

# **Update: US Middle-East Bases DESTROYED. Israel Defenseless | Larry C Johnson**

Operation Epic Failure is unraveling in front of our eyes. While the US managed to kill over 1000 Iranians in the first 10 days of it's mass-slaughter, it is failing massively at constraining the country's second strike capabilities. Every attack by the US/Israeli alliance is met with an immediate response. The US radar system in the region has been whipped out and no US navy vessel dares to come within striking range of the IRGC. And Tehran is not signaling any willingness to stop before its demands for reparations and a complete US withdrawal from the region are met. Trump's team is visibly panicking. Support us on substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com>

## **#Pascal**

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. My name is Pascal Lottaz, and today I'm joined again by Larry C. Johnson for an update on everything about the Iran war. Larry, welcome back. Hey, Pascal. Good to join you. Thank you for taking the time. I really wanted to talk to you about your assessment, especially about the kind of operational or kinetic effects of the war that we're seeing. Just before this, I talked to Stephen Starr, and he gave an update on all the destroyed radar systems and the capacity that Iran still has. I really wonder about your assessment of where the war is going now, after two weeks.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Well, if you're on the Iranian side, they're pretty pleased with how it's going. They've really taken some blows to their infrastructure, but they've also accomplished significant military objectives that have hurt U.S. operational capabilities. Number one, as Stephen mentioned, the destruction of those radars — you know, those are billion-dollar systems. One was around \$500 million, and a couple of others were over a billion each. They were critical for identifying threats, both maritime and aviation, coordinating air movements, and deconflicting airspace. And then we've learned tonight that CENTCOM announced, about two hours ago, a KC-135 was shot down. Now, I guess they may come out and try to say it was accidental, but it wasn't.

## **#Pascal**

What is a KC? Is that a transport plane or a refueling plane?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

It's a refueling plane. A KC-135 can refuel up to five F-35A jets. From the bases where they're taking off, the F-35s have to be refueled even to get back to base, because they don't go too deep into Iran. Anyway, there were reportedly two of these KC-135s returning. What I've learned is that the second plane saw a surface-to-air missile fired up. The second plane took evasive action, hit the first plane, and it's unclear whether there were five or six people on board, but they're all dead. I mean, you hit a fuel tank, that thing explodes. They don't have time to put on parachutes and jump out.

## **#Pascal**

But would that have been shot down over Iran, or would Iran have managed to hit it over someone else's airspace?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

It was shot down over Iraq, of all places. Iraq, okay. But again, some of the Iraqi groups that are aligned with Iran — you know, there's a Hezbollah element — they probably took the shot. So right there, you know, the administration's only reported eight KIA. That's another five or six, potentially doubling that. And I firmly believe the Trump administration is lying about the number of actual casualties. They're hiding it. But that's not all. There have been a large number of KC-135s destroyed on the ground at one of the bases in the region. I'm not going to say which base, but basically what Iran is doing is preventing the United States from using these different bases.

There are 13 locations — you know, from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, even Oman — that have been hit. So the U.S. ability to keep operating in those areas is being reduced dramatically. They're being forced to flee. And once they're forced to leave, where are they going to go? Even if they go to Israel, they're being targeted there. So it's almost like they'll be forced to move somewhere like Cyprus — the Turkish part of Cyprus — or maybe to Turkey. But again, once they show up in Turkey, that becomes a threat. So from Iran's standpoint, they're doing great with their missile and drone strikes. The United States hasn't been able to stop them.

I know in one particular case the U.S. defenses have been depleted — there's no more air defense at that location. By contrast, in Iran, they've got the strategic initiative. They've taken control of the Strait of Hormuz and shut down all traffic. It's not just oil; it's liquefied natural gas and urea fertilizer. In fact, 30% or more of the world's fertilizer comes out of the Persian Gulf. I didn't realize that until I started looking into it the other day. So by shutting down the flow of oil, liquefied natural gas, and fertilizer, Iran is, at a minimum, causing a global recession — and there are likely to be food shortages because farmers won't get the fertilizer they need to plant crops and have them grow properly.

## **#Pascal**

Right. Unless this stops soon — which it doesn't look like at the moment — and, you know, the way in which Iran not only survived the initial blows... of course, Ayatollah Khomeini is dead, but, you know, the Ayatollah is dead, long live the Ayatollah, right? I mean, we've got the next one. The Iranians proved that their governmental structures survive all of this. Of course, the United States — Donald Trump, sorry — announced, basically, victory, saying we struck them. He did these stupid speeches like, "On a scale from one to ten, I'll give our operation twelve to fifteen," which is ridiculous, childish talk. But it looked, in the first couple of days, as if the United States and Israel were achieving a lot of their initial goals, including the killing of the top leadership. But it turns out Iran seems to have been prepared for this.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Yes. No, they're very much prepared for it. And that's the thing the West has been unable to get its arms around. It's a combination of arrogance and hubris. Shutting the Persian Gulf right now has—well, it's a crude term, but it captures the power—the Iranians have the United States by the balls. What's the United States going to do? Drop bombs along the shoreline there? That's not going to open the Strait of Hormuz. Not at all. Because the Iranians have drones, they have missiles. They don't have to be right on the shore; they can stand off. In addition, there are a lot of caves all along that coastline that can hide and protect Iranian units. And it's been reported by CBS that they've mined the Strait.

I don't believe that, for the simple reason that Iran continues to have its ships load up at Kharg Island, sail out, and some Chinese ships are sailing out with oil. They may even allow Pakistani ships. So it's not a complete freeze. But it is serious enough that it's really disrupted the oil market. Oil today was back up close to 100 dollars on Brent futures. Trump had driven it down the other day by claiming that, oh, we're near the end, this is almost over. He was lying. It's not almost over. What Iran is going to—well, Iran will, I believe, continue to keep this closed. And the economic impact is huge. I wrote a piece talking about the chokehold—it's a choke point—and went through the countries most likely to be the most severely affected: Japan is one, Taiwan is another, India is another.

But generally, it's going to have a negative effect on the global economy. It's going to spike inflation because the price has doubled. And we're seeing it, you know, like here in Florida where I live—the price of oil, the price of a gallon of gasoline—from a week ago Monday until last Sunday, it went up 50 cents. Then from Sunday to Wednesday, it went up 15 more cents, so that's 65. And then between yesterday and today, Thursday, it went up 5 cents more. Now, we're a country that's, quote, energy independent. We get very, very little oil out of the Persian Gulf. If that's happening here, I can only begin to imagine what's happening around the world. I don't know—in your area, have you seen any change in gasoline prices?

## **#Pascal**

Not myself, but I'm not keeping a close watch on it because I don't have a car. But the Japanese government has already decided they're going to release some of their strategic reserves. And the number 254 is floating around a lot over here, because that's the reported number of days Japan has in its strategic reserve—apparently the largest per capita in the world. I don't know how true that number actually is, 254 days. It strikes me as very long, but Japan is extremely vulnerable to oil and gas interruptions because it has almost none of its own.

Actually, the only potential field they can tap is in the Sakhalins, and that's a joint project with the Russians. So I really wonder if the Japanese might reach out to Moscow and say, "Hey, how about we restart this thing?" They didn't freeze it to the extent the Europeans did—they put it on hold, but they never shut it down, never completely abandoned it. But, well, that's a completely different discussion. The thing is, the hurt is real, and it's going to get more real over time for all the advanced Western economies, including the United States. And what you're saying is very interesting.

So if the Iranians are actually able to guarantee passage to the ships they like and say, "Guys, you can go through"—you know, they already made the announcement that they would allow passage to ships from countries that expel, I think, U.S. and Israeli diplomats, right? I read this comment—I'm not entirely sure if it was really from an IRGC account or just a hoax—but one said the Iranians would guarantee safe passage to any tanker that manages to convince the Americans to create a patrol for them through the strait, because they'd love to sink them. But what we see is that U.S. shipping isn't going close to the strait. They're not. Can you maybe speak to that a bit?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Well, it looks to me like the Chief of Naval Operations got the trumpet and said, "No, we're not doing that, because the ships would be sunk." You'd use cruisers, maybe destroyers, but even then—it's very risky. There's nothing they can do to prevent the drones or anti-ship missiles. And the Iranians have these small boats called Boghammers that are kept in tunnels, so they're protected. So although the U.S. has said, "Oh, we destroyed the Iranian Navy," no, they haven't. What Iran has is basically a kind of coast guard that can operate and swarm U.S. forces with literally hundreds of boats. It's sort of like water—and then they've got the water drones. So it's not just aerial; it's in the water too. Iran is in a very, very strong position. They can resist U.S. efforts, militarily, to try to guarantee safe passage in that waterway. And they can compound that by working with the Houthis to fully shut down the Red Sea.

## **#Pascal**

Right. Hey, very brief intermission—because I was recently banned from YouTube. And although I'm back, this could happen again anytime. So please consider subscribing not only here, but also to my mailing list on Substack. That's [pascallottaz.substack.com](https://pascallottaz.substack.com). The link's going to be in the description

below. And now, back to the video. So, how devastating is the loss of the U.S. radar system in the region? I mean, Stephen Starr pointed out that this basically reduces the response time of the U.S. and Israel to incoming missiles to about 90 seconds. Is that realistic?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Ninety seconds to a minute. The compensation for this is to use AWACS—airborne platforms—to try to make up for the loss. Because without those radars, the U.S. and Israel are blind. It's blinded them, and it's not like it's a \$50,000 system where you just replace a component and you're ready to go. No, these are \$500 million—half a billion dollars—and up to a billion dollars for at least two of them. Those are incredibly difficult to replace. Right. And apparently really easy to destroy, because Iran did it in the first week.

Right. In fact, one of them was destroyed by a drone—which, again, makes the notion that the United States has an effective air defense system, with the Patriot and THAAD systems, a joke. And frankly, the math just doesn't work out. The total number of PAC-3 missiles fired from Patriot batteries is 4,620 since 2015. That's the total. Now, that's assuming none have been used anywhere else, none have been fired. When those missiles are launched at an incoming threat, you've got to fire two of them. So just do the math.

If you've got 4,620 to fire and you have to use two per target, that takes you down to 2,310, right? That's the total number of missiles they could engage. Well, Russia, in the four-year war, has fired over 12,000 missiles. So if we put all of our Patriots together in Ukraine, they could only deal with about one-fifth of the missiles Russia has fired. So you've got to go back and really question these claims by Ukraine that, "Oh, we shot down 90% of this and 90% of that." Nonsense. That's a lie. But what I do know is that at least one of the U.S. military bases is completely depleted. They have no more air defense.

## **#Pascal**

So, I mean, as so often, war actually teaches us a lot about reality. And the reality is that neither Israel, nor the United States, nor Iran can defend themselves against incoming missile attacks, right? All of these places are basically open territory for the other side's attacks because everyone's figured out how to overwhelm the other.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Well, let me pause you there just to point out—Russia has generally figured that out. They've demonstrated it with a variety of, you know, the ATACMS missiles and the British Storm Shadow. They did have an issue with Bryansk; for whatever reason, the air defense system there wasn't

active. But Russia's been the only one that really seems to have figured it out. The rest are just kidding themselves. All they're doing is providing a nice, healthy bottom line for the military-industrial complex. They're being paid to build these things.

## **#Pascal**

It surprises me. I mean, I always thought that Israel probably has the most reliable air defense system in the world—with its three tiers, everything coming from the U.S., under constant surveillance, and super well protected, with the Iron Dome and whatnot.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

They had Iron Dome and David's Sling. I'm not sure what the third component was that you thought they had.

## **#Pascal**

There was a third one, but I can't remember what it was.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Because it relied on the Patriot for the third level and the THAAD missile for the fourth. But both THAAD and Patriot have proven to be ineffective.

## **#Pascal**

So, what I wanted to ask you is, what are your views on nuclear deterrence? Because on the one hand, we know the U.S. and Israel are two independent nuclear weapon states, meaning that Israel could, at any point, fire one of its nukes. It's assumed to have somewhere between 100 and 400 nuclear warheads. Iran, on the other hand, seems to have established by now that it's fighting a defensive war, because it always responds symmetrically. If you attack an Iranian desalination plant, they'll blow up your desalination plant. If you attack their oil fields, they'll blow up your oil fields. If you attack their ships, they'll attack your ships. They've done that very symmetrically. And they must have a plan for a nuclear attack. My question is: is it thinkable that Iran would then target the nuclear facilities Israel has—the nuclear reactors in Israel? Does that make sense to you?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Well, yes. But actually, I think what Iran's going to do now is immediately work on producing a nuclear warhead—a functional nuclear missile. Right. And they'll unveil it within the next two to three weeks, possibly. I mean, because... well, let me explain the rationale. They're going to keep hitting Israel with missiles. We saw yesterday Hezbollah, which is now fully coordinating with Iran on

this, launched about a four-hour rocket and missile barrage on Israel. And the Iron Dome completely failed to stop it. So Israel knows it's going to be facing continued missile attacks that it cannot stop.

And so, at that point, they'll say, "Okay, we have to use a nuke." Well, if Iran says, "We've got a nuke too—if you hit us with a nuke, we're going to hit you back"—that's Iran's only guarantee that there won't be a nuclear attack by Israel. And I think that Mojtaba Khamenei, the son of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has given the green light to do that. And, Paul, it's important because they murdered his family—the Israelis murdered his mother, his father, his wife, and his baby daughter. So, you know, I think he recognizes that Iran's moral principle of not building a nuclear weapon has cost the lives of many innocent people.

Recall that—well, you may not remember, you're too young—but when the Iraq-Iran war started in September 1980, it was three years later, in August 1983, that Iraq launched the first chemical weapon attack—a weapon of mass destruction—on Iran. They did it to stop an Iranian offensive. But those chemical precursors were provided by the United States. For the next five years, until August 1988, Iraq launched around twenty different chemical weapon attacks on Iran. Not once during that period did Iran develop or use chemical weapons. Not at all. Why? Because of the religious principle—they viewed that as a sin.

So we've already seen that Iran has a history of exercising some moral and ethical judgment in what it does. And you're correct to say there was an attack on one of the desalination plants in Iran. Normally, they would retaliate, but they didn't. I think the reason they didn't is that they recognize if they retaliate—if they take that step now—literally millions of people in the Persian Gulf would die, because it would wipe out the fresh water in the cities of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Kuwait. They don't have fresh water. People would either have to flee or they would die. So I think Iran made a conscious decision not to escalate it to that level yet.

## **#Pascal**

Yes, but they maintain that capacity. I mean, the fact that they then attacked the oil infrastructure in the Gulf states sends a very clear message, right? You take one of us down, we take one of yours down—and hurt everybody. Unfortunately, it's not something we want, but it's what has to be done for defense. It's fascinating to me that the United States managed to coerce more than 140 states into co-sponsoring that bill at the UN Security Council condemning Iran for its attacks on its neighbors. I still don't understand how Russia and China let that pass, but we will in due course.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

They were harshly critical of it. And Lavrov had chastised the Gulf Cooperation Council the other day in Moscow—I believe it was last Monday—for taking such a hypocritical stance and not calling out the United States and Israel for their attack. I think there are some procedural reasons they chose not to veto it, but it wasn't that they sided with the argument or agreed with it. But, you know,

Russia in particular is now in a very, very strong position, with a lot of leverage over countries that need oil, that need liquefied natural gas, that need fertilizer. They need Russia. And Russia and China have made it clear they're going to protect Iran; they're not going to leave Iran to its own devices. I think they recognize Iran is in a very strong position right now. Nobody can budge them out. There's no military action you can take that's going to guarantee you can open the Strait of Hormuz without suffering tremendous losses.

## **#Pascal**

Do you think the U.S., or the Trump administration, is seriously considering putting boots on the ground in one form or another?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Oh, I'm sure people who have no knowledge of military affairs are going to encourage that. But anybody who knows anything about the military recognizes it's incredibly stupid and dangerous. Still, just because it's stupid and dangerous and would result in significant U.S. casualties without achieving any tactical or strategic objective doesn't mean they won't do it. For example, one option might be, "Oh, we're going to assemble an army to invade Iran so we can defeat their army." Okay, they've got a million-man army. The normal rule of thumb is you need a three-to-one or four-to-one advantage in troop size to take on a defender. So that means the United States would need, what, a three- or four-million-man army? We've only got about 457,000 or 470,000 troops right now.

And throw in the Marines, you've got another 110,000. Okay, good luck, guys—you only need to expand by five times. So let's say they somehow magically recruit another 2.4 million soldiers. They've got to be trained, and training takes time. There's nothing in the short run that can be done with a conventional military force. And they say, "Yeah, but what about special operations?" Well, you know what? I happen to know quite a bit about that. I worked 23 years with JSOC—the Joint Special Operations Command—and SOCOM, the Special Operations Command. So I know a little bit. I scripted exercises for various missions. They can conduct raids, they can do hostage rescues. You know, the Maersk Alabama, if you remember that, where the Somali pirates took over the ship and held the captain.

They're great—they can do that kind of stuff all day long. But unless you're talking about a raid, which is a mission that's going to last less than 12 hours, they're not a force that can go in and sustain operations for two or three days, right? And getting them in and out is a whole chore. People who are drawing lessons from Venezuela—forget about that. That was an inside job. I know that for a fact. There were three members of Maduro's security team who were U.S. government informants. They were DEA informants, and they were doing it. They gave up Maduro for the \$50 million. That's what that was all about. But that shouldn't be the rule of thumb for what we could do in Iran. That's not going to happen.

## **#Pascal**

You know, when people say “special military operation,” like sending special operations forces to go in and take out 450 kilograms of 60% enriched plutonium—that’s pure fantasy. You’d have to go deep into a bunker, assuming you even know where it is, and that it’s in one bunker, not two or three.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

It's called a hardened, deeply buried target. I worked on and scripted an exercise about that about 16 years ago. Okay? So, like I said, it can't be done.

## **#Pascal**

Can't be done. So that really leaves only a few options. Because if we follow the chain of explanations you gave us, then the missile capacity of the U.S. is also going to run out. And maybe you'd have to fall back on using something like drones to keep up the bombing—which is maybe thinkable, but...

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Yeah, they really haven't produced the drones—the kind of drones they're using. They're still these \$30 million, \$35 million MQ-9 Reapers, and reportedly well over 20 have been shot down so far by Iran. They do have an ample supply of JASSMs—Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles. They've got enough of those. They don't have a lot of JDAMs; the JDAMs are limited. They're glide bombs that can go about 50 miles max. The JASSMs can go about 500 miles, so that's a formidable weapon. They don't have a lot of Tomahawks. The Tomahawk is in short supply, and I don't know how many they've expended over the last 12 days, but I would suspect it could be as high as a thousand. And then, you know, the annual production last I heard was like 90 a year. So, do the math.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah. And Iran is, of course, going to try to push back the U.S. further, right? Actually, Professor Marandi from Tehran University told me, “Look, our goal is to make sure the United States loses the capacity to ever do this again—not just promise it won't, but actually lose the capacity.” Meaning, chasing them out of the Gulf region. So, do you think they're actually on track to get there over time?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Oh, yeah. Yes, no, absolutely. I mean, like I said, if I told you the base that has already depleted its air defense system, you'd be shocked. They've already rendered the headquarters at the Bahrain Naval Base for the Fifth Fleet unusable. You know, it can't be used again anytime soon. At Al-Udeid

Air Force Base, as I understand it, the personnel there aren't evacuated, but they're not working. There's a thing called the Combined Air Operations Center, or CAOC. You're not going to have the CAOC up and running because it's not a hardened facility. Any missile that hits it would kill a large number of U.S. and allied personnel. You've got the Brits, the French, the Canadians, the Germans, the Italians, Spaniards, Jordanians, Iraqis, Turks—a lot of different organizations. You can go online and look up CAOC, C-A-O-C, or Al-Udeid Combined Air Operations Center, and you'll see they've actually got full photographs of all the people sitting there, smiling, looking up at the camera.

## **#Pascal**

But the talk last week was that the U.S. would actually bring its aircraft carriers closer to Iran. I think that didn't really happen. And there was also talk that the French were going to send part of their navy. Do we have any updates on that? It seems that nobody dares to get close enough to be in striking range at the moment.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Yeah, in fact, the U.S. Navy is staying about 700 kilometers offshore. They've admitted that. And that's because if they get any closer, they could get sunk. There's still a lot of mystery surrounding the Abraham Lincoln. The U.S. says, "Oh, they didn't lay a hand on us," and the Iranians say, "Yeah, we hit it." So I think it was hit—I think some damage was done. And, you know, they've moved offshore so they don't run the risk of getting engaged, or at least if they are engaged, they'll have time to react. So again, what was stated by Professor Morandi, I think, is exactly right—and they're doing it. If you look at the three major bases—the Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia, the Bahrain Naval Facility, and Al-Udeid in Qatar—those three have been significantly degraded.

## **#Pascal**

You said at the beginning that there were also facilities in Oman that were struck. I thought Oman didn't have any—did they, actually?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

No, there was a small facility. I mean, it wasn't big, and it's not really important. I provided the list—let me look that up real quick.

## **#Pascal**

Because, you know, I've always made the argument that Oman hasn't been struck so far because it doesn't have any installations. And Iran is making it clear that if you're an ally of the U.S., your security is lower than if you're neutral. So go neutral, my friends.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Yeah, well, so I'll give you the complete rundown here. Kuwait: you've had multiple strikes on the Ali Al-Salem Air Base, on Camp Arifjan, and the Shuwaikh Port—that's where the six U.S. servicemen were killed—and also Camp Buehring. So there you've got four in Kuwait. Bahrain: you've got the U. S. Navy 5th Fleet Headquarters—that's been basically disabled. Saudi Arabia: the Prince Sultan Air Base. Then the Al Udeid Air Base and Umm Dhail Radar in Qatar. The Al Dhafra Air Base, Jebel Ali Port, Al Ruwais—which is an air defense system with the THAAD, the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense—and the Al Sadr Facility. So there are four in the UAE. You've got one in Jordan, Muwaffaq Salti Air Base, and Erbil Airport in Iraq. Yeah, so you're right—it was not Oman. They're clear of Oman, at least on military targets, and I think in part because of Oman's role in trying to broker a peace agreement.

## **#Pascal**

I thought Oman stays pretty much neutral and doesn't station foreign troops, but I might be wrong about that.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

No, I think you're probably right. That was my mistake. We've identified seven countries and thirteen different bases.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, but it's very methodical, right? You strike the military facilities of the U.S. and Israelis, and that's also why last weekend the president of Iran—Peseshkian, I always confuse him with Pashinyan—but Peseshkian in Iran actually apologized to all the Gulf states, saying, like, sorry that we have to strike you, but we've got to do it. So it's like they want to send this very strong signal to the Gulf states: expel the U.S. military and you'll be better off.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Yeah, I mean, you're going to see, particularly with the Saudis, a reevaluation of how much they want to depend on the United States anymore. In fact, I've spoken with somebody who's in a position to know about that very issue, and basically, the Saudis have told us, "You're on your own. Don't bother us."

## **#Pascal**

Who told whom?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

The Saudis told the U.S. personnel at the Prince Sultan Air Base, basically, "You know what? You're on your own. We're not going to be here defending you." So the Saudis made it clear to the United States: "Okay, you want to stand there and fight? That's your fight. We're not going to do it."

## **#Pascal**

That makes a lot of sense. I wonder—I haven't heard whether the Saudis have expelled the Iranian diplomats or not, because they started direct diplomatic contact again about a year and a half ago, right? Through China. I'm not sure if their diplomats are still in place, whether they still have a direct line of contact or not, but it's very possible that they do, right?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Right, right.

## **#Pascal**

So... Iran seems to be trying very hard to differentiate between U.S. assets in Gulf countries and the Gulf countries themselves, right? And to say, like, no, no, no, we're not attacking you guys—we're attacking the facilities that the U.S. uses. That's also why the desalination plants are still intact, right? They don't want to cross the line into directly attacking the civilian population of those countries.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Right. Yeah, so, you know, I was just looking—I just got a flash over X. Since the start of this Epic Fury, there have been six medevac flights from CENTCOM into Ramstein. And usually, when they're going into Ramstein, that means they're headed to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, which is near Stuttgart. I noticed that a week ago Wednesday, on the 4th of March, Landstuhl issued a memo basically suspending all maternity services. So, basically, if you're coming to the hospital to have a baby—forget about it.

They're not doing that because they're focused on their core mission, which is treating wounded soldiers. Today, as of two hours ago, CBS News is reporting another military medical evacuation flight from Saudi Arabia to Ramstein, with at least 19 wounded service members on board. So, you know, the U.S. is trying to hide these casualties, but they're not going to be able to forever. And that's just going to put more and more political pressure on Trump because, you know, he ran on not starting these kinds of wars or getting involved in something like this. And this doesn't have an easy, quick end to it at all.

## **#Pascal**

I mean, if things stay as they are right now, then the only way to convince the Iranians to stop firing is actually to pull the U.S. military out of there and, you know, give in to their demands. And I just can't see Donald Trump doing that in any way, shape, or form, because of his character.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Well, ultimately, he'll have to, because the economic and political costs will become so great that he can't. If he stays intransigent on that, he'll definitely be destroyed in the midterm elections in November. The Senate will be overturned and go into the hands of the Democrats, and he'll be impeached. And I predict now he'll be the first president actually convicted in an impeachment proceeding.

## **#Pascal**

Which brings me back to this again. I mean, if this becomes existential to the political career of Trump and his people, will they then start contemplating actual nuclear strikes? Because it seems the quagmire is much more than a quagmire—it's much worse than Iraq. This might be an outright Vietnam-type scenario.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

If Trump and the United States dared to use any nuclear weapons, we'd be in a nuclear war with Russia and China—and probably North Korea as well.

## **#Pascal**

Why? Do you think the Russians or the Chinese would respond on Iran's behalf?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Yes. Iran signed a trilateral strategic agreement with them at the end of January and recognized that Iran is going to play a critical role in the future economic realm of BRICS. It has historically been a crucial crossroads for the Silk Road coming out of China, and now this whole north-south corridor—no, they're not going to stand by and let the United States deliver nuclear weapons on Iran. That's not going to happen.

## **#Pascal**

Okay, let's hope that message is understood. It just seems pretty bad—very bad.

## **#Pascal**

Is there anything still on your mind that you haven't seen circulating much in the news that deserves mentioning, or did we pretty much cover it?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Well, Iran's demands are starting to clarify—they're demanding reparations. Araqchi said they're going to hold out for the destruction of Israel, that Israel will have to cease to exist. Now, it'll be interesting to see if they can pull that off. I think they actually have a way to potentially do it, but that carries with it the nuclear threat. And the only way to counter that nuclear threat is to have their own nuke, which I believe Iran is now going to do. The actions of the United States have left Iran with no other choice.

But I can't overemphasize—or we shouldn't underestimate—the strategic power Iran holds by shutting down the economic flow of oil, liquefied natural gas, and urea out of the Persian Gulf. At a minimum, we're looking at a global recession. That's going to happen. After two weeks of this, there's no doubt that's going to happen. The question is, how severe will that economic recession be? Will it turn into a depression? And I think if this goes on—well, this could easily go on for six months. Six months would be devastating. So that means the United States is going to have to make a deal with Iran.

And Iran's deal, at a minimum, is going to be reparations. "You're going to pay for all the damage you've done, you're going to lift all the economic sanctions on us, and you're not going to interfere with our ability to, well, enrich as much damn uranium as we want—and it's none of your business." That'll be their demand. And if the United States says, "No, we're not going to accept that," Iran's response will be, "Okay then, you know what? Suck on this—no oil, no liquefied natural gas." And after a six-month period, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates will no longer be able to return to what they were. All the wealthy who've flocked there will be vacating it.

## **#Pascal**

What an insane mess.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

What an insane mess.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah. Larry, thank you very much. Everybody, please follow Larry Johnson on his homepage, Sonar21—is that correct?

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Yes, sir, and thank you for indulging me. You know, it's late at night. I'm going to smoke a cigar and enjoy the outdoor temperatures here in Florida. I'm very glad you did—22 degrees Celsius, 72 degrees Fahrenheit.

## **#Pascal**

Beautiful. Enjoy the wonderful Caribbean night over there, and enjoy your cigar—you really deserve it. Larry Johnson, thank you for your time today.

## **#Larry C Johnson**

Thank you, Pascal.