

Larry Johnson: Trump & Netanyahu Seek Exit Ramp in Iran

Larry Johnson discusses Trump and Netanyahu seeking an exit ramp to end the war against Iran. If Trump is serious about ending the war and leaving the Strait of Hormuz under Iranian control, the consequence will likely be the US being evicted from the Middle East. Johnson is a former CIA intelligence analyst who also worked at the U.S. State Department's Office of Counterterrorism. Read Larry Johnson's Sonar21: <https://sonar21.com/> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We're joined again by Larry Johnson, a former CIA analyst, to discuss the extent to which Trump might be seeking an off-ramp and what he's willing to, I guess, sacrifice to get it. So thank you, as always, for taking the time.

#Larry Johnson

You're most welcome, Glenn.

#Glenn

So it looks as if the main obstacle for Trump to declare victory and go home would be that he wouldn't know what to do about the Strait of Hormuz. But now he's tweeted that the Strait of Hormuz is not America's problem — it's the countries of the region who should deal with it. How are you assessing this? Is this essentially laying out a path for a proper off-ramp by simply declaring it's not America's issue, or is this just a way of getting other countries to join the United States in, well, let's call it a desperate effort to reopen the Strait of Hormuz?

#Larry Johnson

Well, wait a second, Glenn. Don't you understand that America's had a 100% victory? I mean, we've wiped out the Iranian army, the Iranian navy, the Iranian air force. Why do we need other countries? I mean, it's been a total U.S. victory. Yeah, sorry. It's just, you know, if people weren't dying, if there wasn't so much death and destruction and the pain that's coming for the rest of the

world—people are going to starve, people are going to die in other countries from the consequences of rising gas prices, enormous increases in the cost of gas and liquefied natural gas, as well as the shortage of fertilizer and not being able to grow food. So this would be like a Monty Python skit, because Donald Trump is so schizophrenic across the board. He's caught.

They genuinely believed, between him and Bibi, that Mossad had recruited, apparently, Ismail Kani, the head of the IRGC. So they thought they had an insider who was going to cook it for them, because that's exactly how Trump won in Venezuela. I know for a fact there were three insiders from Maduro's security team, etc., who were cooperating with U.S. authorities and planning and making that happen so we could get in and out without any serious loss of life. That's exactly what they were planning with Iran. They really thought that would happen. And, you know, when they launched this war of aggression—and I'll defer to you as the historian to recount how many countries have carried out wars of aggression, which at the Nuremberg trial was the principal charge against the Nazis.

The United States, in carrying out that attack on Iran and grossly underestimating Iran's capabilities, ignited a fire it can't put out. I'm sure there was somebody in the intelligence community who did a proper assessment of whether Iran could shut down the Strait of Hormuz—and if they did, what the consequences would be. But I don't think, even going up to Scott Besant, the Secretary of the Treasury, that anybody in a senior position had a clue. Until it happened. And then, all of a sudden, they discovered—oh my God—20% of the world's oil supply comes out of the Persian Gulf. It's not coming out. Twenty-five percent of the world's liquefied natural gas comes out, and that goes primarily to Asia. That's cut off. And then the fertilizer—35%.

So the Persian Gulf represented, after Russia, the largest supplier of fertilizer in the world. Well, we're now in the planting season in the Northern Hemisphere, and there is no fertilizer. There are scant supplies, and the prices are going through the roof. So this whole Strait of Hormuz situation has set off the beginnings of an economic recession. And I keep hearing some of these commentators say, "Oh, we'll see if this is going to cause a recession." No, it's happening. Then they say, "Oh, we're going to try to keep prices under control." Where I live in Florida, just south of Tampa, the price of gas since February 28—so now we're in the fourth week—has gone up a dollar, which is 25%. And on the diesel side, it's gone up \$2.

#Larry Johnson

Those costs, once they hit the economy and start working through, are going to mean price rises across the board. And there's zero evidence this is going to end anytime soon. So here's Trump, after claiming they'd just knock out Iran. Instead, Iran, within an hour of that attack on the 28th, began systematically hitting U.S. military installations. And according to recent press reports, Iran has knocked out ten very expensive radar systems. These radar systems cost a minimum of \$500

million—some are over a billion dollars. So it's not like they've got a spare one in the storeroom. "Oh, go grab it and we'll plug it in." No. The United States is trying to compensate using AWACS planes to provide some of the radar coverage, but they've lost a significant asset.

And then the base for the Fifth Fleet in Bahrain—virtually destroyed. They've had to relocate personnel and aircraft out of the Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia. It's too dangerous there, so they moved it farther west in Saudi Arabia. The war has now become a political albatross for Donald Trump. Four days before he launched the war, he was doing the State of the Union address, bragging about how gas prices were so low—"we're not like that crazy Joe Biden, we're not raising your gas prices." He spoke too soon. It's going up every day. You know, I went out on—let's see, today's Saturday—so Thursday I went to the gas station, and the price was \$3.44. The next day, Friday, I went back to check, and it was up to \$3.55 or \$3.54. So, you know, ten cents in one day.

So Trump is looking for an off-ramp. And you hear him in some of his comments yesterday saying, "Oh yeah, we've wiped out their Air Force. We've accomplished really all of our military objectives." So I can see him trying to prepare an exit plan. And it appears he's coordinating it with Bibi Netanyahu, because Netanyahu said on Thursday almost the exact same thing: "We've ended Iran's ability to enrich uranium, and we've destroyed their ballistic missiles and their manufacturing capability." Pretty definitive statements. Now, it's not true, but I can see Trump and Bibi Netanyahu trying to say, "Okay, like we did with the Houthis in the Red Sea last May—well, the Houthis have capitulated, we're pulling out." Only one problem: Iran isn't playing along.

Iran's not going to give up the Strait of Hormuz just because the U.S. and Israel say they no longer want to fight. No, they're going to fight until they get an effective surrender from Israel and the United States. Iran wants a rock-solid guarantee that it's not ever going to be attacked again. And to that end, it appears that Russia is involved now, trying to do some mediation. But Iran is firm on this. The West thinks it can bully them, that it can coerce them, and that we've got the military power to defeat them. We don't. Yeah, we could defeat Iran, we could devastate Iran, but in the process lose a million people—pay unacceptably high costs in terms of casualties as well as loss of equipment. I don't think the American people have the stomach for that.

#Glenn

The Iranians, though—the objective they've set, which is why the foreign minister said, "We don't want a ceasefire; we want a political settlement." And that settlement means the U.S. has to leave the region, along with its allies. Now, you could say, in simple terms, this could be achieved by bombing the various U.S. military bases in the region. But there seems to be something else going on that makes the Strait of Hormuz quite important. That's the whole concept of what we're seeing now with this selective access, or even nationalizing the Strait of Hormuz by setting up a separate corridor within Iranian waters that the rest won't be allowed to use.

#Larry Johnson

Right, right.

#Glenn

If they do this, it means the Iranians can essentially tell the Gulf states: if the U.S. leaves and leaves the Strait of Hormuz to Iran, then Iran can tell the Gulf states that if you want to get through here, you first have to expel the Americans from your territory. They can tax them. And there have been some reports that they're already charging for safe passage. That would essentially be the reparations for assisting the Americans in the attack on Iran.

And some are also suggesting that the Iranians might demand that the Gulf states, if they want to use the Strait of Hormuz, at least get paid in yuan or some other currency—in other words, break up the whole petrodollar system. The whole idea that Trump can just say, "Well, this is not our energy," seems like a simplified version, because what this represents would be expelling the United States from the Middle East, which is quite a dramatic turn. I was wondering, do you see this as being feasible? Because, well, if the U.S. doesn't go along, then isn't it just another forever war with us?

#Larry Johnson

Yes, yeah, yeah. I believe Iran can endure this war a lot longer than the United States can. I mean, Donald Trump has got—so, let's see, we're in March—he's got eight months before the midterm elections. And when the midterm elections come, I think it's highly anticipated that not only will the Democrats take the House of Representatives, but they'll also capture the Senate. And then, at that point, the entire focus will be on impeaching the Trump administration. I think, if so, his back is up against a political wall, and he ignored the warnings he received from the National Intelligence Council, and reportedly from General Kane, that, look, "I'm not sure we can get this done."

And here are the problems. He didn't want to listen—and that's not unusual. It's not unique to Trump. We've had American presidents ignore CIA analyses and assessments for decades. But now it's costing Trump. And his team keeps trying to pretend that inflation isn't going up, that it's just temporary. It's not temporary. They forget about the size of Iran, and they've got such a simplistic view—they really don't look at history or understand it when it comes to war. I tried to draw a parallel with the U.S. bombing of Japan in 1945, which extended over a six-month period.

And that bombing alone didn't cause Japan to collapse and surrender, even though that's the way the story's told in U.S. schools—that it was the dropping of the atomic bombs and Japan said, "Oh my, we give up." No, that's not what happened. It was the entrance of the Soviet army into the battle that finally persuaded the Japanese, "Okay, we've got to surrender." But here's the thing: in Japan, the U.S. killed over 700,000 people in six months, and that still didn't cause Japan to collapse. Well, thank God the U.S. and Israel haven't killed tens of thousands of Iranians so far. But

even if they did, Iran still has the means to keep fighting. And ultimately, you don't take control of these countries until you put boots on the ground—troops in control. And the United States doesn't have the military force to do that.

#Glenn

It's always dangerous to make up, you know, this heroic war narrative afterward. That's something Ambassador Jack Matlock has also cautioned against. You can look at many of them, though—for example, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the way this was sold to the American public for, what, two decades? That it was simply the U.S., you know, staring down the Soviets, saying, "Well, if you cross this line, we're going to, you know, blow you up." And then, you know, essentially almost like a Western—just toe to toe—and then, you know, who will blink first? And the Soviets did. And then they left.

And the story one is left with is that if we're just willing to engage in a game of chicken, stare down the adversary, then, in facing the might of the United States, they'll back down. Ambassador Jack Matlock makes a similar point about the end of the Cold War. He argues that the Cold War was declared over in 1989 through negotiations, and that peace was created through diplomacy, dialogue, and an agreement to build a common Europe together. But that's not a fun, heroic story. So when the Soviet Union collapsed exactly two years later, he said, in his book, that the myth-making began immediately.

That is, the Cold War didn't end—it was won, you know, as Bush said shortly thereafter in the State of the Union speech. And it seems like, yeah, of course, one wants to brag, claim victory, but it has a wider ramification. That is, once you go down this path, the lesson becomes that peace isn't created through diplomacy, negotiations, and compromise. It's that we defeated them, we stared them down, we exhausted them, and now they collapsed and we won. And it creates—yeah, what Matlock said—a very militaristic approach to security, where peace is the result of defeating adversaries, not diplomacy. And, you know, you can create a very dangerous political culture from this.

#Larry Johnson

Well, I can just say, reinforcing that point, it's not only Donald Trump who's saying he doesn't recognize international law. He's surrounded by so-called advisors—Stephen Miller in particular—who say, you know, international law, these international institutions, they're worthless. We don't respect those. The institutional framework that was put together in the aftermath of World War II to ensure there wouldn't be another conflict like that has been completely rejected by the Trump administration. And so those who continue to try to—well, we're in sort of a League of Nations situation now. The League of Nations continued to operate up until World War II, but it was

completely irrelevant. Nobody recognized its power or authority. It had no power, and nobody recognized its authority. I think that's actually where we are right now with the United Nations and the other international institutions.

#Glenn

Yeah, well, I think they eroded by themselves a bit after the Cold War, because international law under the UN Charter is based on mutual concessions or mutual restraint. And this, of course, was reflected in a bipolar distribution of power. Now, the problem is, you know, the only reason countries accept that they should have a restrained foreign policy is the assumption of reciprocity, which gives you predictability. But in a unipolar world order, why would any country constrain itself? This is kind of what, you know, Stephen Walt suggests is the main challenge. He would then assume that international law would begin to shift.

At least that's how I interpret this rules-based international order. In the West, we began to carve out exceptions for ourselves. For example, in 1999, with the war—the attack on Yugoslavia—it was argued that it wasn't legal, but it was legitimate. So suddenly, those weren't the same thing. And what makes something legitimate, even if it's not legal? Well, protecting human rights, spreading democracy. In other words, the West created a prerogative solely for itself to breach international law by claiming we're the champions of liberal democracy.

And you saw this being used over and over again. But now, of course, we're at this critical point where we're balancing each other, and we do need to restore some rules. From your article, I thought it was interesting—you write that Netanyahu and Trump may be looking for an exit ramp. I think Trump is quite obvious; he doesn't shy away from suggesting he's looking for a way out of this. There are a lot of reports. But why would Netanyahu want an end to this war? This seems like the last opportunity to really knock out Iran. After this, I don't see another opportunity coming along.

#Larry Johnson

Well, number one, they have no chance of knocking out Iran. They foolishly believe they do, but they don't. And the war has now become quite costly for them. Israel is a small country—its population is usually put between seven and ten million. I don't know how many have fled since the start of the war on the 28th. But step back and look at what Israel has failed to do. They've had Hamas surrounded in a virtual ghetto, five miles wide and twenty-five miles long, for two and a half years now, and they've still been unable to defeat Hamas, even though they've got a 300,000-man army deployed there.

They've got tanks, artillery, combat aircraft that can drop bombs, helicopters—you know, they've got everything. And Hamas has basically sidearms, light arms, rifles, RPGs. And Israel has been unable to defeat them. Now, you know, there was an uprising in World War II in Warsaw, in the Jewish ghetto, where a small group of Jews held off the Wehrmacht for about four weeks. Well, here's

Hamas doing incredibly better than anything that was done in the Warsaw ghetto. And then, on top of that, Israel has now decided, "Okay, we're going to invade southern Lebanon, and we're going to destroy Hezbollah." Except—didn't they already destroy Hezbollah?

I mean, we had all the cell phones—you know, the exploding cell phones go off—and the pagers blew up, and we killed Nasrallah. Hezbollah's done. Except, let's see, Hezbollah destroyed seven Merkava tanks two days ago, and they destroyed another one within the last 24 hours. So Israel is getting itself bogged down in that, and then it's launching these constant airstrikes against Iran. They're using up munitions, and they don't have an industrial base that can just start churning out everything they use. So they're depleting their stock of those missiles, and they've depleted—or are close to running out of—the air defense missiles as well.

So just strictly from a military standpoint, you'd say, "We've got to stop this because we're bleeding out." Israel doesn't have the same capacity to endure that Iran does, simply because of its size. For Iran to target Israel, they only have to worry about, like, two cities—Haifa and Tel Aviv. But, you know, there are also reports today that they're now hitting Dimona—the nuclear facility at Dimona—and the military bases in Beersheba. So yeah, Israel wants to get it stopped. And Alastair Crooke and his wife, you know, they produce a weekly analysis of what's written in the Hebrew-language press, and that's quite different from what they put out in English.

It's like, yeah, we're not going to tell the goyim what we really think. You know, we'll just keep it among ourselves. And they noted that there's been a dramatic shift in the objectives. Originally, it was the defeat of Iran. Now it's like, oh, okay, we've basically rendered their enrichment program inert, so we can find a settlement. And I think they're going to try. But again, it ignores the fact that Iran gets a vote, and Iran's not going to settle for that. Iran's going to settle for something. You know, one of the requirements may be that Israel will have to submit itself to IAEA inspections and sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty—or Iran will keep bombing the hell out of Israel.

#Glenn

Well, I'm wondering how far Iran will push this, because they're also fighting two countries—the U.S. and Israel—both very militaristic in nature, but also two countries that link security to dominance as a strategy. The U.S. sees global primacy as the source of its security, while Israel looks at regional dominance.

So I'm just curious how far the Iranians can push them before they might, you know, consider using tactical nuclear weapons or something to up the pressure on the Iranians. Because if I were Trump, you know, the only way I could get out of this would be to communicate to the Iranians, "We want to put an end to this—we can call a ceasefire. Otherwise, we're just going to keep escalating and escalating." I think the problem is that the Iranians can afford to go up this escalation ladder because, you know, despite the pain at the end of it, at least the U.S. would be leaving the Middle East, and its Gulf state frontline allies would be done with it, essentially. But this is why I'm

wondering—I found it interesting that the Strait of Hormuz seems to be the most sensitive part of all this.

This is why the Americans can't really leave, because—and you see this in his tweets now as well—he tweeted that the Europeans should be helping us open up the Strait of Hormuz. He didn't even call it a military operation; he called it a simple military maneuver, which they don't want to participate in. And he used this to put pressure on the Europeans, saying, well, NATO is simply a paper tiger. The Europeans will regret not helping us—which is, you know, a kind of light threat. And then he comes back later, hammering on with another tweet, saying either you help us with Hormuz, or I might take Greenland. I mean, that's quite an ultimatum. So it doesn't seem like he's ready to give up or hand over control of Hormuz completely to the Iranians either, as they would use it, of course, to push the Americans out of the region.

#Larry Johnson

Well, his desperation—I mean, he's behaving like a drowning man. You know, the Titanic has sunk, you're in icy waters, and you're thrashing about trying to figure out a way to save yourself. That's where he is. He's in, like, a poker game with Iran, only Iran's in a much better position—holds the better cards and has more money. They're not as wealthy as the United States, but Iran's ability to escalate is greater than that of the United States. Yeah, the United States can use nukes—and then what? Then it's in a nuclear confrontation with Russia, China, North Korea. There's no cost-free way for the United States to use nuclear weapons. I mean, again, it's difficult to imagine what the world would be like in the aftermath.

But, you know, business as usual would come to a halt. So the United States is not willing to escalate militarily to the level where they might have a chance of defeating Iran, because it would probably require a three-million-man army, which would then shut down much of the economy and focus it on producing weapons. You know, right now they've virtually exhausted their supply of Patriot PAC-3 missiles. The same for that—if they still have a few left, they don't have anything in numbers that could be used in a future conflict. So, you know, Trump wants to get out, but he's a narcissist—he can't admit failure. And Iran doesn't care. Iran's not here to protect Donald Trump's ego. You know, Iran holds the moral high ground.

It was attacked in a ruthless, vicious manner, designed to decapitate its leadership and leave the country rudderless. But the Iranians had prepared for that. And now that they're fighting back—well, we said, "Oh, we've got complete air supremacy." Oh, really? That F-35 got shot down yesterday—or the day before—and it managed to limp back into friendly territory and land at one of the Gulf Arab airports. But Iran still has a lot of resources. More importantly, it's got Russia and China in its corner. Russia and China are not leaving Iran to fight this on its own. They're providing extensive support in terms of aid, economic assistance, weapons, and, you know, drones—they're helping resupply drones. So this thing's going to keep going unless Donald Trump agrees to the terms that Iran's going to demand. Otherwise, this war will drag on, and it'll kill his presidency.

#Glenn

Well, desperation has definitely set in, which is why Trump needs an out. But we now see that a lot of U.S. Marines have already departed, heading down toward the region. Not as many as you'd expect if you were planning to take a huge, mountainous country like Iran, with more than 90 million people. What do you think the objectives are for these boots on the ground? Are they going to snatch small islands? Are they going to invade Yemen to make sure the Red Sea isn't closed off? I mean, what do you think their objective might be?

#Larry Johnson

There is no sane military objective. So let's put this into context. The area along the Strait of Hormuz—the Iranian coast—that's about a hundred-mile-long stretch. In World War II, on D-Day, the invasion of Normandy, that beach area was 50 miles long. So what we're talking about now is a territory twice the size of Normandy. In Normandy, the United States, Canada, and Britain invaded with 165,000 troops. The two Marine MEUs—Marine Expeditionary Units—the 11th and the 31st, each have between 2,200 and 2,500 Marines. So, altogether, maybe 5,000 Marines. Out of those 5,000 Marines...

#Larry Johnson

Only about 2,000, maybe 2,500, are actual infantry—on-the-ground combat soldiers. Everybody else has a supporting role. So let me see if I've got this right: we're going to try to take a territory that's twice the size of the Normandy beach. I forgot to mention it's basically sheer cliffs, with little spots of beach here and there, but cliffs all along the way—a territory that's not easy to attack and quite easy to defend. Oh, and I also forgot that in those cliffs are caves. The Iranians have built caves over the last 35 years and put missiles in them that can be fired at ships in the Persian Gulf. So, you know, this makes absolutely no sense.

Oh, and then how are they going to get those Marines on shore? If the ships come in—each of these MEUs has a ship that looks like an aircraft carrier, and it does carry a few F-35Bs. They can take off vertically. It's got some helicopters, it's got Ospreys. But those ships—if they get within 500 miles of the Iranian coast—they're going to be attacked, just like the Abraham Lincoln was. And the Abraham Lincoln suffered some damage and had to leave the area. So for these Marines to be deployed anywhere, you'd have to bring the ships in close enough that they'd be vulnerable to missile and drone attacks. Iran also has underwater, basically drone missiles that can be guided like a conventional torpedo, except they're steerable.

And then they've got submarines. It doesn't make sense. But let's just assume—okay—somehow they get through the strait, get up to Karg Island, and manage to land all 5,000 Marines there. How do they get resupplied, number one? Number two, they're in what I've called Karg Island—it's Snake

Island with oil. Snake Island is up in the Black Sea. It's this outcropping of rock that the Ukrainians and Russians have alternately landed on and claimed to control. The problem is, there's no protection. You're completely exposed. So if the Marines get onto Karg Island, they're going to be hit with drones, missiles, and artillery. It'll be a bloodbath for the United States. And you step back and say, okay, what's the goal here?

Oh, we're going to shut off the flow of Iranian oil. Well, wait a second—Scott Besant, the Secretary of the Treasury, just announced they're lifting all the sanctions on Iranian oil because they need it to keep supplies up so prices don't go through the ceiling and inflation doesn't get worse than it already is. That's why I said there are inconsistencies here. So, I don't know—I think maybe they're trying to use that as a deception. You know, you bring the Marines in because instead they're going to try to launch a military operation to seize enriched uranium that's inside Iran. Again, an impossible mission. But they're thinking in some very bizarre ways. It's not consistent, and it's certainly not recognizing that there are limits to U.S. power now.

#Glenn

Well, another piece of news we've got now is that the Iranians, I think, launched two ballistic missiles toward Diego Garcia, the strategic base in the Indian Ocean. This seems to suggest that Iranian missiles are quite a bit more capable, with a much greater range than previously thought. Apparently, the two were intercepted on the way, but nonetheless, this seems to change the strategic picture to quite an extent. Suddenly, Iran can hit at least all parts of Europe—assuming Diego Garcia was the intended destination. It could go even further than that. You'd think this would challenge some of the calculations by the Europeans about whether or not they'd join in on this war.

Because if they join in and the Iranians have missiles they can hit, then I'm sure the Russians will be very happy to share some targeting data—perhaps of some German military factories, or wherever in Britain they're making the Storm Shadows. It just seems all of these wars are very interconnected. It seems like this could spiral very quickly out of control if they decide to keep climbing this escalation ladder because... I mean, what other significance do you think there is to these capabilities, these missiles? We were told they'd exhausted all their missiles and were pretty much done with them. Yeah. The Iranians said, "We're saving our best stuff for later," so either the Americans were lying or the Iranians were. But now that these missiles are coming into play, one can't help but think that perhaps the Iranians—well, at least there's some truth to what they said.

#Larry Johnson

Well, in fact, I saw something yesterday saying that the United States and Israel combined have destroyed 320% of Iran's missile capability. Three hundred and twenty percent, huh? That's... gee. Look, I've maintained—you've seen this in Ukraine as well—where they intercept 200 out of 150 missiles. Yeah, yeah. And in fact, as we talked about last time, when you look at the number of PAC-3 missiles on the Patriot system, the United States has only produced 4,620 of those. Those are

capable of taking out about 2,310 ballistic missiles. Well, Russia's fired over 12,000. So, okay, the math just doesn't add up. But Iran's missile capability is buried underground.

Their production facilities are underground. And the United States—unless you have a human source who's been in there counting and providing direct information—you have no clue what's down there. Now, Israel has had some good intelligence, but in this case, they've grossly miscalculated. I'd be willing to wager that the missiles fired at Diego Garcia weren't necessarily designed to hit Diego Garcia, but to force them to fire some of their air defense missiles, which are in limited supply. In fact, I think Iran could keep doing that until they deplete the air defense stock at Diego Garcia.

Then they send in the real missiles that could actually hit it. So, you know, Iran has had a pretty fascinating strategy. They're not just blindly firing; they're being very methodical in how they go about this. And they've said, "You hit our oil facilities, we'll hit yours." The potential for oil production to restart is still there. I mean, it hasn't been destroyed in the Persian Gulf to the point where you'd have to re-drill wells and relay pipelines, etc. But if the United States, in its desperation, goes that route, Iran—well, the world's oil supply would be crippled for years, not just a month or two, but for two to three years at least.

#Glenn

Well, how would you approach this problem then? If Donald Trump picks up the phone today and calls Larry Johnson, what would you tell him about how to get out of this? Because if it's clear he's looking for an off-ramp, I don't see one. I think that's the main problem. Whatever the Iranians are asking for—if it's to pull out of the region, or to put some limits or constraints on Israel—none of those are things he seems able to deliver. He has to find some way out. His off-ramp has to include some component where he can, I guess, declare victory, no matter how hollow, empty, or transparently ludicrous it might be. He still has to give something to his base, saying, "Look, we won. Look how much we destroyed, how many people we killed." But he's not going to be able to sell this if they have to pull out from their bases or something like that.

#Larry Johnson

Well, he could actually, you know, let's call it the resurrection of the JCPOA without calling it the JCPOA. I could conceive of a scenario—though I agree it's not likely—where Trump could get us out of this mess by declaring, "Hey, we've accomplished our military objectives. We've defeated Iran. And as evidence of this, Iran has now agreed to allow full IAEA inspections of its nuclear sites, to guarantee it's not enriching uranium, and to remain a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty." So, as a result, we no longer need to have a military presence in the Persian Gulf because Iran has agreed to behave and be part of the community of nations. You know, he might be able to sell it that way.

But Iran—well, Iran might, but I'm not sure Iran at this point is going to be willing to subject itself to any kind of international control over its nuclear enrichment capabilities. I think there may be a realization that they've got to go the way of North Korea. North Korea has the bomb, and the rest of the world leaves it alone. It's like a porcupine. So that's about Donald Trump's only option. He has to declare victory, but in declaring victory, he's going to lift all sanctions on Iran and get U.S. military forces out of the Persian Gulf. Now, that will enrage the Zionists. But Trump—well, the damage he's done to his coalition, or the coalition that got him elected, is decimated, destroyed.

You're even seeing now Tucker Carlson speaking out strongly against Trump on this. You've got Marjorie Taylor Greene, Joe Rogan, Dave Smith—who's a popular comedian—and Candace Owens. She's got millions of subscribers to her blog or her podcast. So there's a real, you know, growing number of influential alt-media personalities that are condemning Trump. And I don't see a way back for him at this point. This has been a fatal blow to his presidency. The one thing he had was the credibility that he was never going to start a new war in the Middle East. And by God, he started one—and he can't stop it.

#Glenn

Well, I was thinking a very bold offer would be to essentially link this back to "America First." That's the new national security strategy from December of 2015. It more or less addressed this new multipolar distribution of power, where it suggested we can't be everywhere, so we're going to have to set priorities. Let's focus on the Western Hemisphere, because we can't let the Chinese dominate in our backyard. And of course, East Asia—this is where our peer competitor is. But, you know, that means drawing down, or at least scaling down, or even pulling out from Europe and the Middle East. That would be the goal. This is kind of what he ran on. This is what peace entailed.

Because only the last tweet is actually where he says, you know, NATO is a paper tiger. The Europeans betrayed us. They're going to regret this. I mean, this is a perfect opportunity to pull out of Europe. And this also comes along with his comments that, well, the Strait of Hormuz isn't our energy coming through there, it's not our responsibility. We tried to get the rest of the world to join in to help us open it, but they didn't want to. You know, he could play this card and essentially pull out of Europe and the Middle East. If you leave the region with the Strait of Hormuz to Iran, that's exactly what you get.

The U.S. would have a very diminished presence in the region. But I don't—again, he's not a king. He can't decide everything himself. It's just very hard for me to imagine Trump being able to pull something like this off. And also, it's hard to sell that as a victory. You know, if you leave with your head held high, maybe, but if you leave like in Afghanistan—just rush out because you're defeated—you can't sell that as a victory. And a lot of it has been focused on, well, a lot of the failures in this war have been about the ability to sell the war. The narratives are just all over the place.

#Larry Johnson

Well, in fact, that was the first fatal mistake he made. Even George W. Bush understood that he had to make a case and tried to make a case to the UN, but he also had to make a case to the American people about why we needed to invade Iraq. That was all lies, but the American people bought it. And so he had majority support going in. But he also discovered that support was pretty tenuous and evaporated as the "mission accomplished" turned out to be a prolonged guerrilla insurgent war. And, you know, one of the interesting things about that insurgent war was that you had Shia who were opposing the United States, but also Shia groups backed by Iran that were fighting alongside the United States against the ISIS characters.

So, you know, again, the United States had no idea what it was getting into—the complexities—and now we're caught because we're having to expend military resources. And some of these bombs, to make new ones, they need something called gallium. Gee, that comes out of China. And China's said, "Sorry, we're not sending you any more." They've also cut off rare earth minerals, which are critical for some weapon systems and armaments—things like radars. So, you know, the United States has disrupted, and maybe permanently damaged, its supply chain to keep the military-industrial complex running.

And at the same time, it's using up resources that aren't easily replaced. So, you know, they're not going to run out tomorrow, but they're always preparing for a confrontation. You know, we're going to have a confrontation with China. And China, smartly, is thinking, "These fools are going to attack us if given the chance. So we're not going to arm them or give them what they need to build weapons they'll use against us." No, that's not happening.

#Glenn

Well, these radars you're talking about cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and they need gallium. It's not just that China has overwhelming control—it's that 98 to 99 percent of the production is in China. Which means, if the U.S. wants to fight a war with China, it basically has to ask China for permission to sell it the rare earths it needs in order to attack China. So...

#Larry Johnson

It's a really horrible game that's being played here. I mean, let's put it like this: hey, Glenn, could you give me—say I want to buy a gun from you and the ammunition because I'm going to kill you with it. So, what price would you sell it to me for? I don't think you'd sell it to me.

#Glenn

No, and I think... But also, if the Chinese wanted to disrupt and deny sales to the United States, it could be seen as disrupting international trade. But the thing is, the U.S. already started that trade

war against the Chinese, so if they retaliate by limiting these kinds of rare earths, it seems appropriate. So no, it's just the overall grand strategy here. It seems to be all absence. "The grand what? What was that word you used? Was that strategy?" "Yeah. Every time I bring up the word 'strategy,' when I talk to people like Colonel Douglas McGregor, he always says, 'Glenn, there is no strategy. Stop using that word.'"

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, I'll be like Mandy Patinkin in the movie **The Princess Bride**. And your boy Sean, you know—strategy. And Sean in the movie kept saying, "Inconceivable! Inconceivable!" And Mandy Patinkin finally said, "I don't think that word means what you think it means."

#Glenn

Anyway, thank you for taking the time on your busy weekend. I appreciate it. And yeah, have a good one.

#Larry Johnson

All right, my friend. Stay safe.