, ready to finish it. But I don't think he wants to finish it in terms of blood, in terms of bombs and missiles, or maybe even nuclear weapons. I think he wants to finish it indirectly, if you will—good old Sun Tzu

action out there. But I wouldn't try him. I wouldn't try him. And if he figures out that this is an effort not just to block his southwestern Belt and Road initiative, and the effort to build a new trade route up along the Gulf and into the heart of Russia—if he figures out that this is really aimed at him—he will throw his weight into this conflict and terminate it very early.

Just submarines, Glenn. Russia and China together could take care of every combatant in the Arabian Sea—just with submarines. It's the most hospitable seawater on Earth for submarine operations: convection zones, salinity levels, convergence zones. You can actually be in a state-of-the-art attack submarine beside a state-of-the-art enemy attack submarine, a hundred meters apart, and not know where you are—not know your enemy's over there, or he knows you're over there. Passive and active sonar aren't operative to the extent they should be in that kind of water. So you've got maybe a hundred submarines that could be active in there, with the Chinese diesel-electrics that are very slow and quiet.

You've got torpedoes that can be fired without leaving a wake, that sink ships without revealing what hit them. You're talking about a real naval war here—one we would lose. No question in my mind. Yes, we've got some very sophisticated submarines too, but that old adage about the best weapon against a submarine being another submarine is hogwash. Submarines are the most deadly weapon on the face of the Earth. They still are. They were in World War II, and they are now. We took a lot of casualties in the Pacific because Chester Nimitz, Doug MacArthur, and even Franklin Roosevelt didn't understand that—nor did Admiral Stark or Admiral King.

Submarines had Japanese-eating rats in August of 1945. We had just devastated them with our submarines. People say, "Well, you couldn't get a diesel that far." Are you kidding me? Tang and Wahoo, the two top killers in the Pacific, made 10,000-mile patrols. They went all the way to the Formosa Straits, attacked Japanese shipping, and then went back to Pearl. Yeah, they had long legs—long legs and speed in those long legs, too. So, you know, this is just ripe for exploitation by people who know what they're doing. And Putin's navy is not tied down.

#Glenn

Well, that's what I meant. There are so many ways this can go terribly wrong. And if you're sitting in Moscow or Beijing and you see the possibility of the U.S. knocking out the Iranian piece on this massive Eurasian chessboard, it would be a disaster. So it's also an opportunity to rebalance, essentially, the hegemonic ambitions. Much like the way the Chinese saw the war in Ukraine, they know that if NATO were able to knock out Russia, they'd be next. So it's—no, I think it can go wrong. Do you see any wider implications here in terms of China challenging the dollar? They can't live with this. But Ukraine—surely they're running out of weapons as well. Zelensky isn't looking happy these days. He's trying to trade in some, get some more Patriots by offering drones, but that's not happening. So do you see other parts of the world being impacted by the attack on Iran?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I do, and I see an indirect impact from Ukraine, and it's this. You know, in 1865, right after most of the observers on our battlefields in the Civil War went home to Europe—they'd been at Cold Harbor, they'd been at Antietam, they'd been at Gettysburg, and then Cold Harbor again, and a few other battles at the end of the war—their messages back to Europe said, "Beware," to their foreign ministries and their leaders. "Beware. This is a million-man army, battle-hardened. We've seen them on the battlefield. They'll be after you next." Of course, by 1866, we'd pretty much demobilized and put a few soldiers out on the prairies to fight the Indians—the Native Americans. That was all. But they were scared. They were very scared. Russia has that kind of army today—the most battle-hardened, well-trained, well-fought army in the world.

And I would not be messing around with Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan—whatever down there. I just wouldn't be doing it right now because, again, they are extremely competent. And we've had observers on that battlefield, so I know we have people—Marines, soldiers, and others—who are reporting back that this is not the army that started the special military operation. It's learned throughout the experience of new drone warfare techniques and such. It's learned. So it is probably the deadliest army on the face of the earth right now. OK, you slip off the line right now and head on down to Odessa. You finish consolidating Kherson. You present that as a *fait accompli*. You own the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. And now you say you want to mess with Georgia. I mean, this is the game—it's afoot. And some of the people playing are neophytes, if even that.

#Glenn

I think what they might be banking on as well is that any minor peace deal not only risks giving a temporary pause for NATO to rearm Ukraine and start again later, but also, if it's limited in victory, the same problem could manifest elsewhere. That is, if you have NATO expanding eastward, what happens to all these divided societies—Moldova, Georgia—all of them could become new flashpoints. So I think a big victory in Ukraine would send a clear message to Moldova and Georgia: don't go down this path. Also...

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Lavrov—actually, I think it was Ray McGovern or Larry Johnson, somebody like that, who told me this—they met with Lavrov when they were there. He actually said, "The concern is NATO. The concern is NATO moving eastward. And anywhere it moves, we will check it. And this is the most obvious example right here—the special military operation. But you need to understand what our concern is: no further."

#Glenn

Well, if common sense would return, maybe we could find solutions to these things. Thank you for taking the time and sharing some of your insights.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I've been watching your shows, by the way, and I want to congratulate you on having several that were really informative.

#Glenn

Thank you, I appreciate it. Sure.