

Larry Johnson: PROOF Iran Shot Down US Plane, Trump LOSING on All Fronts

Larry Johnson is a former intelligence analyst at the CIA who also worked at the US State Department's Office of Counterterrorism. Johnson discusses the huge losses the US is incurring to Iran including several aerial tankers in just days as Trump prepares a self-destructive invasion of Kharg Island. FOLLOW ME ON RUMBLE: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> FOLLOW ME ON TELEGRAM: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> SUPPORT THE CHANNEL ON PATREON: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #Iran #trump #khargisland #iranwar

#Danny

Bloomberg is reporting that about half of Iran's missile launchers are still intact, and that they're not able to actually destroy these launchers because of where they're located inside Iran. There are also, of course, the reports that CENTCOM has now acknowledged about the downed KC-135 refueling tanker over Iraq. Another one, I believe, landed successfully off the Mediterranean in Israel. There are reports of the USS Gerald Ford experiencing mysterious fires on board, and the USS Lincoln, according to Iran, has retreated because of damage it sustained in a confrontation with a small Iranian vessel. Now there are even reports that the U.S. is going to send 2,500 to 5,000 Marines into deployment again in the Middle East, essentially escalating this war.

#Larry Johnson

The U.S. is like a drowning man from the Titanic, trying to find something to grab onto just to stay afloat. And even if you stay afloat, you're still going to freeze to death in the water. The United States has started a war it cannot win, because ultimately, to win and take control of this situation, you'd need troops on the ground. Except you'd need about four million troops—maybe you could get away with three million—and that three million would suffer catastrophic losses trying to take control of Iran. You know, let's start with the lie being told to the American public that this KC-135, an air refueler, just crashed. Explain to me how it crashed. Normally, when everything's working perfectly, unless there was a catastrophic mechanical failure—which I know didn't happen—there's no reason for it to go down.

#Danny

I mean, I know what happened—it got shot down.

#Larry Johnson

But let's go with the Pentagon story. Oh, it was that they crashed. Okay. Normally, you crash on takeoff—that's one of the most dangerous times, because an engine gives out or cargo shifts. Or you crash on landing—again, something mechanical goes wrong, or there's terrible weather, you know, you're caught in a sandstorm. But none of that happened. This plane wasn't encountering bad weather. So how does a plane go from flying at, say, 25,000 feet or 20,000 feet and then suddenly crash into the desert? How does that work? The way it works is, it was shot down. Okay, so the Pentagon's lying about that because they don't want the casualty numbers to go up and reflect what's actually going on.

And we got a hint last week about the nature of the casualties when, a week ago Wednesday, on the 4th of March, there was a memo released at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. Landstuhl is the hospital that's the primary stopping place for wounded soldiers from combat situations, where they're first sent to be stabilized until they can get on a plane and head back to Walter Reed in Bethesda, Maryland. And I knew Walter Reed well—I actually lived four or five blocks north of it, on West Virginia Avenue. So what we saw a week ago Wednesday, on the 4th, was Landstuhl putting out a memo saying, "Hey, all you pregnant ladies who are thinking about coming here to have a baby, think again. You're not going to get to come here."

"We're shutting down the maternity services because we've got to focus on our primary mission." Now, they didn't write in there that the primary mission is dealing with combat casualties, but that is their primary mission. Same day—or maybe the next day—in the *Stars and Stripes* edition of the newspaper over there, about 16 miles east of Landstuhl, there's another U.S. military base called Kaiserslautern. And Kaiserslautern put out an appeal saying, "Hey, we need some blood donors—like, quick, emergency, emergency." So that right away told you there were more than just a few casualties flowing into Landstuhl. And then Thursday night—I can't remember if it was Thursday night or Friday—I got the first pictures of three large medical transport buses.

The van implies something smaller. This is bigger than a minivan by far. It was parked at Andrews Air Force Base, and it was a Walter Reed medical transport. So they're picking up—so, you know, patients coming out of Landstuhl were being landed at Andrews and taken to Bethesda, to Walter Reed. And, you know, that's what's going on. Lots of casualties, more than they're mentioning. One of the bases has run out of—well, they have no remaining air defense system. It's gone. So, going forward, the U.S. troops that are still there have no defense against missile and drone attacks—none. If Iran decides to press the attacks there, there will be a lot of casualties.

#Danny

It was the Iraqi resistance that took credit for the downed KC-135 refueling tanker that took the lives of, I believe, six U.S. personnel. Iran has oil prices going up through the closure of the Strait of

Hormuz—now about \$100 a barrel, or approaching that. It fluctuates, but overall the trend is upward. We also have news that Marines are going to be deployed to the Middle East. Iran's IRGC is saying, "Please, we are ready for you." And you probably saw the imagery, Larry, from Quds Day—you had Masoud Pezeshkian, the president of Iran; you had Abbas Araghchi, the foreign minister; and Ali Larijani, the head of the National Security Council. They were all there without security, in a huge rally of millions of Iranians, without a security detail. So I'm curious if you could comment on Iran's position right now. We hear from the Trump administration that they're looking to surrender. I'm curious if you agree with that.

#Larry Johnson

No. Well, Trump, as always, is lying about that. So let me ask you—you're not a military guy. I mean, you've got some knowledge, but tell me how you think. Okay, we've got 2,500 Marines. Give me the mission. Tell me what those 2,500 Marines are going to do.

#Danny

Well, there's a lot. There have been reports of one that's teased. I'm not trying to...

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I'm not trying to embarrass you with this, but what I want you to do is help explain to people who may not have a military background how they see this developing. And then I want to go over what, if any, problems there are with how you see it.

#Danny

Yeah, no, the only thing I can see, Larry, from how I look at the battlefield map in this war is what I'm hearing from the Pentagon and from these so-called military analysts—unofficial, unnamed. It seems like what they want to do is seize the coastline, or Karg Island, or something like that—some kind of specialized or targeted operation. That seems to be, at least from the outside looking in and without the expertise, what they're planning. I don't know if you agree with that.

#Larry Johnson

Okay, so you've got to get those ships—the Marines are going to be on ships. They'll offload from those ships, or they'll come out on landing craft, LSTs—the boats that take them to shore come out of the ship itself. But that means they've got to get close enough to shore that they're in range of Iranian missiles and drones. So how do you protect those ships from getting blown up even before you get the sailors to shore? You don't. But let's say some miracle happens—you get those Marines to shore. Then what?

#Larry Johnson

2,500 sounds like a lot, but if you've got to cover a mile of beach, that's not a lot. And then, if you're being attacked by drones, you don't have bunkers you can crawl into—you're exposed. So they're going to get attacked with drones, they're going to get attacked with artillery. And then, when the Iranian soldiers show up, the Marines are going to be firing away. Well, you only carry so much ammunition on you, and in that kind of firefight, you're going to burn through all the ammo you brought in. How do you get resupplied? Where's the resupply coming from? And let's say you're pinned down on that beach for three days—where's the water coming from? Where's the food? You probably carried enough to eat for a couple of days off MREs.

But my point is that to really make an imprint on a piece of territory as large as Iran would require hundreds—actually, more than two million troops, candidly. So where would you assemble those? Because, you know, just to show how much things have changed in 23 years—23 years ago, we were able to stage massive numbers of troops in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. They were visible from space. But Iraq didn't have drone capability then, and their Air Force wasn't capable of attacking us. They had a few Scuds, but not many. So we could assemble 160,000 troops there in Kuwait without a problem. You couldn't do that today. Today they'd be completely exposed to missile attacks, drone attacks. And any concentration of troops, as we've seen in the war in Ukraine, becomes just a massacre, because both Russians and Ukrainians have learned you don't mass troops.

That's no longer viable in the age of drones. So, yeah, these people talking about, you know, inserting boots on the ground—they don't know what they're talking about. And I actually... sixteen years ago, was it? Seventeen years ago? Maybe a little longer. I worked specifically on an exercise for U.S. Special Operations Forces that went into Iran, in this exercise, to attack a target where there was nuclear material underground. And I'll just say, the lesson learned from that exercise was: don't do it. It may look good on paper, but in practice, don't do it. And even though time has passed, I don't care what technology we've developed, that mission hasn't gotten any easier at all.

#Danny

Maybe you can talk about the full scope of what we could call the battlefield right now in this war, because it's massive. It includes what's happening with the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's very aggressive closure. We've seen a vessel hit—a tide-linked vessel—and we've seen attacks in the Persian Gulf. They've hit vessels there too. And there's also, of course, Israel, where every single day missiles are coming in. Hezbollah and Iran are working together. And then there's the broader regional situation, where U.S. military bases as well as U.S. naval assets are still being hit constantly. So I'm curious if you could go over where we are now when it comes to Iran's operation, True Promise 4, and its overall strategy. How is it influencing U.S. actions and Israeli actions at this time?

#Larry Johnson

So Iran, I think, accurately assessed both the tactical and strategic situation at the outset of this war—that U.S. forces would be based in places like Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia; in Bahrain, where the headquarters of the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet is located; in Kuwait, at four different bases and airfields; and the same in Qatar, at Al Udeid Air Force Base, home of the Combined Air Operations Center. To a lesser extent, there are also some in the United Arab Emirates. So between all of those sites, probably about thirteen bases. The United States' confidence was that their air defense systems would be capable of fending off any attacks by Iran and, in turn, that they would be able to use those locations to launch attacks into Iran that Iran would not be able to fend off.

Well, it's true that the attacks inside Iran went off largely without a hitch. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed, along with the Minister of Defense, the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Command, and others. But within an hour of being struck, Iran immediately began firing back. The strategy was twofold: first, to take out these massive, highly expensive radars that were used to detect missile launches, determine threat locations, and monitor air traffic across the entire region—out to about 5,000 kilometers—and second, to identify maritime threats and maintain communication with key U.S. naval assets.

Within three days, Iran had knocked out all of those radars and had also begun methodically destroying key buildings on each of these U.S. military bases around Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Al Udeid, and Bahrain. I think the most damage has been done to the naval facility in Bahrain. It's really not usable anymore. And to use it, you've got to get a Navy ship in through the Strait of Hormuz—they'd be a sitting duck. So that facility, for all practical purposes, is dead. It looks like the Prince Sultan Air Base has been decimated. There are satellite images emerging showing the destruction of at least five KC-135s—these are fuel tankers. So those destroyed on the ground, plus the one that was destroyed in Iraq yesterday, that's at least seven that have gone away.

Those seven were designed so they could fuel five planes apiece during a mission. So, you know, that's a pretty big hit on U.S. capabilities. The U.S. is being forced to withdraw its personnel from these bases and to curtail its military activities there. And with the radars knocked out, they've denied Israel any kind of advanced warning—maybe a minute or two at most—of an inbound missile attack. So, in terms of the U.S. objective to decapitate the leadership, that has failed. The objective to weaken support for the Islamic Republic has failed dramatically—just the opposite. Support for the government, for the Islamic Republic, has gone up in a way that's really unprecedented.

They haven't seen anything like this since Iraq attacked Iran in September 1980, at the start of the Iran-Iraq War. The military is unable to protect Israel from the missile strikes—they keep coming in and hitting. Israel has this multi-layered defense system. The first layer is Iron Dome, which goes after subsonic threats. The next layer is David's Sling, for some ballistic missiles. The third layer is the Patriot missile, which is supposed to hit ballistic missiles but can't. And then the last one is THAAD, the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system. Those have been destroyed. The radars that operated them have been destroyed, so they're no longer functioning.

#Danny

This is Mossad's president of Iran—he's walking freely among the Iranian people without a security detail. Very much a statement here. The same goes for Ali Larijani, who is the Iranian Security Council secretary. These were the images being shared around. But I wanted to ask you, what will determine this war? Iran has said that they will dictate what happens in this war. They're not going to stop until they get international guarantees that aggression will stop altogether and won't happen again. It's a very, very tall order. But there are a lot of developments here that aren't looking good, including this one. According to the Financial Times, the U.S. has burned through years' worth of ammunition—billions' worth as well—just in 13 days.

And then I mentioned the missile launcher issue. I want to scroll down here because there's a lot of talk about the U.S. having air superiority. Even Bloomberg had to note that air operations have been complicated—that despite 80 percent of Iran's air defenses being destroyed, hard-to-find weapons such as the 358 missile, capable of launching from small, easily concealed rail vehicles, have made things difficult. So, do you believe Iran when it says it will determine what happens in this war? And what exactly will force this thing to come to an end at the end of the day? What do you believe?

#Larry Johnson

Well, it'll come to an end when U.S. exhaustion sets in, or when there's panic about economic collapse. It's not going to end because the United States has bombed 30,000 sites in Iran—that won't do it. Iran is now strategically positioned to—well, it's a crude term, but I think the poetry of it captures it—Iran's got the United States and the world by the balls. And anybody who's been in that position knows you don't have a lot of movement and you don't have a lot of choice; you sort of have to go along with what's being offered. Iran's first demand, I think, is the sanctions. Economic sanctions must be lifted. You know, Iran's calculus is this: if Iran does nothing, the economic sanctions will continue to impoverish Iran and the Iranian people.

Now Iran has put the rest of the world in the same position it was in—facing higher prices, raging inflation, and reduced supplies. And as such, those countries that are friendly with Iran are finding, you know what, they can get by with a little help from their friends. So Iran has every incentive to keep withholding the flow of oil, liquefied natural gas, and urea from the Persian Gulf. Understand that about one-third of the world's fertilizer basically depends on what comes out of the Persian Gulf—actually more than one-third. And right now, we're in planting season in the Northern Hemisphere. The vast majority of arable farmland in the world is above the equator, so it's planting season now.

And without fertilizer, some crops in certain areas won't grow. So when the planting season's over and the crops aren't growing, and then harvest comes, you're looking at food insecurity—food shortages—six or seven months down the road. That's going to happen; there will be food shortages in six months. That's guaranteed. The cost of oil and liquefied natural gas is already driving prices up

around the world. The U.S. should be one of the least affected, because the United States gets only a small amount of oil from the Persian Gulf. Yet where I live, I've seen about a seventy-cent increase in the price of gasoline per gallon in just a little more than a week, maybe a week and a half.

So if this keeps going at this rate, I'm going to go out later today and take a look, see if it's gone up even more. I suspect it has. Diesel has gone up \$1.30 in the last 12 days. So \$1.30—when you add that into the price of fuel for a diesel, you know, you've got 100 gallons in one of these trucks—and it's gone up a dollar, so you're adding an extra \$100 in costs. Well, that gets passed on to the people who pay for the food. Those trucks are hauling food and other goods, so transportation costs go up, and that's going to increase prices on those goods in stores. The things that are necessary, like eggs—okay, you're going to have to hold your nose and buy that. But other luxury items that you don't need, you'll say, "I'm going to take a pass. I'm not going to buy that." So this is going to bring this combination of stagflation—economic decline with rising prices.

It's a double whammy. We experienced it in the '70s, well before you were born. It's bad, and it's going to create a real political blowback on Donald Trump. I ran a game theory analysis last night, and it's published at sonar21.com. I encourage people to read it. Basically, I was asking the question: if Iran is threatened by Israel with the use of a nuclear weapon, what is Iran's best course of action? And the answer is, in addition to maintaining control over what goes in and out of the Strait of Hormuz, Iran should immediately build a nuclear weapon—covertly, more than one—and then announce it. So that Israel is on notice and the United States is on notice. "Okay, we now have the nuke—the nuke you've been afraid of all along. We've got it now, and we'll use it if necessary." That'll likely be the only thing that'll save...

#Danny

Iran from being a victim of a nuclear attack. I think this reality is becoming more and more clear as the war goes on—that no matter the limitations, no matter the number of humiliating events, no matter the public reaction or the disagreement of the general public, world public opinion, or U.S. public opinion—none of this seems to be stopping the U.S. and Israeli war of aggression right now against Iran. And as you said, the only thing that might temporarily halt it is the economic crisis, but that doesn't change the overall orientation that the U.S. and, of course, Israel have toward Iran. The conclusion you're making is that this war won't be what takes Iran down, but that it's the threat of a nuclear weapon—a nuclear strike—that will cause a lot of problems down the road.

#Larry Johnson

Well, it's certainly one factor that's being taken into serious consideration. The other thing to look at and realize is that the new leadership in Iran, under Mojtaba Khamenei—the son of Ali Khamenei—he is his father's son, and yet he's not. He's something I don't think Iran has had for several centuries: a warrior-prophet. Mojtaba came from a special family. I mean, when the Iran-Iraq War started—I want to put the country that started it up front, so the Iraq-Iran War—back in 1980,

Mojtaba was, I think, a 17-year-old boy. His father wasn't the supreme leader yet, but he was high up in the hierarchy, an advisor to Ayatollah Khomeini. In fact, Khomeini had designated Ali Khamenei to be his successor.

And, you know, we see how the sons of rich guys do. Hunter Biden—did he serve in the global war on terror only long enough to get a cocaine high and get kicked out? Uh, Eric Trump, Donald Trump Jr.? No. Hey, Barron Trump signing up now? No. So, you know, these favored sons—like that old song "Fortunate Son" talked about—they don't fight. Mojtaba Khamenei did. He started as a 17-year-old. He saw combat. He saw colleagues and friends die. He was shot at. I don't know if he was wounded, but he served honorably. And, you know, he's a man who knows what it is to actually be in a war and to face death. He adds to that his religious faith.

So Trump, you know, Trump and the idiot Americans who keep disparaging him think he's someone to take lightly, that he's in this position just because he's his daddy's boy. No, he's his own man. He proved his manhood. This guy walks around with a set of balls on him that Donald Trump would be envious of. So that's the first real mistake the West is making—misjudging him. And I think he's a man of quick decisions. I think they've figured out, just as in the scenario I laid out, the optimal strategy for them is to immediately get a nuke. If his goal is to protect and preserve Iran, get a nuke as fast as possible, because then you're in Kim Jong-un territory. There are limits to how much the West is, frankly, going to mess around with you.

#Danny

History is our guide. That's exactly what has happened with North Korea—with the DPRK. The U.S. has thought multiple times, not just once or twice, about attacking North Korea again, and has not, militarily at least. Sanctions, yes, but it's not even really in the national security strategy so much anymore. They talk more about China now than they do about North Korea at this point.

#Larry Johnson

The United States foolishly believes it can use brute force to compel Iran to surrender or change its behavior. But I think those threats of brute force are actually going to have the exact opposite effect. They'll make Iran realize it has to go even farther and inflict more pain on the United States. And that pain is going to come—on the economic front. This war is remaking not just the geographic face of the Middle East, or let's call it the geopolitical map. The previously strong alliance between the Gulf Arabs and the United States is dying right now. They realize they've been betrayed by the United States.

I fully anticipate that, at a minimum, Saudi Arabia—but maybe even the Qataris and the Emiratis—are going to follow suit and seek closer relations with Russia and China, no longer being dependent on the petrodollar. You know, they'll break free of that and move into something else. So this is, you know, the United States losing control of the narrative. And frankly, I think it's going to be weeks

before they can convince Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz to normal traffic. In that period of time, you're going to see the position of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar rapidly deteriorate, because they've depended in the past on being this sort of playground for the rich and famous.