

# Iran TAKES DOWN F-35, Rains Missile HELL on Israel | Johnson & Wilkerson

Former CIA analyst Larry Johnson and Col. Lawrence Wilkerson discuss the Iranian downing of a US F-35 fighter jet and the intense missile fire over Israel as the war backfires on Trump. Larry Johnson blog: <https://sonar21.com/> PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: [chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com](https://chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com) Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #trump #israel #hezbollah

## #Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. I have with me former CIA analyst and geopolitical commentator Larry Johnson, and former chief of staff for Colin Powell, retired Army Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson. Gentlemen, thanks so much for joining me today. Hey, glad we're still alive.

## #Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah.

## #Larry Johnson

Yeah.

## #Danny

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, we have a lot to get to with the latest updates on the Iran war. So everyone, hit the like button as we get started here. First, I just wanted to go over the latest developments regarding the F-35 that was shot down over Iranian airspace. Just hours before that report came out, Donald Trump said this, which contrasts quite a bit with the reality of the situation. But here we go.

## #Donald Trump

They've just about obliterated everything there is, including the leadership. Their Navy's gone, their Air Force is gone, their anti-aircraft equipment is gone. We're flying wherever we want. We don't have anybody even shooting at us.

## **#Danny**

So that was the commentary from Donald Trump. And then, finally, here's the ABC News report on the F-35 being shot down just hours after he made that statement.

## **#Speaker 01**

For the first time in this war, an F-35 stealth fighter jet was struck during a combat mission over Iran. The pilot made an emergency landing at a U.S. base in the region and is now in stable condition. But there are serious questions about how a stealth plane—nearly invisible to radar and costing roughly \$100 million—could have been hit after three weeks of relentless bombardment of the Iranian military. Overnight, Israel and Iran traded yet more attacks.

## **#Danny**

So Trump originally denied that to begin with—that was how they framed it, Larry and Colonel Wilkerson. But there are reports and more evidence suggesting that not only did Iran take this down, but that it was not necessarily a very—how should I say—smooth landing for the F-35. According to some reports, there were shrapnel injuries, and a Chinook was seen circling the Saudi desert, possibly looking for the crashed F-35. So, Larry, what do you know about this situation? What does it tell you? And maybe, where do you think this war is now, as we're getting close to the third week?

## **#Larry Johnson**

Well, I have to go Sergeant Schultz on you—I know nothing. You know, look, I've seen the reports from the Iranian side, and I've seen the denials from the U.S. side, or rather, the U.S. admitting that it crashed, that it landed. I think if it had been hit full-on with a missile, it would have come apart; it wouldn't have stayed intact. But how do we know if it landed? Because we've got a clear track record of Central Command lying. They lied about the KC-135 that was shot down—yeah, that was shot down—but they claimed it was a midair collision.

So they lied about that. They lied about the KC-135s that were on the ground at Prince Sultan, their base, claiming that only four suffered minor damage. No, they suffered significant damage. They're no longer mission capable. So, you know, is it conceivable that Iran still has an active air defense system? Yeah. Yeah. And, you know, I'm not sure what hit the plane or how it hit it, but if it was able to fly away and land, then whatever hit it didn't cause catastrophic destruction.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, Colonel Wilkerson, what do you make of this development, and what does it tell you about where this war stands right now?

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

I'm like Larry—I have no insight into whether it happened, how it happened, or what the disposition of the airplane is. I can tell you this, though: we were shocked. I happened to be in the first Marine Corps War College seminar—probably the first seminar ever—after we had that great book. I forget the name of the author; I shouldn't, because he's a terrific guy. I had him come to my seminar and speak. He outed the NSA. They had to make a decision after he wrote that book and revealed so much of their covert situation, along with the NRO, that they opened up. I had petitioned them for years before, as had my predecessor, and they wouldn't let us visit. We visited almost everything else in the government hierarchy except the NSA and the NRO. Well, about the same time, they both opened up and let us visit.

So we took a seminar and had to go through—God knows—security clearances and everything else, even though all of my Marines and airmen and such had TS or higher, code word, special compartment, those sorts of things. And when we got in there, we got in at a most propitious time to learn something the NSA had just discovered, and I don't think the rest of the security community had learned it yet. They would subsequently learn, and all manner of lies would come out of that community, but I think we got the truth in that briefing at the NSA. What we heard was that these dumb Serbs on the ground had figured out they could find an old radar—World War II—vintage radar.

And if they were really careful in looking at the sweeps of that radar, they could find a little blip that was the stealth fighter, the F-117, at that time. And they found one and shot it down. Then they found another one and shot it down, and we quit because they beat us. They beat us with old, old technology. I don't know if that applies here, but I'm just suggesting that technology isn't everything it's cracked up to be once it meets the war, the exigencies of that war, and creative people on the other side. No advantage lasts very long, in other words.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, well, especially as this war drags on, Larry, what does it tell you about how the U.S. is conducting it now? Because for a long time I've heard that the U.S. was largely standing off, avoiding the range or the capabilities of Iran's air defenses. Now, there are some who believe they've had to enter directly into Iran's airspace, making them more vulnerable. And then there's this report here that says Iran possibly—now, this isn't verified, it's just one source from \*Military Watch\* magazine—used the Majid heat-seeking missile system to take out the U.S. F-35. Not sure what that is; I don't know, Larry, if you know what it is. But it's an air defense system, I guess, that's indigenous to Iran. And a lot of Iranian sources, of course, have said they were using their own air defense systems to shoot this down. But what does that tell you about how the U.S. is fighting this war now, as it drags on? I mean, we're entering the third week here.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Well, we've learned nothing from history. Most Americans are raised with the notion that the use of air power brought an end to the war in the Pacific in World War II—that it was because of our relentless bombing of Japan that the Japanese gave up. But the documents from the actual Japanese general staff tell a different story. It's true that the United States started a relentless bombing campaign on the main islands in March of 1945. The first big one was the firebombing of Tokyo, which killed over 100,000 Japanese. And we continued that bombing campaign through March, April, May, June, and July. The atomic bomb was dropped first on Hiroshima on August 6th, and then on Nagasaki on August 9th.

And so, as Americans tell the story—we're propagandized from middle school through high school—that it was the use of the atomic bomb that pushed the Japanese over the edge. But the reality was that the Red Army, the Soviets, entered the war on August 8th—or, depending on which side of the international dateline you're on, August 8th or 9th—and immediately attacked Japanese forces in Manchuria, decimating them. The documents from the Japanese general staff show that up to that point, they had held out hope they could negotiate an independent surrender or make a deal with the Russians, splitting the Soviets off from the United States. Well, that failed. And it was that—the ground intervention by the Russians—that finally tipped it over. So here's the United States.

Once again, we're going to bomb them back to the Stone Age. Yeah, good luck with that. We tried that in Vietnam, and that didn't turn out so well. Up to this point, we've dropped glide bombs or JASSMs from outside Iranian territory. To my knowledge, we're still not overflying Iranian territory, because I think they still have functioning air defense systems. So the SEAD missions—the "suppress enemy air defense" operations—haven't worked. And that's why you're now hearing all this public talk about ground forces in Iran. I mean, the level of incompetence being displayed by the Trump administration separates it from any other president in our history for sheer negligence and incompetence, especially when it comes to military affairs.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, well, Colonel Wilkerson, you know, I wanted to show that Iran—it's not only that they've taken down, I mean, I think reports say 16 or 17 or so U.S. aircraft, between drones and this F-35 and the KC-135 tanker.

## **#Danny**

Don't forget the F-15s. It might have been the Kuwaitis—yeah, it might have been the Kuwaitis. It might have been the Iranians. Who knows at this point? But exactly. It's not just this, Colonel Wilkerson. Iran is hitting everywhere. In particular, the ones facing the most brutal attacks right now, in retaliation, are the Israelis. In the last 24 to 48 hours, there are reports that Iran is just raining hell on Israel—that the radars or alert systems are only going off sometimes as little as a couple of minutes before the missiles come down. I'll show a bit of imagery of what's going on, but talk about what this means for Israel. There are even images coming in now of Haifa—the oil

refinery—having been hit very hard, in conjunction with Iran’s attacks on energy infrastructure across the region. So maybe you can respond to this.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Let me say first, that author’s name was Jim Bamford. I can’t believe I forgot it—he’ll kill me if he listens to this. Everything I’m hearing from Israel indicates to me that one of the smartest things they did, if you will—and are doing, though it’s becoming very onerous on their people—is building so many bunkers, going underground. Because if they were above ground, say, for example, like most in Tehran probably were—those ten million or so in Tehran—when the bombing commenced, there would be bodies everywhere. Probably a good three to four percent of the Israeli population would be dead or wounded. But the fact that they have these bomb shelters, though, has its own limitations.

I’m hearing that people are getting very restless. They’re getting really irritated about having to stay in these bomb shelters or keep going back to them. At first, they were running to them when the sirens went off, but as you said, the sirens aren’t very effective anymore. So now they’re just staying in the shelters and not coming out. This can get old very quickly, especially for people who aren’t used to it or never imagined that Netanyahu would put them in this situation—that they’d ever find themselves like this. So I think there’s a morale problem now in Israel among the general public.

You also have tremendous destruction above ground, so when someone does come out—as I saw in a smuggled video recently—there was, I don’t remember if it was a New York Times reporter or a CNN reporter, someone who somehow managed to squirrel her way in there and had taken a cell phone picture, apparently. But there was also video from someone else who was filming. You saw this woman come out of the bomb shelter, someone in security gear ran over to her, tried to grab her and get her back in, and she resisted. And the next thing you know, they disappeared.

I don’t know whether they were killed or not, but they disappeared in smoke and fire. So I think it’s that sort of situation for Israel right now. And it’s not going to get any better, because more and more you’re not seeing anything going up, and you’re seeing lots coming down. The most impressive one I watched—at least it was purported to be, and I assume it was, because I’ve never seen anything like it—was the Karam Shah-4, or whatever it’s called. The one that comes in at three or four times the speed of sound and has this capability for multiple entry—not like our MIRV, but it sounds more like a MIRV system than a cluster bomb. It lets 30 or 40 other projectiles go out.

I don’t know exactly how accurate they are, but if it’s 30 or 40 and they have the detonative effect that I saw, then it’s pretty formidable. It’s a huge square that gets penetrated and bombed. It reminded me, when I first saw it, of the MLRS—the multiple launch rocket system—we had just put in the field at Grafenwoehr, demonstrating what it could do to a column of Soviet tanks coming

through the Fulda Gap or wherever. I said to myself at that point, and to the two people on my left and right, nothing could have lived through that. It was incredible. Well, that's what this thing is. And these things are hitting Israel with regularity now.

## **#Danny**

Yeah. Larry, what do you make of this—especially the fact that every single day Iran is hitting Israel, every single day Iran is striking across the region? And there are reports that it's not only not stopping, but that Iran is actually increasing, even if only slightly or steadily, the volume of its volleys again. What do you make of that, especially given the energy situation that's causing panic all across the West?

## **#Larry Johnson**

Well, I'm very disturbed by the Iranians. I mean, obviously, they're not listening to Donald Trump, and they're not listening to Benjamin Netanyahu. Their missile capability has been wiped out—don't they realize that? I mean, for God's sake, wake up. You can't keep launching missiles you don't have. I'm sorry, but the absurdity of this... And we're seeing a replay of what we saw in Ukraine back in 2022. There were breathless reports in Western media every day—"Oh, Russia's just days from running out of missiles." Meanwhile, the ones actually running out of missiles are the United States and Israel, with respect to air defense missiles. They're being depleted—rapidly depleted. In fact, I know in one particular area, they were depleted last week.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

I didn't see any come up in this—maybe a 30-second episode. Not a single one.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Yeah, yeah. So Iran has now launched its 68th wave of attacks. They're averaging about 3.5 separate missile attacks per day, and each one of those carries at least 20 missiles. So figure they're firing 60 to 100 missiles a day. Well, okay, we're now on day 21—three weeks in and starting the fourth week. So, you know, averaging 100 a day, that's about 2,100, right? So Iran obviously has a larger stash of missiles than the West had anticipated. But I don't see how they could have made that mistake, because I was saying last June that Iran's production and storage are underground. They've moved away from having to use mobile launchers to fire.

They figured out how to build silos they can launch from underground and then reload from those silos without anything on the surface revealing where the missile actually is, making it very difficult for the United States to target them. And they've been very systematic—going after U.S. military bases, radar, aircraft and storage facilities. Now, as their gas production facility at South Pars was hit, they turned around and taken out Qatar's. So now Qatar can't just turn it back on; it's going to

be down for quite some time. And they're regularly hitting infrastructure—both military and critical economic targets—such as ports, refineries, and the airport in Israel.

So, you know, Iran's quite content. And meanwhile, they hold control over the Strait of Hormuz. I read yesterday—I haven't seen it confirmed—but apparently even the Japanese, who are heavily dependent on oil coming out of the Persian Gulf, agreed to buy petroleum from Iran with Chinese yuan, the Chinese currency. So while the new prime minister of Japan is running around Washington giving Donald Trump back rubs and foot massages and telling him what an incredible person he is, the Japanese practically stiffed the U.S. petrodollar in favor of boosting China's effort to exert more control over it. So it's really not going well for the United States.

## **#Danny**

No, it definitely isn't. And there was that horror—I don't have the video—but Takeuchi's sitting right next to Donald Trump when he responds to a question about why he didn't tell anyone about launching this war. And he goes, "Well, I wanted it to be a surprise. Japan knows all about surprises—remember Pearl Harbor?" I mean, the optics of all this are looking quite bad. But Colonel Wilkerson, beyond the optics, to reinforce what Larry said and your reaction to it—here's a report from *\*The Economist\** saying that the cost of replacing the first four days' worth of munitions alone would be twenty to twenty-six billion dollars.

However, the problem has more to do with scarcity. The U.S. has burned through 300 Tomahawk cruise missiles, and the Pentagon planned to buy just 57 new ones in the current fiscal year. There's been no delivery of that interceptor since 2023, and they haven't placed any new orders. Only a puny 39 interceptors are slated for delivery in 2027—six years after they were ordered. And Colonel Wilkerson, it's my understanding that not only have a lot of these interceptors been used, but many of their radars have been completely destroyed as well, all across the region. So, your reaction to where the U.S. stands right now—militarily, the U.S. and Israel—and anything you want to respond to, Larry?

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Well, there are several things I think are true here. One of them is that they're lying at the Pentagon—that's the first real problem they've got. Second, many of these systems, especially the multimillion-dollar, in some cases \$300-million, radars and other similar setups, were destroyed quite smartly by Iran early on, in various countries too—without, in most cases, doing much damage to surrounding facilities, equipment, or people. In other words, they just took out the radars. Those systems require minerals that China has about a 98% lock on, and I'm sure they won't turn any loose for us to build more.

So even if you could get the production line up, if you could put, you know, double or triple shifts on it, if you had the trained workers—if you could do all of that—you still don't have the necessary

ingredients to build it. Now, I understand they have a task force working right now around the clock. I guess that means eight hours a day, 24 hours—I wouldn't, I'd be surprised if they could actually get that work done—trying to find other sources or other materials they can supplement, exchange, or substitute for the key materials that China controls. And it's not just one particular item; it's about three or four, as I understand it.

One of them, though—gallium, I think it is, or however you say that—they have about a 96 or 97% lock on. So you're not going to get that one, for sure, probably. They've got all these different impediments. And as I've said before, this business of making Tomahawks, for example, that's a crystal-clear case if you want to look at it. Just Google it, and you can find the latest stats on what Tomahawk production is for the Navy, the Air Force, even the Army, because they have a version for them now. And you can see that it's ages and ages hence. Now, can they speed this up?

Can they call RTX, Lockheed, and others in and say, "Speed this up"? Apparently, Trump's already done that in his meeting at Mar-a-Lago with these salivating defense contract CEOs. But you can only speed it up so much, and we're firing it fast enough that their production rate—however good it might be eventually—is going to have a hard time keeping up. I don't see how they planned for this being a long war. That's my ultimate statement. They did not plan for it being even a month-long war. They planned for it being quick and over, and it isn't going to be. And on the other side of that coin, it may be a very long war.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and Larry, to what Colonel Wilkerson was saying—just to pull this up because it's coming out now—according to Donald Trump, as we're speaking, he's saying, and I can't believe this, he's saying that the U.S. could end military operations right now but will continue so Iran can never rebuild. He's saying that Israel and the U.S. share similar goals in this war, and that it's unacceptable to end it right now because if the U.S. does, Iran will be able to rebuild at some point in the near or distant future. And he wants to make sure that never happens.

But Colonel Wilkerson just laid out some huge limitations. So, your reaction to this—especially in light of the reports, Larry—that there are multiple fronts the U.S. military is trying to open. They're sending helicopters and other aircraft to try to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, and they're rushing thousands of Marines to the Middle East to do something. We don't really know quite what; there are conflicting reports. So, your reaction to all of this? Tell him how they're rushing them. Yeah, how are they rushing them? How are they rushing these Marines, anyway?

## **#Larry Johnson**

No, look, I agree with everything Colonel Wilkerson said. So let's step back and try to figure out what in the world Trump and Netanyahu are trying to do. They're openly talking about putting U.S. troops on the ground in Iran. In previous U.S.—let's call them military expeditions—like the invasion

of Normandy on D-Day, we weren't announcing that we were going to land there. If anything, we ran a deception operation to make the Germans think we were going to land up at Pas-de-Calais, to the north. Patton even constructed a whole mythical army, with message traffic and everything, to convince the Germans of that so we could gain an advantage by landing in Normandy.

So I can't rule out the possibility that all this talk about sending the Marines is just a charade—it's a deception operation. I put that as one possibility. But that means we're preparing to try to do something else, and that "something else" has been talked about. It's an exercise I worked on 20 years ago, where basically you put Delta Force into Iran to try to capture one of the uranium storage locations and take custody of it. And I sure hope to God we're not trying to do that, because the lesson from that exercise—and nothing's changed in the intervening 20 years—is: don't do it. There are too many things that can go wrong.

And, you know, one of my buddies was a young Ranger, doing patrol on the hostage rescue attempt—you know, when the helicopter crashed into the C-130 out in the deserts of Iran back in 1980. Yeah, my buddy Mike, who was then a Ranger and later went on to become a Delta sniper, he was there. You know, we had good intentions, but we sort of screwed the goat in that process. So now, let's look—if it's not a deception operation and they're genuinely talking about sending troops, so far I've heard about two different MEUs, the Marine Expeditionary Units. A MEU consists of about 2,200 Marines, and one's supposedly coming out of Okinawa.

The other one's coming out of San Diego. The one from Okinawa is going to take about two weeks for that unit to arrive on scene, so let's say two weeks from today—we'll be in April. Likewise, the one from San Diego—actually, I was surprised by this. I had thought maybe the easiest way would be for San Diego to just start sailing west. No, they go down through the Panama Canal, sail across the Atlantic, go through the Mediterranean into the Suez Canal, then down through the Red Sea, and then they'll get on station to do whatever. Well, you know, the Chinese know that, the Russians know that, and I'm sure they're sharing it with the Iranians.

If that group of Marines is actually sailing that route, and it turns out the United States is serious about trying to put them ashore, then I wouldn't be surprised to see that ship sunk in the Red Sea before it even has a chance to get on station. Plus, it's going to take about 17 to 19 days to get there. So again, we've got all these breathless news reports about, "Oh, they're sending troops." They're not getting there anytime soon, folks, so don't hold your breath. We don't have Star Trek transportation capabilities—no instant "beam me up, Scotty." None of that's happening.

But if they really are planning to use these guys militarily, we're talking a maximum of 4,400 Marines—that's what they've announced. Well, compare that to the D-Day operations on the Normandy coast. That involved 165,000 troops landing, not counting the paratroopers who had already gone in earlier that night and were inland. And the U.S. was going up against defended

positions, just as there are defended positions all along the Strait of Hormuz. The beach area we attacked on D-Day was about 50 miles from north to south; the Strait of Hormuz is more than 100 miles north to south. So we had 165,000 troops and still had trouble establishing a beachhead.

## **#Larry Johnson**

And so now we're going to send 4,400 up against defended positions, and they're somehow going to magically make the Iranians back down. This is madness—absolute madness.

## **#Danny**

Yeah.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Oh, sorry, Colonel. Hold on. Huge demonstration yesterday outside Sana'a. The Houthis are up in arms now—they're ready to go again. I was wondering when they were going to enter the fray. I knew they probably would, sooner or later, but apparently they've made a decision, and this was sort of the ceremonial announcement of that decision. So I'm not sure I'd want to be passing through the Red Sea.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, I mean, that's the thing. The Houthis—Ansar Allah—Colonel Wilkerson, they've also said that if the Gulf states try to use their air interceptors to take down missiles heading toward Israel, they're going to start fighting. It seems like they're itching, especially to get back into the fight with Saudi Arabia. I'm sure. Which, of course, they have some history there to settle—a bit of a vendetta. Yeah. So, yeah, I wouldn't want to. But Colonel Wilkerson, your reaction to this? Because there's also talk of Kharg Island—talk that maybe that's going to be the operation, that these Marines and U.S. forces will be sent there to occupy the oil crown jewel, or "energy crown jewel," as the U.S. mainstream media is calling it.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

The Forbidden Island is what the Persian poet calls it—or the Lost Pearl, the lost pearl of the Persian Gulf, or something like that. The only way I could see that being feasible—and Larry and I talked about this with Nima earlier—would be to fly Marines in on Ospreys, or, you know, a combination of Ospreys and their MH version of the Black Hawk. And that would be really ripe for total destruction of that air element. If the Iranians were at least, let's put it this way, in range, with the right missiles and timing, you'd be annihilated. You probably wouldn't even be able to get on the ground. And if you did get on the ground, you'd be annihilated right afterward.

So I can't—you know, we did this all the time at the Amphibious Warfare School. We used the AWS at the War College and then at the Command and Staff College to do demonstrations when we were talking about big amphibious ops. One of the things you might want to keep in mind is that about 50% of even the Corps at that time—and I'd say a much higher percentage in the other services, and in the joint community above all the services—would tell you amphibious operations have seen their day. They're not going to happen again, because if they do, everyone involved in the amphibious operation itself is going to die. And maybe some of the ships supporting it are going to die too.

And this is all because of what we've seen so clearly demonstrated in Ukraine, and now beginning to be shown in this war. Missiles dominate Ukraine. Drones dominate. And if you have them in sufficient quantities—accurate enough and deadly enough—and the Iranians have proven ten times over that they do, you can devastate anyone trying this more or less traditional approach. However, the Marines may cling to it. A good comment on that is how the Navy has refused to fund many of their requests for new amphibious ships and such. In fact, these are what's left. This is really what's left. It's just not a manner of warfare I'd be contemplating, particularly not in these circumstances.

Now, if you're going ashore in a Third World—Fourth World, pardon the phrase, but we used to use it all the time—country with not much of a military, and they've got a nice sandy beach you can roll up on, like they do at San Diego when they practice, or in Southern California—yeah, okay, but that's passé. That's gone, unless you're going up against a fourth-, fifth-, or sixth-rate power, militarily speaking. Iran's not that now. They've proven it. They've substantiated it. It may be in a niche way, but that niche happens to be battlefield-dominant right now. So I don't know how you'd do this without getting a lot of people killed—mostly Marines.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, I mean, that's what I was wondering about, Larry. You know, Responsible Statecraft wrote about this a few days ago in reaction to the news. And now there are more reports that this is serious planning going on—planning, if we can call it that—in the Trump administration. But Harrison Mann, who's a former Army major, says seizing Iran's crown jewel would be a suicide mission, and that Operation Hold Iran's Oil Hostage—by taking over Karg Island—would end up delivering the regime hostages of its own, referring to those who would be participating in the operation. Larry, your assessment of this as well, if you can add.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Well, again, we're not learning anything from history. We saw in the Black Sea that both the Russians and Ukrainians had a learning experience with that outcrop of rock in the middle of the sea called Snake Island. Early on, the Russians were there, the Ukrainians attacked it, the Russians held for a while, and then they withdrew. The Ukrainians climbed on board, and then they ended up abandoning the rock because—you know, you could shell it all day long with naval gunfire, drones,

missiles, and glide bombs. And even if you were hiding out in a bunker on the island, what are you going to do? So this whole fantasy about taking Karg Island—the United States is suffering from a multiple personality disorder.

On the one hand, you've got those advocating, "Oh, we've got to shut it down because that's going to cripple Iran's ability to export oil." But then you've got Scott Bessett saying, "Oh no, no, we need to lift the sanctions on Iran so it can ship oil to keep supplies up and not crush the world economy." Like, okay, guys, which is it? You want to cripple Iran by shutting down its oil, and if you do that, Iran's vowed, "Okay, we'll shut down everybody else." So you'd be taking 20–25% of the world's petroleum off the market right away—boom—and it wouldn't be back anytime soon, particularly given that it's going to take any U.S. Marines headed there two-plus weeks to arrive now.

So this is, you know, the United States setting up—they can't figure out what they want to do with a ground mission. And again, let's go back to history. Iraq tried for eight years to invade and take territory in Iran, and failed, losing hundreds of thousands of soldiers in the process. The United States thinks, with its puny little force—and I don't care even if all the news about the Marines moving or the 82nd Airborne moving is intended as deception and they're actually going to try something with an even smaller force—this ain't Hollywood. You know, SEAL Team 6 and Delta Force can be the stars of the show in a Hollywood movie, but they're not going to run off with Iran's nuclear capability. That's not going to happen.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, Colonel Wilkerson, any further comment on this? I mean, I think we're looking at a major crisis on the U.S. side that the Trump administration seems to be whistling past. And we haven't even discussed the energy part of this, because oil prices are absolutely skyrocketing. What Iran did to Qatar Energy alone—that critical hub—they're saying months, according to the Western mainstream media, before it's operable at all, and years before it's fully operable. So that's a major hit. And Bloomberg is saying that no matter what happens, even if this war ended tomorrow, it would take months, if not years, to recover. And it's not going to end tomorrow. So, your reaction to the economic side of this and how it relates to the military developments we're seeing?

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Well, I saw this up close and personal in a very vivid way. I think I've spoken about this before—something called a petroleum disruption exercise. We ran it at the new Ritz-Carlton in the financial district of Beijing in January or February of 2009. We had all of what we would call the peer and near-peer powers there. We had MARAD there, we had Lloyd's of London, we had AIG, we had the U.S. shippers group—I forget what you call it, but it's all the major shipping companies in the world, chaired at that time by the U.S. We had all kinds of expertise there in maritime affairs and in oil and gas. And we just did two things. It was about a week-long exercise, and we did two things.

We took down a tanker in the Strait of Malacca. We got everybody interested in the techniques of the exercise and so forth through that scenario. We did a little bit of damage. We brought in the Five Power Defence Arrangements—it was inadequate. We had the United States Navy involved. And incidentally, at that particular time—and I go back to this when I want to talk about better times—the Chinese actually agreed that the United States Navy, along with some of theirs and maybe some Russians and others, would lead it, because it was the preeminent sea force, the one most able to calm tensions and bring the markets back into shape.

Even two or three days in, they were showing signs that no shippers would go that way—and that's a lot of shipping. No insurers would insure, and so forth. The minute the U.S. Navy got on scene in force, and others joined them—like the Five Power Defence Arrangement navies—everything calmed down. So, you know, we had an interlude there just discussing what had happened and so on. Then the next iteration was, we took down Ras Tanura—about 8 million barrels per day production capacity at that time. That was Saudi Arabia's most prolific port then. Compare it to Kharg Island today, for example—10 or 12 tankers loading simultaneously, done and gone in a day. Huge output. Ah, wow.

Shippers wouldn't ship, insurers wouldn't insure—nobody was getting any oil. It hit \$300 a barrel for West Texas Intermediate, and Brent Crude was right behind it. Those were the only two really meaningful benchmarks at the time. We had to go into—and we did go into—a long discussion, and Ambassador Chas Freeman can tell you all about it. He was the only one on our side who spoke Mandarin, so he could understand the Chinese deliberations on the other side of the table. We had to go through an enormous amount of discussion. The Chinese delegation—I've never seen this happen in a war game or a simulation before—they actually raised their hands and asked if they could go back to their Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And we knew some of them were intel plants in the exercise.

We had some other people there. They asked if they could go back because they said the decision was so monumental that, even in a war game, they needed permission to make it. And they did—they went back, came back, and we made the decision. I can't remember the exact details, but basically what we did was something the world would've thought could never be done. We took the world's oil supplies and redistributed them across the globe. We sent North Slope Alaskan oil, for example, to Korea for the first time. Another incredible move was sending a huge load that was going to China instead up to Japan and Korea, because they were really hurting.

Japan, for example—100% of its petroleum comes from overseas. So to say those were better times is simply to tell the truth. They were better times. We actually made some good decisions, and I have no doubt that was fairly realistic—that we could have dealt with a critical global situation like that back then. Not today. Not today, because at root, what we're dealing with here—Donald Trump has no conception of what I'm about to say. Neither does Pete Hegseth. I don't think Vance does

either, although Peter Thiel might have given him some insights. The people behind this administration—and they're not all Americans—the people behind the money, behind the American empire, want China taken down.

That's the real purpose of this war in Iran—for this country. That's why we're waging it. I don't think the president knows that. But it has nothing to do with Iran's nuclear capability. It has everything to do with the Southern Base Road Initiative—arguably the most dangerous one of all—coming through Iran and going up into the belly of the Caucasus. And once that's operational, and the other three are added to it—the northern one, the central one, and the southern one in Russia, which is really just a remake of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, in conjunction with Russia, mind you—this is all happening.

All these things are going to debouch into Europe, and that's the new world economy. We've taken the southern one—which we think is the most dangerous—and we've taken it on in this war. That's who's behind this. That's who's really backing this conflict, which is why I think it's going to be long and hard. And Iran doesn't even know. I'm not even sure Bibi knows. Bibi's plugged into the world's intelligence, so maybe he does know. But I think that's the real reason behind this conflict, and that's why I don't think it's going to be over anytime soon.

## **#Danny**

Yeah. And then that begs the question, Larry—what do we make of the desperation we're seeing, especially on both sides, all sides of the aggressor parties, particularly the U.S. and Israel? I don't know if you saw this, Larry, but Donald Trump today said the U.S. and NATO are a paper tiger, which is always kind of funny when that happens, because I think, OK, you're calling yourself a paper tiger. I guess they didn't want to join the fight to stop a nuclear power in Iran now that the fight is militarily won. There's very little danger for them. They complain about the high oil prices they're forced to pay but don't want to help open the Strait of Hormuz.

A simple military maneuver—that's the single reason for the high prices. So easy for them to do, so little risk. Cowards. We will remember. Malcolm Nance, who I despise—he's a U.S. intel asset—but even he is saying you can't get to Kharg Island without transiting the Strait of Hormuz. He's sounding the alarm that this is going to end in disaster. I just want to show this for good measure as we begin to get your final comments here. This is the situation in Israel. Some people in the audience were asking, "Where are Israeli troops? Why aren't they being deployed? Why can't they do some of this?" And here's the situation in Israel.

You have everyone—you have WhatsApp messages, according to Israeli sources. Four alerts were heard in a 90-minute span, with people having breakdowns after not sleeping for two weeks. So Iranian missile fire is definitely keeping them very busy and incredibly stressed. But Larry, what do

you make of this? The desperation—you just see it. Donald Trump posts it; he posts the desperation. This isn't something I'm making up. Your reaction to this, given everything Colonel Wilkerson was saying—that this is going to be a long war. Yeah, it'll be a long, painful one, it seems like.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Yeah. Well, let me go back and remind you what Donald Trump said at the State of the Union. I apologize to Colonel Wilkerson—he's going to have to hear this again. He heard it earlier with NEMA. But this is what Trump was bragging about in terms of his major accomplishments during his first year in office. He said, quote—and this was four days before the start of the war, before we illegally attacked Iran on February 28th—on February 24th he said, "Gasoline, which reached a peak of over six dollars a gallon in some states under my predecessor, was quite honestly a disaster. It is now below two dollars and thirty cents a gallon in most states, and in some places one ninety-nine a gallon. And when I visited the great state of Iowa just a few weeks ago, I even saw one eighty-five a gallon for gasoline—the lowest in four years and falling fast."

Well, now it's rising like a rocket—like an Iranian rocket headed for a U.S. military base in Qatar. Down in my neck of the woods, gasoline has surged over a dollar a gallon in the past two, two and a half weeks. I haven't checked it today; I've got to have it now. I drive to the gas station just to see the price going up, and people are shaking their heads. So Trump's got a real big political problem on his hands, and that's one of the reasons you see this desperation. Because he was told—by the Israelis, right? By the Zionists—that this was a piece of cake. "We've got this wired inside. We've got a guy already at the higher levels in the IRGC. All we've got to do is kill these people."

The regime's going to collapse. The people are going to rise up and protest. And we'll have control of Iran—two weeks max. Two weeks max. Well, now we're going into week four, and there's no end in sight. So that's why they're desperate. And you've also seen a change in the rhetoric in Russia—I mean, in Iran. Excuse me, Israel. Too many I's. Alistair Crook's wife, Aisling, she reads all the Hebrew-language press. So a lot of times what happens in Israel is they'll put out one story in English, but they tell another story in Hebrew. They think, "Oh, those Americans, they don't understand Hebrew." So here's the deal: the Israelis went from talking about victory and the defeat of Iran to now saying, "Well, OK, we've sort of achieved our objectives."

And, you know, we've got maybe some more reasonable people in leadership positions, so we may need to bring this to an end. That's what I took away from Bibi Netanyahu's press conference yesterday, where he specifically said that after 20 days, he could tell us Iran today has no ability to enrich uranium and no ability to produce ballistic missiles. So, we'll just declare victory and go home. That's what he was saying—that they can no longer enrich uranium and no longer produce ballistic missiles. What's the logical conclusion of the war then? So that's where you're seeing the desperation, I think, on the part of both Israel and the U.S. And, Danny, this time, Iran's not going to stop.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

They can stop if they want to. Israel can stop. I don't think Iran's going to stop.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, that's a really good point, Colonel Wilkerson. We had a couple of questions from the audience—maybe you two can answer quickly before we head out of here. One question was: how about Israel and the U.S. surrendering unconditionally? What are the odds? And why isn't naval artillery bombardment being used? I think those are two good questions, given what you just said there, Colonel Wilkerson. Iran has a choice here, and they've said—they're being very open about it—that they're not going to stop unless certain demands are met. So, Colonel, what could we do? And then, Larry.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Well, on that question, I can tell you about naval bombardment. Unless you've got shells that can fire about 1,000 kilometers, you're not going to get naval bombardment, because your ship would be destroyed. You can't get close enough—nowhere near. Why do the carriers hang back 1,300 nautical miles? Because they know Iran has missiles that can hit them. If you hit the Lincoln or the Ford, or any other carrier for that matter—if you hit the amphibious platform that's called a carrier but really isn't—with a Kahlilj Fars, it's gone. It's finished. It's toast. It's on the bottom, in Davy Jones' locker. And sad to say, so are probably most of the 5,000 sailors, because that's the kind of catastrophic sinking that happens when you get hit with a high-velocity missile like that.

We were really worried about it a long time ago when we were implementing our old plan in the Pacific against the Russians, because they were going to shoot sea skimmers, submarine torpedoes that are hugely effective, and high-velocity missiles, and they were going to shoot missiles in between. So you'd get three classes of missiles coming in—one diving straight down on you—and this was an early version, if you will, of the Reshnik. And you'd have submarines firing torpedoes that would come up under you and break you in half, with your stern and bow going down almost simultaneously, all hands on board.

You want to see some of that? Look at the torpedoes we fired from boats like the Tang and the Wahoo against the Japanese—again, in the East China Sea, in the Formosa Strait. They went down with all hands on board and all cargo on board. You can read the skippers' reports: three minutes from six torpedoes hitting her bow, midships, and stern—three minutes, down. The whole ship, everything gone. They didn't have to surface and pick up survivors. One time, the Tang did and picked up a single survivor, took him all the way back to Pearl. That was the only one. That's the devastation. That was 1944. It's much worse today.

## **#Danny**

Yeah. Larry, final word here?

## **#Larry Johnson**

Yeah, no, I agree with Colonel Wilkerson. Look, you know, if you get in close to the coast, they're done—they're toast. What we've realized are the limits of naval power, as well as the limits of air power.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, definitely. Without further ado, everyone, we're going to head out here. Be sure to hit the like button—that helps keep the stream boosted as time goes on after we're done, and it helps Larry and Colonel Wilkerson get their message out further. Larry's blog is in the video description, sonar21.com. All the places to support this channel are there as well. I want to thank all the people who gave super chats and new members—thanks so much for that. I'm actually going away for a little bit, but I'll try to do some short morning programs to keep the updates going, so be on the lookout for that. Without further ado, everyone, take care, and I'll see you on the next show.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Bye-bye. Take care.