

Larry Johnson: U.S. Attack on Kharg Island Will Destroy the Gulf States

Larry Johnson is a former intelligence analyst at the CIA who also worked at the US State Department's Office of Counterterrorism. Johnson discusses why a U.S. attack on Iran's energy facilities on Kharg Island will predictably result in Iran attacking all energy facilities in the Gulf States. Read Larry Johnson's Sonar21: <https://sonar21.com/> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: 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 are joined by Larry Johnson, a former CIA analyst, to discuss the very dramatic developments taking place in the war against Iran. So, yeah, first let me thank you for coming back on the program. It's good to see you again. Hey, always appreciate the invite, Glenn. So I wanted to start by focusing on Karg Island, because it handles about 90% of Iran's oil exports. Many commentators have been asking if this is really what could break the back of Iran's economy. So why isn't Trump going after this? Well... it appears that, you know, we've reached this point now as we continue up this escalation ladder.

Trump — of course, the United States has now bombed Karg Island. Trump claims to have “totally obliterated” — that's his phrase — the military facilities there. He didn't touch the energy facilities, I guess for good reasons. But he's now threatening that the oil installations are next unless Iran folds, meaning by opening up the Strait of Hormuz. How are you assessing this situation? Because, you know, on one hand, if it's a bluff, Iran can't really capitulate. On the other hand, if Trump goes through with this, it's like the nuclear option in an energy war. So what does all of this mean? Yeah.

#Larry Johnson

I guess Donald Trump reminds me of a casino's favorite client — you know, the one who keeps coming in, spending lots of money, and losing. That's Donald Trump. This attack on Karg Island just makes zero sense, no matter how you look at it. They did not attack the oil terminal — that's the good news. Iran reportedly has five oil terminals, so this is actually only one of them. Although it may pump the most oil or provide the most oil to tankers heading south through the strait, destroying it wouldn't cut off Iran's only source of potential revenue. But they did bomb the runway of the major airport.

So you say, oh, good, that'll keep Iran from using it — except Iran really doesn't have an air force. There's also talk of the United States invading, you know, trying to occupy Karg Island. Well, one of the ways you do that is by flying in troops, or once the troops are parachuted in, you've got to resupply them somehow. So you'd need to land on the runway — except this runway is, I was told, about 5,000, almost 6,000 feet. And the way they've bombed it means it's only good for about 3,000 feet. Well, a C-17 requires at least 3,500 feet to land. So scratch the C-17, and that leaves you with a slow-flying C-130. So, I mean, if you're planning a military operation on the island, you've now screwed yourself from the U.S. standpoint.

Iran has made it very clear that if you attack our actual oil terminals and resources, we will attack those of our other Gulf neighbors. And there are at least thirteen different targets they've already identified. So Iran didn't react immediately or angrily last night when this happened. It happened early Saturday morning Iran time, late Friday on the East Coast. So this was just lashing out for the sake of lashing out. It's not part of a strategic picture, because you've got to sit back and ask, what is Trump trying to accomplish? Well, what's been accomplished as a result of this attack on Iran is shutting down the Strait of Hormuz.

And in doing that, you've now closed off 20% of the world's oil supply, 25% of the world's liquefied natural gas, and 35% of the world's urea, which is needed for fertilizer. And, you know, about 75% of the arable land in the world is above the equator, so that means we're now in planting season. The 35% drop in fertilizer is huge — it means some crops aren't going to get planted or aren't going to grow. And then, when it comes to harvest time, food's not going to be harvested, and there's going to be a drop in the global food supply. So it literally can affect billions of people. On the gas front, prices are now rising very rapidly, even here in the United States. I've been monitoring my local gas station.

A week ago on Sunday, I paid 50 cents more than I had the previous five days. So last Sunday it was \$3.04. On Wednesday, the price went up to \$3.19. Then on Thursday, it was \$3.24, and yesterday it was \$3.32. So it's basically gone up almost 80 cents in just over a week. I mean, I'm fortunate — I'm in a financial situation where I can handle that increase. I'd rather not, but I can. But an estimated 60% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck, which means they don't have much spare cash.

And so this is going to impact not only their bottom line, but the real killer is on the diesel front — the price has gone up over \$1.50 and is approaching \$2. Every truck that hauls supplies for grocery stores, hardware stores, Walmart, Price Club, any of these major vendors — their costs are going to go up. As fuel prices rise, those costs get passed along to the consumer. So I get the strategy: you're trying to heighten inflation around the world, and in the process, you're also setting up a recession. Because what we know from history is that every time we've seen spiking oil prices, there's been a recession.

You know, that varies — the length and the depth of it have varied. But we've never had a situation where the entire Persian Gulf has been closed off like it is now, and with the shutdown of operations in three, you know, three or four critical countries there — apart from Iran — when you look at Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and then Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. I keep wanting to say Dubai and get it mixed up. So, you know, we're in uncharted territory as far as history goes. There's nothing to point back to and say, "Oh yeah, this is what happened that time." So the potential for this to create an actual global economic catastrophe is high. And Trump's response now is to double down militarily, except they're in a situation where the U.S. cannot militarily defeat Iran.

You can't do it from the air. Air power has never won a war. And there was an Air Force general who testified in the United States a couple of weeks back and admitted that. I mean, history clearly shows it. So you say, well, what about ground troops? The age when, you know, 23 years ago, the United States could assemble soldiers over the course of nine months at bases in Saudi Arabia — they were quite safe. They weren't facing drone strikes, they weren't facing missile strikes. Not today. You couldn't do that. You couldn't assemble an army that would be required to take on Iran, number one. Number two, the United States doesn't have that size of army. Total current military strength is 445,000 in the U.S. Army and about 180,000 Marines.

#Larry Johnson

You know, good luck — six hundred thousand against a million-man army in Iran. That just, you know, doesn't work. So there are valid reports that they're deploying two different groups: a 2,200-Marine amphibious unit and then a 5,000 or 5,500-strong force.

#Larry Johnson

I don't care whether it's 2,200 or 5,000. Again, what are they going to do? The notion that this is going to be like World War II, where the Marines are in their landing craft charging toward the shore, the ramp comes down, and they storm into fire—that's not going to happen. Those craft wouldn't even get close to Iran; they'd be blown out of the water. So it's unclear how they're going to try to employ these Marines. They could try to parachute them in somewhere, but once you do that, how do you resupply them? They'd be through whatever ammunition, food, and water they carry within a day. And if you can't resupply them, they're dead. Plus, these American planners apparently haven't watched the war in Ukraine. There's a real reason you don't see mass movements of troops on either side—because with drones combined with artillery, it's impossible for soldiers to move in large units. They'd be decimated.

#Glenn

Well, taking Iranian oil off the market is one thing, but I'm just thinking about this idea of a massive Iranian retaliation. I mean, there's a reason why the Iranians haven't attacked the Gulf states' energy facilities to that extent—because then it would be open season on Iran. But if the Americans

go after them, why would Iran show any restraint? They could just burn it all down, and the Gulf states would essentially cease to exist, at least the smaller ones. So it's a pretty crazy threat to make. And once you start making those kinds of threats, it's very hard to climb down—especially when you turn on the TV. I think Keith Kellogg was also saying, you know, "We should just take it over."

But, you know, one thing is, if the objective is to invade, fine—but the alternative is, of course, just bombing it, destroying everything. But then, you know, every energy facility in the Middle East would be on fire within a few days. So yes, this seems like an insane escalation. But Trump is under great pressure to do something, because now he's committed himself to this rhetoric that he can open the Strait of Hormuz—ships should just go through, it's not a big problem. But how would you assess this? How can the U.S. reopen the Strait of Hormuz? It can't, can it?

#Larry Johnson

It cannot. No, it cannot be done. Well, it cannot be done with acceptable losses. Yeah, you could probably do it militarily, maybe accomplish it, but the cost—the actual physical cost and manpower losses—would be horrific. And with actual ships... they can't do it just from the air. I mean, there are caves and tunnels all along that coast. You know, Alistair Crooke has been there and seen it. Iran's been preparing for this contingency for 30 years. So they're not just a bunch of guys who built a wooden deck on the side of a cliff with a machine gun. That's nonsense. If you haven't had a chance, watch the interview Danny Davis did yesterday with Robert Barnes. Robert's an attorney, but he's well plugged into the Trump administration through J.D. Vance.

And what he said is that Trump is now being pushed away. Anybody like Tulsi Gabbard and J.D. Vance who've tried to counsel against a war with Iran—he's only listening to those egging him on: "Yeah, you can do this. Yeah, we're winning. Yeah, keep going." They're not giving him an honest assessment. And we now know the battle is underway inside D.C. between, let's call it, the anti-war crowd and the "let's go all the way to Tehran" crowd. The first indicator was when General Daniel Kane, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reportedly told Trump, "This is not going to go the way you think it will—there are major obstacles, major problems." Trump ignored that.

The next was the leak from the National Intelligence Council—their report, their assessment—that had been delivered to Trump a week before this, saying, "You're not going to get regime change, no matter what you do." And so, when the leaks started coming out that Trump was pushing people away—it wasn't just Robert Barnes—and that the U.S. was sustaining greater losses than were being reported, that information started getting into the press. So this shows there's real disagreement within the government. They're not all pulling in the same direction on this. The Pentagon's lies are also beginning to be exposed. You know that KC-135 that was shot down? Let me emphasize—it was shot down. It did not crash. The Pentagon claimed that it crashed.

So you have to step back and say, okay, explain to me—how did it crash? Planes can crash on takeoff because of an engine failure or because they're too heavily loaded. But this didn't crash on takeoff. Or they can crash while landing because of heavy crosswinds or, again, too much weight on board, or a mechanical failure while they're coming in for a final approach. But planes flying along at 25,000 feet just don't crash, particularly if there's no bad weather. You know, they just don't fall out of the sky. Well, this one got shot down. So they're lying about that. They're desperate to try to have a military solution. Trump's got it in his mind that he can win this, and anybody who tries to tell him different is getting shut out. So this is—it's like a King Lear situation, the madness of King Lear, to go back to Shakespeare.

#Glenn

Yeah, the rhetoric from Trump is getting a bit wild. Again, he already declared victory—which is strange, because if you're threatening to attack Kharg Island, and you know what the retaliation will be—that all the energy facilities and the Gulf states will burn, and the energy markets and global economy go down the toilet—you wouldn't make those threats if you'd already won, essentially. This is an immense escalation. But there's also other rhetoric. We heard that he tweeted that Iran was about to try to take over all of the Middle East unless the U.S. attacked Iran.

Which seems like a desperate attempt to make the war look defensive or even legal, because I think people do look into these things. They might not if there's a big success, but once there's a failure, people start digging. Also, one of the new or interesting talking points has been these supposed Iranian sleeper cells and the possible surprise attack on California. I guess this is meant to brand Iran as a terrorist state that could also carry out attacks against the United States. Yeah. Why not link them to September 11th, right? How do you make sense of that—especially the sleeper cells and the possible attack on California? Yeah.

#Larry Johnson

Well, let's deal with the attack on California. How are the drones going to get there? I mean, where are those drones supposed to be launched from? Off the coast? You know, one of the non-existent boats in the Iranian Navy—since, according to Trump, the Iranian Navy has been destroyed. So they no longer have a ship that could carry drones, sit off the coast of California, and fire them into the state. This is all reminiscent of the Japanese attacking the West Coast of the United States in World War II—claiming, "Oh, well, we were prepared for that." It wasn't going to happen, but nonetheless, they were prepared for it. Now they've trotted out this scare story about Iranian sleeper cells so many times.

All you've got to do is go back and look at it. We've got 46 years of data on Iranian support for terrorism, and it just doesn't support the U.S. narrative. Iran hasn't been going out of its way to attack the United States. In fact, I'd say all of the attacks attributed to Iran or Iranian proxies

against the U.S. were in retaliation for things the U.S. did—like the bombing of the Marine barracks in October '83. That was in response to U.S. battleships back then—we still had the New Jersey—offshore lobbing shells into the Bekaa Valley, killing Shia. And that actually wasn't carried out by an Iranian proxy.

It was carried out by Amal, which was a longtime Shia group in Lebanon. They'd been there since 1972—seven years before the Iranian Islamic Republic came into existence. We haven't had a single terrorist attack in the United States in the last, you know, 46 years since Iran came into existence that could be pinpointed to Iran or an Iranian proxy. Not one. But we always trot that out to justify why we've got to make Iran an enemy. And at the same time, the actual Islamic radicals who have carried out or tried to carry out terrorist attacks are linked to ISIS, which is a Sunni outfit. The Shia version of Islam is not big on suicide bombers. It's not big on that kind of fanatical sacrifice.

Whereas the Takfiri version of Sunni Islam—the Wahhabi version—it is. We just saw this: they had that attempted bombing the other day, two guys in New York City. ISIS, not Iran—ISIS. They also point to this one guy down in Texas who showed up and shot up a bar, killed 14 people, I believe, or at least four. Again, he was not acting on orders from Iran at all, because that's just not how Iran has operated. And, you know, the reality is, when you look at which country has been carrying out terrorist attacks against other countries, it's the United States. We've funded and rehabilitated the MEK, and the MEK has been carrying out terrorist attacks regularly inside Iran for well over the last 30 years. So...

#Larry Johnson

It's political manipulation. It's designed to shape public opinion, to reinforce the narrative against Iran without allowing Americans to step back and take an objective look at what this is all about.

#Glenn

Yeah, I thought it was strange when Iran had to be, I guess, sold as the number one sponsor of terrorism in the world. And, you know, they have to flesh out the argument by referring to roadside bombs in Iraq against the U.S. occupation forces, and then going back to Lebanon in 1982 when, technically, it was Hezbollah. I think they did the bombing there. It's not very convincing in terms of listing Iran as the world's sponsor of terrorism. But how about the targets the Iranians are going after?

Because it does seem that they're systematically going after key targets—the radars, which are quite important. I saw they took out the one at the U.S. embassy in Baghdad as well. Again, it's more difficult to intercept Iranian drones and missiles. And we see the military bases, embassies—all of this kind of fits within the wider objective of expelling the United States from the region. But we also saw this report about an attack on those five refuelers in Saudi Arabia. I think they were KC-135s.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah.

#Glenn

Trump went out and called it fake news. But again, he says a lot of things.

#Larry Johnson

No, no. I knew about that before it was reported. And they weren't just damaged—they were destroyed. Right. And the reality now is that the air defense system at Prince Sultan Air Base is no longer intact. It doesn't work. So the base is basically quite open and vulnerable to Iranian attacks. The U.S. is having to withdraw its troops from there—the Air Force personnel—because they're not protected. They're in tents, and they're very vulnerable to an attack. So the loss of those five tankers is just another example that Iran had a battle plan in mind. They were going to do two things: first, weaken and try to drive out the U.S. military from the Persian Gulf, and second, do that by destroying the bases.

Two, they were going to take out the radar systems there that are critical for detecting launches out of Iran and monitoring threats both in the air and at sea—maritime threats. They did that. They did that within the first four days. And despite the claims that we had these robust air defense systems around the bases, one of the radars was taken out by a Geran drone—not exactly a high-speed missile. So then their third objective was to degrade Israel economically and militarily, to destroy its infrastructure. You know, I think it's worth noting that Iran, despite massive missile strikes on Israel, has not been trying to inflict large-scale civilian casualties so far. Because somebody said, well, that's just because Israel's censoring that information.

No, if they really were—if Iran was really targeting schools with children, for example, and killing them—Israel would make that public. In fact, I'm surprised they haven't even fabricated that story as well, just to try to build further public opinion against Iran. So Iran's been quite careful in that regard. But then also, their eye-for-an-eye strategy: if you hit our oil, we're going to hit your oil; if you hit our bank, we're going to hit your bank. And so they just—in Dubai—they just took out a Citibank building, or at least hit it. It didn't destroy the building, but it was one of those big skyscrapers, and it suffered quite a blast. The one area, curiously, that the Iranians did not respond to with a counterpunch was when their desalination plant was hit. And that only accounts for about 8% of the water in Iran, so it's not a critical resource.

But they've declined so far to go after the desalination plants in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Kuwait—recognizing that doing so could jeopardize or put at risk millions of people and really create a human catastrophe. So I think Iran is being thoughtful about this. They're recognizing that there's a political consequence to some of their actions, and they're keeping it

within those bounds. But the U.S.—as was admitted in the Wall Street Journal, and this is one of those other signs that support for Trump is fading—they said, hey, the U.S. grossly underestimated. They didn't even take into account the possibility that Iran could close the Strait of Hormuz. The Iranians have far more ballistic missiles than we assumed, you know, that kind of thing.

#Glenn

Well, of course, they can escalate the targeting of the Gulf states, but Iran doesn't have to destroy all the U.S. bases there. All they have to do—I mean, they don't have to destroy these countries—just incentivize them to decouple from the United States. And you've seen some of that in the rhetoric, that they'll only target countries hosting American bases, and of course the bases themselves. That's why, for Iran, the presence of those refuelers in Saudi Arabia kind of confirms that the Saudis were assisting in what was a surprise attack on Iran. But there's another point—I think that came out as a suggestion.

Now, I haven't seen if it's been confirmed, but it came from, I think, some Iranian commentators that Iran might consider allowing ships through the Strait of Hormuz if they pay in Chinese yuan instead of dollars. If this is confirmed, it would be another form of decoupling. Do you see any pathway forward? Do you think the Gulf states would want to accept something like this? Because on the one hand, the U.S. presence makes them more vulnerable to attacks, but on the other hand, they don't really have militaries of their own. So how would they defend themselves without the U.S.? It seems like a bit of a security dilemma—if you accept the help, you risk war; if you don't, you could be overrun.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I think, at least in Saudi Arabia—in the Saudi case—there's a reassessment underway, recognizing that they made a deal with the devil, the United States, back in the 1970s, when the U.S. went off the gold standard. We convinced the Saudis to go along with using the dollar as the primary means for purchasing oil. And so the effect—the petrodollar, as it's come to be known—reigned supreme. That fostered this relationship between the Saudis and the United States: we guaranteed their security against threats that we either claimed existed or created for them. But I think now Russia and China are playing this quite smartly. They're in a position to create an alternative to the United States, and I think it could be more attractive to the Gulf Arabs.

At least it'd be less of a subservient position. Those countries don't normally come in and, you know, tell you what to do or boss you around like some servant. So, you know, I think we're looking at this as part of the realignment of the international situation—and the financial system too—because in the past, when the price of oil went up, people were paying in dollars. The Chinese were paying in dollars, and then what did they do with all those dollars? They'd buy U.S. Treasuries. Well, they're

not doing that anymore. One of the other ironic outcomes of this war is that before, the United States—and now, let's remember, the United States and Israel started this—you'd think the U.S. would have stepped back and looked at it more broadly.

What's our overall strategic objective in the world? But no, they didn't. So, as a consequence of this war—whereas five weeks ago Janet Yellen, the Secretary of the Treasury, was insisting that India stop buying oil from the Russians and that we'd punish any country doing so—today it's, "Hey, India, we think it's a great idea. Buy as much of that Russian oil as possible." And, you know, Russia, which previously was selling its oil for as low as \$55 a barrel to India, is now getting well over \$80, maybe closer to \$90 a barrel. So they're raking in an additional \$150 million a day, roughly \$4.5 billion a month. All the Western analysts were predicting the implosion of the Russian economy, or at least that it was in trouble. Here's Putin.

And that's just the oil. They've also got an advantage—they've got liquefied natural gas. Hey, anybody need any liquefied natural gas? Russia's got some. And fertilizer. Who's the other largest producer of fertilizer in the world? Oh, that'd be Russia. So literally, from February 28th to now—here we are on March 14th—in 15 days they've shored up the foundation of the Russian economy in a way that nobody could have predicted a year ago. So this, you know, again, goes along with the changing picture, because when this war ends with Iran, it's not going to end with U.S. troops marching through the streets of Tehran.

It's not going to be a victory march of Israelis and U.S. soldiers waving their flags as the Iranians, you know, submit. No, it's going to be the United States and Israel—they're going to have to figure out how to back out, you know, how to get a victory. I did raise the possibility that Trump, in his wild rhetoric, might say, "Oh man, we devastated Kharg Island. Therefore, we've accomplished our objectives. Mission accomplished. We win." So we're going to pull out, we're going to stop all these attacks on Iran because they're devastated—there's nothing left of their leadership, there's nothing left of their air force. We win. That's Trump's only way to get out of this mess.

#Glenn

Well, yeah, but that's the problem. There's no escalation dominance. He doesn't get to decide when the war ends. And if the Strait of Hormuz remains closed to hostile countries and, you know, to the Gulf states until they've paid reparations for the damage done to Iran... you know, it's very hard to sell this as a victory, no matter how many parades he might organize.

#Larry Johnson

Well, yeah. No, I agree with you completely. That is, you know, that's where they— They did that with the Houthis, okay? They could get away with that with the Houthis because the Houthis weren't sitting there continuing to bomb U.S. military bases. They stopped launching missiles into Israel, but they kept stopping ships from going into an Israeli port. So... but nobody was keeping tabs on the

ships. They weren't easy to see. But this—how does he, you know—he can declare victory, but the very next day Iran's going to keep launching missiles, attacking U.S. military bases, any that remain, and hitting Israel over and over and over until the Israelis are begging for it to stop.

#Glenn

Well, I'm glad you brought up the Russians, because I saw in the British media that apparently one of the state media commentators in Russia, Kornilov, linked the British attacks on Russia with the Storm Shadows to Iran's attack on British targets in the Middle East—saying, more or less, that this shouldn't surprise the British, that now they'll get it in return. I didn't watch the original clips, and I'm skeptical of the British media, but still, it seems... I'm not sure if that commentary is accurate or actually based on reality. So again, I don't know the substance, but it wouldn't surprise me.

I kind of made that comment myself, I think two or three years ago—that, you know, in the NATO countries, we tend to fight a lot of wars. And at some point, the Russians will be in a position to do what we're doing in Ukraine. That is, we're setting up a firing position where we can shoot at the Russians, but they can't fire back at us. Right? I'm wondering if you think the Russians might go for something like that. Again, pure vengeance—I'm not sure—but certainly to restore deterrence, to show that it has to come with a cost for anyone who attacks Russia. Yeah.

#Larry Johnson

Well, first, I did hear Alexander Mercouris discuss the possibility that the British supported this launch of Storm Shadows into Bryansk that killed six people. That was retaliation for Russian attacks—so, Russian support for Ukrainian attacks on British troops in the region. And we can't rule that out. What I found, you know, I'll call it amusing, is that the West is all in a huff—"My God, Russia's supplying support to Iran! How dare they?" It's like the pot calling the kettle black. Here are the United States and the NATO countries, for more than four years, not only providing weapons but also intelligence—intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance data, ISR data.

They've planned attacks against Russia. I think, candidly, Russia has been far too passive in reacting to these. The time has come for Russia to put the United States and NATO countries on notice that any reconnaissance aircraft—even if it's in international airspace, but positioned so it can collect data on Russia and provide it to Ukraine—will be shot down. These are now targets. An effective state of war exists between Russia and the West, and this is meant to back them off. They've got to understand they can't keep running away with this cost-free. And, you know, Russia's motives in helping Iran out—thank you very much.

#Larry Johnson

A critical node in the multinodal world—or they want to call it multipolar—but I think "multinodal" is a better way to express it, because Iran sits at the crossroads of both the new Silk Road coming out

of China and the north–south economic corridor coming out of Russia, as well as its strategic position with the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. So both Russia and China have recognized that Iran is very important strategically, which is their main reason for supporting Iran. What I'm fascinated by—let's call it the maturity and restraint of Iran's diplomacy—the way they've dealt with India is a case in point. You know, Prime Minister Modi was in Israel two days before the attack on Iran by the United States and Israel.

Oh my God, it was obscene. It was like, if there were a way you could watch something on television and get diabetes, this would've done it. I mean, it was that sweet and syrupy. He was just obsequious—doing everything but giving Bibi Netanyahu a back rub. And he came out claiming to have a strategic alliance with Israel. Well, two days later, Israel hits Iran and kills members of the Iranian leadership, kills children. And then, when Iran shuts down the Strait of Hormuz, all of a sudden you could hear this loud puckering factor going on in India. Oh my God—because 80% of their oil comes out of the Persian Gulf. What were they going to do?

In fact, I really thought that Iran—because, you know, India is one of the founders of BRICS—and yet, by siding with Israel in such a public way, it was really undermining its other BRICS partner, Iran. But instead, Iran played it pretty maturely. They came back and said, "Oh no, no, if it's an Indian-flagged vessel, if it's a vessel carrying oil to India, that'll be allowed to pass." And that may have had something to do with the fact that India obviously has to pay full freight now—they don't get it cheap like they did before. But it shows that the Islamic Republic of Iran is not this vicious terrorist beast the West is portraying it as. And, you know, I cited the earlier example—they also didn't go after the desalination plants. They've been relatively limited in their strikes.

They've tried to avoid hitting purely civilian targets in all the Gulf countries. Now, the U.S. toady that's in Bahrain—or, according to reports, has fled, the king—the Bahraini government continues to take a very adversarial stance toward Iran. The United Arab Emirates were reportedly involved in the attack on Kharg Island last night, so they're going to pay a price, a heavy price. But I think Iran is still looking down the road. They ultimately want to repair relations with these countries, but they're going to get the United States out. The United States is going to have to leave that region as part of any settlement to this war. And until that war is settled, the Strait of Hormuz is going to remain closed, and the world, I believe, is going to be facing a global depression, not just a recession.

#Glenn

I think, well, these kinds of demands are understandable, but at the same time, they can't be met by the U.S., so it's kind of a recipe for a long war. But I also agree with your point about India, because they played some of their cards wrong. They allowed themselves to bend to U.S. pressure on scaling back Russian oil purchases. But now, of course, the Americans are saying, "Oh, wait, maybe you should do that after all." And their discount oil is now premium-priced oil, so it might not have been a great move. Also, the Indians, with Modi visiting Israel, you know, there were some good optics there.

And also, after even inviting Iran to participate in this naval exercise, the U.S. then sank its warship on the way home, and the Indians, as far as I know, couldn't muster any condemnation. I mean, they were invited by them, and they were sunk on their way home in international waters. And no, it just... it looks like they played some of their cards a bit unwisely here. Just as a last question, what do we know about the destruction in Israel? Because they keep very tight control over their media, and I think our journalists in the West are quite obedient—or loyal—to these restrictions on revealing losses or destruction within Israel. But what do we know so far?

#Larry Johnson

Well, we know through what we're not seeing. Let me explain. If I'm telling you, "Oh, everything's fine," but you can't come take pictures, you can't come look—that tells you everything's not fine. They've turned off the public satellites that are capable of taking real-time images out of Israel. They've been shut down; they're not providing that product anymore. Now, you saw that CNN was allowed to go into Iran and report, and they did. CNN wasn't told, "You can't report here, turn the camera off." No, they were allowed. It appeared pretty clear—wide access. So this tells me, from what I've been watching, there are only a few images that get out every day.

You've had—I guess we're up to—42 waves of missile attacks into Israel since February 28th. That's huge. So that's roughly three waves of missile attacks per day. And now they're carrying 2,000-pound warheads, or even upwards of 3,000 pounds. So this is definitely causing damage in Tel Aviv and Haifa. The port has been hit, the oil refinery reportedly has been hit, and there were images that emerged last night of Nevatim, the Air Force base down in the Negev Desert. Israel can't take this kind of pounding. And people say, well, what about Iran? Iran's, what, fifteen times bigger than Israel? Israel's got 55% of its population in just two cities.

Now, as big as Tehran is—with, what, 10 to 12 million people, and some say with the metropolitan area it gets up to 15 million—okay, they've got 15 million. They still have another 75 million people spread throughout the country in different cities and towns. The next nine largest cities in Iran are all about a million, maybe two million each. So there aren't these huge metropolitan areas; they're actually relatively dispersed. The point being, if Iran and Israel are firing the same amount of munitions at each other every day, Israel is going to degrade quicker and faster than Iran. And Israel will be in a position where they won't be able to sustain this, which then raises the issue of whether they'll want to use a nuke.

And there's that possibility. I wrote an article on the game theory behind this, and basically the game theory solution is that if Israel is threatening to use a nuke, the best option for Iran is to immediately produce a nuclear weapon. If they have a demonstrated nuclear capability, it forces the U.S. and Israel to change their calculations, because Israel in particular can't risk launching a nuclear

strike on a nuclear-armed Iran. Iran could then come back and literally destroy Israel. An Israeli strike on Iran would cause terrible loss of life and terrible damage, but it would not destroy Iran. Israel would be destroyed.

#Glenn

Well, I think the Iranian territory is about 75 times that of Israel or something like that. It's really huge. Yeah, it also requires a larger population, of course—about 90 million people. So it does require a whole lot more firepower. But yeah, this is the big thing. What really perplexes me is that they keep making these demands, ultimatums, bluffs—essentially demanding that Iran capitulate, like giving up the ballistic missiles. And then they're left with an option that Iran predictably won't and can't accept. Then they either have to let their credibility falter or go up the escalation ladder, which will just make matters much worse. So you can see the destructive path we're on, yet no one is doing anything serious to put an end to it. And again, given what Iran wants—an end to the U.S. presence in the region and compensation—it's going to be difficult.

#Larry Johnson

And the elimination of sanctions.

#Glenn

That's right.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah. And look, I think we're seeing again something we've never seen in history—where one country can choke off and close off a critical economic lifeline and has control of it. And the rest of the world, or the parties most affected, really can't do anything to reverse it without incurring a terrible cost they're not willing to pay. And that cost would be loss of life and loss of ships. It would be very devastating for the United States, for Japan. And the other really interesting thing that's playing out now is what's happening with Taiwan. Taiwan's going to run out of power in ten days. What do they do? So all of this chip production that's there—that's going to stop. They don't have the energy.

Oh, they've got to come up with an alternative source. Oh, what source might that be? Gee, China? Russia? Hmm. So China has now acquired increased leverage over Taiwan. Yeah, this is 5D chess going on here—the cascading effects across the board. In fact, it never entered my mind when I heard they closed the strait. I thought, oh boy, that's going to be bad for oil. And then when I started looking into it and came across this export of urea, I had no idea. And at 35% of the world's supply—good Lord—that's significant. So all of a sudden you begin to see that this whole strategy shows Iran is now in a position where it's going to be able to dictate terms of surrender.

Because despite all the U.S. tough talk and so on, the economic pain is going to become too much for so many countries aligned with the United States. The countries aligned with Russia and China—they're going to be okay, because Russia is an alternative source to the Persian Gulf. And that's going to strengthen it even more in terms of economic and political power. The countries that are coming out now, they're relying on Russia to supply gas, oil, fertilizer—that buys the Russians more goodwill. And what about the United States? The U.S. has kicked off a war that's caused all these countries pain. So when we come knocking on their door, they're not going to answer.

#Glenn

Also, if Iran were the only adversary, then the U.S. could perhaps invest more resources—both blood and treasure—into this. But, as you suggest, Trump never ended U.S. participation in the war against Russia—well, the proxy war through Ukraine—and also never put an end to the economic war or the military buildup in the competition with China. So, going after all three at the same time, this defeat in Iran will be so much worse. I mean, you know, even America's worst enemies wouldn't want to see too humiliating a defeat, because that's not a source of stability. So, no, I'm worried about what's coming. But yes, as always, my friend, thank you very much for taking the time. Do you have any final thoughts?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I just want to go back to the terrorism thing. I pulled up the statistics for 2017 just to put an exclamation point on this notion that Iran is the number one sponsor of terrorism in the world. And these are actually the stats for 2016 and 2017. Number one: the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS. And these stats did not include Iran. Branches of ISIS like al-Nusra, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham—this was just straight-up ISIS. Total deaths in 2017: 4,350. In 2016: 9,180. So right there, you're looking at over 13,500 dead from ISIS. They were number one. Number two was the Taliban, with about 7,200 deaths in those two years.

#Larry Johnson

Number three was al-Shabaab—again, Sunni, not Shia. They killed over 2,100 people in those two years. They also list the Maoist Communist Party of India, the CPI (Marxist). They were actually the fourth highest for 2016 and 2017. And bringing up number five was Boko Haram, another ISIS affiliate. You know, not a single Iranian group in there, not a single Iranian-backed group. And that's been the case every year—except the statistics did show that for 2023, they lumped in October 7th, and Hamas now appears in the top ten for that year. But, you know, this argument, this demonization of Iran as a terrorist state—it's a damnable lie. And one final point: we can go back and look at what happened, what Iran did in response to the Iraq War, when Iraq used chemical weapons against Iran.

And those chemical weapons that were provided by the United States and built by Iraq, used against Iran, started in August of 1983 and continued through August of 1988—over 20 chemical weapon attacks, weapons of mass destruction. Iran never developed a chemical weapon and never used one on the battlefield. Why? Because it was a sin against God to do that. So I think the world underestimates the role of religious conviction in Iran's policies here. They're not this "we hate the Christians, we're going to kill all the Christians and Jews" nonsense. Just the opposite. The Iranians, over the course of actual war, have shown far more decency than the United States has in all of its wars, in my judgment.

#Glenn

Yeah, no. Reading from the media, the talk about Iran—you know, they talk about burqas and suicide bombers. But, you know, first of all, there were no burqas in Iran. And second, the suicide bombers, those extremist organizations, have tended to be on the Sunni side, not the Shia. So there's a lot of propaganda. There's no other word for it. Yeah. Yeah. Well, as always, thank you very much for taking time out of your day. I know you're busy, so thank you.

#Larry Johnson

Well, you're busy too, and you're doing great work. Keep it up, Glenn Diesen.