

# Nuclear Power Plant Attack, Oil War Escalation, Restraint Off | Larry C. Johnson

The war is getting worse with the Israeli regime striking at nuclear power facilities in Iran. At the same time, Iran's parliamentary speaker announces 'eye for an eye' doctrine in the war. Clearly, the US/Israeli tag-team is has not given up on the dream of subduing Iran with a bombing campaign alone. Yet, as Larry Johnson points out, that didn't work even in the Second World War against Japan, and it's not succeeding now. So what's next? Join for a talk with Larry. Support us on Substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Our Store / Donations: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com> Support Larry here: <https://sonar21.com/contact-sonar21/#support> Larry on Substack: <https://substack.com/@larrycjohnson>

## #Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. My name is Pascal Lottaz, and today I'm joined again by Larry Johnson, the former CIA analyst. Larry, welcome back.

## #Larry C. Johnson

Hey, thanks for the invite. Glad I didn't wear out my welcome last time.

## #Pascal

No, you're doing fantastic work, and the insights we're getting from you are just stellar. So, it's Friday morning here in Japan, Thursday evening over there in Florida for you. What's the update? We talked last time exactly a week ago—what do you think we've learned in the war against Iran one week later?

## #Larry C. Johnson

It's escalating to the point of being out of control. The attacks yesterday by Israel on the gas field in Iran—which Iran had warned, "If you attack ours, we're going to attack yours"—and then the strike on the Bushehr nuclear plant that took out one of the power units, have really pushed things forward. I fully anticipate Iran will now retaliate, probably going after Dimona in Israel. This is escalating because Israel is growing more and more desperate. They really thought they had caught Iran. It looks like Mossad had actually recruited a senior Iranian official who was providing key information about the locations of top people in the Iranian government.

And Ismail Qaani was alleged to have been a Mossad agent and to have, you know, helped the Israelis target many of his colleagues. He was detained. I don't know if he committed suicide or was executed, but he's out of the picture. It was his conviction—his work—that led the Israelis to have such high confidence that they could actually decapitate the Islamic regime and build a new government around Qaani. That didn't happen. And Iran now is, you know, a complex society. It's not a one-man-pony society. As a result, basically every position in government—people have been told to select who's going to replace them down to seven levels. So they don't miss a beat. Somebody dies, somebody steps in to fill the position, and away they go.

## **#Pascal**

Go ahead. The resilience of the system has by now proven itself, right? With all the decapitation strikes, including the most recent one against the chief of the security forces, Ali Larijani, we just see that they keep going. Yet Hekseth, just a few hours ago, gave this bombastic speech saying everything is going according to plan—it's fantastic, it's awesome, we're pounding them. Turkey is going to be dead in a day since the start. What do you make of that? Is this hopium on their side, or are they actually planning to flatten Iran the way they flattened Gaza?

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

It's hopium and a lack of education. Even though Hegseth attended Princeton, which is a very prestigious school—one of the Ivy League schools—he obviously may have spent more time playing sports than reading books. You know, I wrote a piece the other night about the U.S. bombing campaign against Japan in the last six months of World War II, in 1945. It's a reminder of the limitations of a bombing campaign. That campaign started in March 1945 with the firebombing of Tokyo, which killed over 100,000 civilians, and it continued almost nonstop for the next six months—April, May, June, July, and then August. Now, you haven't—I don't think—let me ask you: when you were in high school and first learned about the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, did your instructors tell you that it was basically the U.S. dropping the bomb that brought the end of World War II with Japan?

## **#Pascal**

No, no. The thing is, the atomic bombs were always presented as part and parcel of how the war ended, or what happened near the end of the war. But the implication was always that it was the bombs. My own research—well, I'm quite convinced it was the entry of the Russians into the war, which happened on the same day as the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, on August 9th. That actually tilted the thinking in the bunkers in Tokyo among the militarists, those who wanted to preserve Japan. Because there was always a faction that wanted to sacrifice a hundred million

martyrs—right? Japan only had sixty million people at the time, but they just added forty million from Korea and said, “We’re all gonna die.” But that, then, was what changed the calculations in the bunker and led to the most successful surrender, I would argue, of the twentieth century.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Yeah. Well, the point I'm making there is you're correct. I thought Russia entered on August 8th, one day before Nagasaki.

## **#Pascal**

In the United States, it was probably August 8th, but in Japan it was the 9th—for the same reason that I’m speaking to you on March 20th while it’s the 19th over there. Time zones; we have the same problem.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Yeah. So in the United States, we're taught—brainwashed, really—that, oh yeah, it was dropping that bomb, that’s what did it. So they’ve got this mentality that all we have to do is, you know, bomb Iran into the Stone Age and they’ll surrender. Yet history shows that never works. Even in the case of the atomic weapons, it was the entry of the Soviet Red Army that tipped it. And as you correctly noted, what we’ve got going on here is that Texas still believes this myth that just by dropping enough bombs on Iran, they’re going to surrender. And, you know, the number I had for Japan’s population in 1945 was about seventy-one million.

But, you know, when you consider that Iran right now has about 91 or 92 million people—so Iran is not only bigger, about four times the geographic size of Japan, but it’s also got 20 million more people than Japan—the notion that, you know... And thank God the United States and Israel haven’t come close to killing anywhere near the hundreds of thousands that were killed by the Americans. But, you know, the other sort of sad part of this is that the U.S. has a tradition of killing civilians with air power, because it’s really easy from 25,000 feet to drop a bomb and kill people. You don’t have to see the blood, you don’t have to see the mangled limbs, you don’t have to smell the burnt flesh. So it’s easy to do. It’s like a video game.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, yeah. So, I mean, in a sense, this is what would make the war even more horrible for Iran. But all historical evidence points to this not actually changing the course of the government. I mean, you’d need a strategic shift, right? Something that would make it impossible for Iran to win. But strategically, right now, they do have the upper hand, because the United States is also getting hammered pretty badly, aren’t they?

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, yes, it is. If nothing else, it's the reputational damage, you know, because the mythology of the United States as this invincible foe is being exploited. Here's Iran, which has gone toe to toe not just with the United States, but with Israel. And we're now entering the third week—actually, the fourth week.

## **#Pascal**

We're done with the third week, or we're about to be in a day from now. But what do you make of that tweet yesterday—on Truth Social, by Donald Trump—where he actually said they're not going to allow Israel anymore to bomb Iran's oil fields, because they did so yesterday? And then Iran, very predictably, hit back again at the oil fields in Qatar. Qatar already confirmed about \$5 billion in damage, and it's going to take anywhere between two to five years to rebuild. So more than the damage in money, it's the damage in time that's going to restrict oil flows. And Trump apparently said, "No, no, no, this was not what was intended to happen," and for the first time kind of gave a de-escalation signal. And Israel actually confirmed that last night, saying they're holding off on strikes on the oil fields.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, the fact of the matter is, from people I know, the United States was fully briefed. They knew exactly what Israel was going to do and didn't stop them. So, you know, Trump can play dumb and pretend he didn't know, use it as a bargaining ploy. But the fact is, the United States did it.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah. I mean, it's again one of those moments—like the Ukrainian drones flying to the home of Vladimir Putin—and then Donald Trump going, "What? No, no, that cannot be. I'm quite shocked." It's plausible deniability, right? But it doesn't change the fact that Iran strikes back and just takes out the oil infrastructure. And this apparently, apparently really scares the U.S., doesn't it?

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, yeah. And this notion again that Trump has pushed—that Iran is completely defeated, 100% defeated, we've wiped out their air force—well, they never had much of an air force to start with. That wasn't key to their defensive strategy. We've wiped out their navy—again, Iran's navy was not, you know, they were not a blue-water navy. They weren't seeking to be. Real naval forces were designed to project power around the globe, or at least they used to be. And now we're running into that model again, which is no longer relevant in the modern world. It used to be that an aircraft carrier strike group gets near your coast and—oh my God—what are you going to do? Twenty years ago, you'd say, "Oh my God, let's give the United States what they want; we don't want to risk

getting attacked.” Now it’s the United States saying, “Stay off us—are we out of range of their cruise missiles and their ballistic missiles, etc.?” So, I mean, it’s been a real shift—and their drones—

## **#Pascal**

Hey, very brief intermission because I was recently banned from YouTube. And although I’m back, this could happen again at any time. 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. There was this news five or six days ago, or maybe already a week, that there was a fire on the Gerald Ford, the carrier, and that it originated in a laundry room. Do you believe that, or do you think the Iranians managed to strike it?

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

I think the Iranians managed to strike it. Andrei Martyanov—I don’t know if you know who he is—so Andrei, on his channel, put up a video the other day. He was discussing, I forget the particular ship, but it was another U.S. ship that, in a previous engagement—maybe in Vietnam, maybe in Korea—got hit with a missile. It burned for 19 hours before they got it out. So he’s saying, thirty hours over a laundry fire? You’re telling me some lint caught on fire, and it takes you thirty hours to put that out? I think something else happened. I’m not sure what, but the time required to put out that fire is almost twice as long as it took to put out a fire on a ship that was damaged in combat.

## **#Pascal**

So, of course, the position of U.S. forces at sea is quite a well-guarded secret, or at least not that easy to figure out. But do we know where these battle groups currently are and what they’re doing at the moment? Because it seems to me that all of the air campaign—is it actually launched from these ships, or are the air campaigns... No, I mean, that’s a ground... That’s the problem with them.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

So... the ships have to stay put right now. It looks like they’re about 500 miles offshore. Right. The combat radius of an F-35—so they’ve got the squadrons on board—is 600 miles. That means it could fly 300 miles out and then 300 miles back, with enough fuel to land on the carrier. Or it could fly out 600 miles, but then it would have to be refueled.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, you're not going to put a KC-135 refueling tanker over Iranian airspace, because it would get shot down. So that means if a plane takes off from a carrier, it flies about 300 miles off the shore of Iran, then gets refueled. It can fly another 300 miles in, but then it has to turn around, come back, and get refueled again to return to the carrier. That's why the refueling requirements for the aircraft—if the ships stay more than 500 miles offshore—really make them combat ineffective.

## **#Pascal**

So the notion that the air defenses over Iran are disabled is just not true. I mean, Iran isn't able to shoot down all incoming missiles, but they can shoot down some. And the U.S. is very much aware of that and is currently operating under the assumption that if their aircraft entered, they would be shot down.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Correct. They've been using munitions that—let's call them glide bombs or glide missiles. They're launched from an aircraft like the JASSM, the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile. I forget what all the acronyms stand for, but it can travel about 500 miles. A JDAM can travel 50 to 60 miles, so it has a much more limited range. Then you've got Tomahawk cruise missiles, but we're running out of those. Those were limited in production to start with. So this is the problem: the United States is trying to fight a modern industrial war without having the industrial base to do it.

## **#Pascal**

How many of these missiles and so on are left, would you say? You know, I was thinking about this the other day—maybe we're the ones making a mistake by saying again and again that the U.S. doesn't have this industrial capacity. What if the U.S. actually has a lot more of these things than we know about? That could cause Iran to underestimate U.S. and Israeli firepower.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, it's pretty difficult to hide that when it's in an open Department of Defense budget. They do have classified portions, sure, but then you've got the manufacturers—Lockheed Martin, for example, and Raytheon. They're publicly traded companies, so they report on their results: what they're producing and how much. That's where we get these numbers. The notion that they've got some secret facility where they're building ample supplies of these weapons—I seriously doubt that. What we know from public sources is that they started producing the THAAD, the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense weapon, back in 2007. So now, 19 or 20 years later, the total number produced is about 900. And when you fire at an incoming target, you've got to fire two of those THAADs.

So, in other words, we'd have enough if we'd never used a THAAD before—which isn't true; we have used it in the past in other situations. But if we had never used one, and we had the total complement of 900, that means it's capable of defeating 450 missiles—ballistic or cruise missiles. So how many missiles has Iran fired in the last 20 days? They've fired, on average, 50 a day. So that's a thousand, if my math's not off. Right? So right away, they've fired more missiles than the THAAD could shoot down. Similar—go ahead.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, no, I talked to Mohamed Marandi yesterday in Tehran, and he was saying, like, yeah, they're killing our leaders, but we just continue anyhow. And look, we haven't even started using our most powerful weapons yet. I mean, we're just going strategically—or we, I mean, the Iranians, because he's not in the government, of course. The Iranians are currently using the older versions. And, well, according to him, Iran also has not just underground bunkers but underground production facilities. So, as we speak, they're making more of them—that's his claim.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Oh, no, I think he's exactly right. You know, there's enough video online that Iran has put up that's not imaginary, because they recognize they couldn't fight and win against the United States on an above-ground basis. But they've got the advantage. And I know for a fact—because 20 years ago, when I was still doing support for the U.S. military—I was involved specifically in scripting an exercise that looked at how to attack an underground Iranian facility. So they've been doing this for more than 20 years.

## **#Pascal**

That matches very much with what Marandi says, because he says they started preparing for a war with the United States basically in the '90s, and then spent the last 30 years learning about U.S. tactics—because the U.S., of course, attacked everybody around them on both sides, from Afghanistan to Iraq to Syria. So they've had a lot of time to study U.S. military tactics. So, what do you think is the most likely scenario now that this war seems to be escalating? More attacks on civilians on one side, but on the other, I mean, Iran is probably just going to keep degrading U.S. infrastructure in the region, right?

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, that and Israeli infrastructure as well. It's much easier for Iran to bleed out Israel than for Israel to bleed out Iran. In Israel, you just focus on two cities—Tel Aviv and Haifa. That's 55, almost 60% of the population right there. Then take out the infrastructure, take out the airport—Ben Gurion. Again, they've got one airport, one civilian airport anyway—and take out the two ports. The

imported goods that flow into Israel come through either Haifa or Tel Aviv. Take them out, blow them up. By contrast, you're going to take out the airport in Tehran? All right, they've got at least ten other major airports throughout the country.

Okay, so they've got, you know, ten to twenty times the number of airports that Israel does. Their population—while Tehran has the majority, about twelve million people, roughly thirteen percent of Iran's population—is still spread out. It's not just one city. You take out one city, you don't take out Iran. You take out two cities in Israel, you basically take out Israel. So as Israel loses its air defense and missiles, and they're as depleted as the United States, Iran just keeps hitting them at critical nodes. It's not necessarily going to force Iran to surrender, but it's going to compel the Iranians to at least seek some sort of peace agreement, because they can't sustain that kind of damage over time.

**#Pascal**

The Israelis, you mean? Yeah.

**#Larry C. Johnson**

Yes.

**#Pascal**

Yeah. What do you make of the argument put forward by Brian Berletik that, look, it's not Israel that's wielding the power of the United States—not at all. It's Israel that's just serving as the attack dog of the U.S. and as a convenient excuse to do all of this. And overall, the strategy, according to at least one strategy paper by one of the think tanks, is to actually cut off China from oil flows and to really, primarily, hurt China—but to do so by attacking Iran. And that this is part of the whole onslaught strategy to push everybody, including, of course, Russia, into a corner from which they can then be picked off, all three of them, bit by bit.

**#Larry C. Johnson**

Now, I think—I know that's the analysis in the West—and I think the West grossly exaggerates China's dependence on foreign oil. China has moved aggressively into the era of electric power, with electric cars running on electricity, not petroleum. And China has matched that with unparalleled electric production throughout the country—nuclear, coal, wind, solar, and so on. I mean, Russia is light years ahead of the West combined in terms of electricity production. So they don't need gas, they don't need liquefied natural gas, they don't need petroleum to keep their economy running at a high rate.

**#Pascal**

Not to the same level as Western countries do. They still need it, of course—I mean, there are these huge industries that do need it—but not to the same, I mean, proportionally not to the same rate, is what you're saying. Yeah.

### **#Larry C. Johnson**

Right. It was different 20 years ago, okay? Yeah. If this were happening 20 years ago, China would be in very serious difficulty. But they're not. And again, they've got Russia. They don't need the Persian Gulf—they've got Russia right next door. And they're still building pipelines. You know, it's a good symbiotic relationship between the two. Because the other sort of unexpected benefit of the closure of the Persian Gulf has been—oh my goodness—it's injecting an enormous amount of cash into the Russian economy. With the cutoff of oil, Russia can now replace it. Same with liquefied natural gas, and the same with fertilizer. It's all going to be at a higher price, though. So for Russia, the sanctions are fading away. And now even Janet Yellen, the Treasury Secretary, admits the world needs Russia.

### **#Pascal**

I mean, it seems like such a huge strategic blunder that it's just difficult to wrap my mind around it. But do you think we now have to expect that the Middle Eastern—or West Asian—oil and gas supply, the energy supply from that entire region, is basically taken off the global grid? Or do you think we're still at a stage where the U.S. would want it to come back, in Iran and the others too?

### **#Larry C. Johnson**

I think it's off the grid for, you know, at least another three months. Right. And that's going to, again, as the impact of this hits and starts working its way through the system, you still have Western investors who've got their eyes closed and their fingers in their ears. They don't want to believe it. They think, "Oh yeah, any minute now, power's coming back, any minute now." And it's not. Iran has the—well, they have full control over the... in a way, they have control over the global economy now. They can make the case: "We're not the only ones who are going to suffer sanctions. The rest of you are going to suffer with us until such time as the sanctions against us are lifted."

### **#Pascal**

Right. So it seems to me that, for the first time in a long while, a country in that region actually has the ability to seriously punish Western economies for what they're doing. I mean, Iran is trying to do away with this notion of impunity—whatever we do to others, they can't do back to us. So they're kind of forcing a level playing field. Do you think that will be a strategy for them to move toward negotiations at some point, to wind this down in a way that not everybody in the region is completely obliterated? Because mutually assured destruction can't be the goal, right?

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Right. No, I think Trump's way out will basically be reviving the JCPOA. I mean, he's not going to call it the JCPOA, but the substance will be the same: the economic sanctions against Iran will be lifted, but there'll be a new clause—no more U.S. military presence in the region. And in exchange for that, they'll allow full inspection of their nuclear sites. So I can see Trump spinning this as, "Oh man, we've just achieved the greatest victory—Iran's surrendering."

But they're surrendering because, you know what, they're going to allow us full inspection so we can guarantee they'll never have a nuclear bomb. And therefore, we don't need to keep our troops in the Middle East. We can bring them home. We're going to save some money. So we're going to withdraw our troops because we've won—won a hundred percent victory. We don't need them anymore. And then we lift—the sanctions on Iran are lifted because Iran has agreed not to have a nuclear weapon. We've got it guaranteed. Thank God, America, we won. I can see that. But that's not—the reality of the story is, Iran won.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah. No, the most realistic way to wind down a war is if both sides can tell themselves they gave the other one an off-ramp and that they won, right? And the Iranians can say the same—like, we chased them out, we won. And the Americans say that. I mean, that would actually be a realistic way forward. But one more thing—I just wonder if there's a breaking point at which the Gulf monarchies might actually say, "America, we're hereby canceling our basing agreements with you," and signal to Iran that from now on they're going to be neutral. Because we know that at some point these proxy states do start negotiating. We know that from the Vietnam War—Dien, the president of South Vietnam, was actually killed over his secret negotiations with the North, with the tacit okay of JFK. But we know they were trying to get something going. Do you think the Gulf states, the proxies, might at some point try to do that?

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

I think the biggest one to be concerned about is Saudi Arabia. The United Arab Emirates—they're done. They're toast. They're not going to be relevant anymore. Right now, 83% of their economy is stalled. I mean, oil accounts for 25%, and then their services industry accounts for up to 58%. Yeah. So, you know, there's just no way they can sustain that. Let me give you the rundown of the services industry. They get about 15% to 16% of their GDP from wholesale and retail trade. Well, that's at a stop right now. So that's not happening.

## **#Pascal**

That's the UAE now.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Yeah, the UAE. The financial and insurance services—they've, you know, grown to about 9% in recent years. That's banking, fintech, insurance, wealth management. Again, they're at a standstill. They're not acquiring new clients, and the wealthiest are getting the hell out of there. Real estate activities—buying and selling of commercial property and condos, etc.—again, that's in reverse. People aren't likely to buy property in Dubai. Good God, that's like trying to buy beachfront property on an island filled with leprosy. Then tourism and hospitality.

Hello, tourists are not flocking to get into Dubai or Abu Dhabi—they're flocking to get out. Yep. And then, you know, transport, storage, and logistics. You've got one of the largest free trade zones at Jabal Ali. Well, they're not doing any business, because to have a free trade zone means ships are sailing in, offloading stuff, and then sailing away with stuff that was loaded on board. That's not happening. So what do you do with a nation that's 83% dependent on oil and services and can't do any of it? It's going to collapse. That's not a guess; that's just a basic numbers problem.

## **#Pascal**

I mean, that's why, for them—the Gulf states—they have to wind this down as soon as possible, for exactly that reason. And, you know, wars are like Corona: at some point, they end, and things can rebound. The difference is that during Corona, we didn't have damage to the physical infrastructure. Here, you have damage to the physical infrastructure. But anything can be rebuilt; they just need to end this as soon as possible. Or even if the overall structural conflict doesn't end, they need to figure out a way to take themselves out of the equation—out of the line of attack. So that's why I wonder whether, at some point, they'll try to negotiate that part with the Iranians, to say, like, "Look, from now on we won't host the U.S. anymore. Just stop shooting at us."

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Yeah, no, I think that's possible, though. Right now, the Saudis are making the exact opposite noise. They're talking about, "Okay, we're going to go to war with you." Okay, well, Saudis, what are you going to do? You don't have the youth of Saudi Arabia lining up to enlist in the Saudi army or the Saudi air force. You know, that's a mercenary place—they rely on foreigners to do all the dirty work and heavy lifting for them.

## **#Pascal**

So, do you have any sources telling you something about the Russian approach to this, or the Chinese approach? I talked to a Chinese scholar on Monday, but I wonder if you've heard anything about the cooperation going on between Iran and the other two.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

I haven't heard anything specific, other than just watching how Russia and China seem to be closely coordinating and talking, because they've got a problem in BRICS with India. China and Russia are going to have to figure out whether to tell India to take a hike—go away, go hang out with your Western buddies—or not. Saving Iran is critical for BRICS. I was fascinated listening to Joe Kent's interview, his responses to Tucker Carlson's questions last night, because he started talking about how part of an agreement with Iran would require Iran to do all oil transactions in dollars, not in renminbi. And he said that. So, you know, that tells me that's one of the issues being discussed within intelligence circles—that they recognize BRICS is a threat to the U.S. dollar. They're trying to save the U.S. dollar and hoping they can get leverage over Iran. But the problem is, Iran's got all the leverage right now.

## **#Pascal**

This interpretation would square with what I've heard from analyst colleagues in Latin America, who see what happened with Venezuela not as being about taking possession of the oil, but about getting the denomination of Venezuelan oil into U.S. dollars. And that seems to have been accomplished. It might be that this is also one of the main reasons for the Iran war—to make sure the oil, the petrodollar, stays afloat. But again, it doesn't seem to be going that way, unless we're completely misreading the war.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, Venezuela is a special case, because Venezuela was an inside job.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

I know this because my former business partner was directly involved in it, I found out. I mean, he's sort of retired, but he had three informants—three guys who had previously been DEA informants—who were right in the middle of Maduro's security detail. And those three guys basically turned off all the security, all the military resistance that could have been used against the United States. It was all done in a bid to get a \$50 million reward. The problem is, they got sniffed out by Donald Trump. Yeah.

## **#Pascal**

I got pitched one hypothesis, which the person said he can't prove, but that even Maduro was part of it—and that him being taken out was part of the whole deal. And those were like a hundred empty caskets, actually. Do you think there's anything to that?

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Possibly. I can't rule that out.

## **#Pascal**

And that's why they took him with his wife—because they're now going into retirement somewhere, maybe not too far from you.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, yeah. You know, what was so odd was all the pictures. Go back and look at all the different ones that were put out—he was at a Paris fashion show, for God's sake. He showed up with a different outfit every ten minutes.

## **#Pascal**

And he was perfectly prepared—shoes on, everything, suit on—ready to be kidnapped in the middle of the night, when you'd normally be wearing pajamas and so on.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Yeah. But Trump, in his own mind, created this fantasy that he thought Iran would be the same. And part of why they may have believed that is it appears that this IRGC general—the head of the IRGC, General Ismail Qaani, spelled Q-A-A-N-I—was actually a Mossad asset and had been used to identify meeting locations: where Soleimani was going to be when Soleimani was assassinated, where Nasrallah was when Nasrallah was assassinated, where the different officials were who were assassinated last June, and then the same here on April 28th. He'd be at those meetings and then he'd say, "Oh, got to go, you know, got another appointment," and he'd be out eight to ten minutes before a missile would strike. So maybe Trump was counting on having someone like Qaani in place—someone the United States could deal with, could control—and that it would make it easy to overthrow the Iranian regime. Well, that didn't happen.

## **#Pascal**

Who do you think is mainly in charge of the entire war from the U.S. side? Like, is it the Pentagon, obviously, or is there very heavy CIA involvement in the overall planning of the thing?

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

No, rarely have I seen the CIA come in and take part in planning any kind of military operation. Because, you know, frankly, the Department of Defense has its own version of the CIA. Yeah.

## **#Pascal**

Right.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

What do they need the CIA for? That's just a competing organization. The CIA's like the military—"we can do it all on our own, we don't need the CIA." Right.

## **#Pascal**

Right. Okay, so this is purely a Pentagon-run affair, and we see now that Pascal Lottaz is talking about maybe an additional 200 billion U.S. dollars that might have to be appropriated. That's in addition to the 1.5 trillion that's already foreseen for the military budget. This can't be very popular for much longer—or do you think Congress will actually do that under this configuration and—

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, the cynical view is that Congress is a group of prostitutes—they've been asked to perform, so they pay the money out and get the job done. Yeah. So again, it begs the question: if we're winning so greatly, why do you need another \$200 billion? I mean, you've won, right? Right.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, and it begs the question: if throwing more money at the problem is actually going to solve it. I mean, if it doesn't, then you could throw two trillion at it—it just won't matter, right, if you can't produce the stuff you need. So that's, I guess, the real question in the background.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Yeah, and that's, you know, ultimately going to be more, I think, of an economic war than the actual fighting part. The United States is going to run out of targets to hit, and Iran is learning with each attack what to do and what not to do. Israel, again, is the one that's going to suffer the most from the damage, simply by virtue of its size. It's tiny. You know, when you've got nine to ten million people living basically in three large cities, it's not hard to imagine that you're more vulnerable than a country of ninety-one million, spread out over territory that's easily twelve or thirteen times larger. Yeah.

## **#Pascal**

No, absolutely. But then maybe, just to move toward the end of this interview, what's your interpretation of the way the war has been fought so far? Because the fact that Iran didn't launch

mass attacks on civilians in Haifa and Tel Aviv also tells us something. They didn't attack the nuclear power plants either, and there's a whole range of targets they haven't gone after yet. That's part of strategic signaling. We know the Iranians are actually very constrained—not only in the mass killing they carry out, but also in the infrastructure they choose to target. So how are you interpreting the missile negotiations we're seeing?

### **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, this goes into the fundamental misunderstanding the West has about Iran. And it starts—let's go back to the beginning of the Iraq-Iran war in September 1980. That war began with the encouragement of the United States. There was never a formal document proving that, but it was a natural step because the U.S. was trying to pressure Iran to release the American hostages. The Reagan administration doubled down on that policy and provided the chemical precursors for weapons that were first used in Iran in August 1983, and then used 19 more times after that, until August 1988, when peace was finally negotiated.

### **#Larry C. Johnson**

What's fascinating is that during that entire time, when Iran was being hit with chemical weapons, Iran never retaliated with chemical weapons. They didn't have them, and they didn't try to develop them. It goes back to the concept of haram—the sin. They were not going to commit a sin against God, which is how they saw it. So, actually, Iran fights wars with some ethical limitations.

### **#Pascal**

Yep.

### **#Larry C. Johnson**

And some could argue that disadvantages them. But again, I think they showed themselves for what they were in that instance—by not killing civilians deliberately and not using a weapon that could cause mass casualties without being able to control it.

### **#Pascal**

But, you know, that's the thing. I mean, I think people actually know that—the war planners in Tel Aviv and in the Pentagon. They're aware of this, and they're using Iran's restraint to their advantage by saying, "OK, we're much less constrained than they are, so let's hit them harder." But Pascal Lottaz has actually said, this is not a fair fight—we beat them when they're down. Yeah. What do you think Iran is trying to do to offset that kind of self-imposed limitation? Which, I mean, I'm glad they have, because killing civilians is always a terrible crime against humanity. But what do you think they're now trying to achieve?

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, I don't think they're going to back away from that. We just saw that with the Western attack on the desalination plant in Iran, and Iran did not retaliate in kind against the Gulf Arabs—knowing that if they knocked out the desalination plants in those countries, people would die. They don't have enough fresh water. So I think throughout all of this, you know, they've tried very hard—Iran's tried very hard—to maintain their moral integrity and adhere to Islamic law, Islamic principles. And actually, I think that's going to be their ultimate strength. That's why they'll prevail over the West in this case, because I think the West, particularly the United States, is going to run out of gas. They'll lose the energy they need to sustain the war at the tempo that Iran's going to dictate.

## **#Pascal**

Right, all right then. All we can do is wait and see, unfortunately. But Larry, thank you so much for all of these insights. And if people want to find you, they should go to your homepage—Sonar21, sonar21.com. Any other place you'd like people to go?

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

I'm also on Substack—again, it's at Sonar21—and the same for Patreon. But the easiest is sonar21.com, and you're there.

## **#Pascal**

Everybody, just look up Sonar21—subscribe to Larry, subscribe to his Patreon and Substack. And again, Larry was kicked off YouTube, so please do support him on these other channels. Larry Johnson, thank you so much for your time today.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

Well, thank you, Pascal. And hey, by the way, did you see YouTube kicked off Rick Sanchez?

## **#Pascal**

Oh, yes. Yes.

## **#Larry C. Johnson**

They banned his YouTube channel, and he's now on BitChute.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, they're coming after the journalists, very expectedly. No, it's bad. It's bad. I hope Rick Sanchez—I hope some people get back. I mean, sometimes it happens; it was possible for me. I hope others can come back. But yeah, yeah.

**#Larry C. Johnson**

I appreciate your work and look forward to chatting again.

**#Pascal**

Look forward to seeing you again. Thank you, Larry. Bye-bye.

**#Larry C. Johnson**

Bye, my friend. Have a good day.