

# The US-Israel war on Iran is escalating—but has it already failed? | Larry Johnson

The US-Israel war on Iran is escalating—but has it already failed? Former CIA analyst Larry Johnson says “Trump could not accomplish what he intended.” Support Independent media to remain bold: <https://patreon.com/IndiaGlobalLeft> Link for donation: <https://paypal.me/sankymudiar> In this explosive interview, former CIA analyst Larry Johnson breaks down the ongoing US-Israel attack on Iran, offering a sharp analysis of military strategy, intelligence failures, and global geopolitics. He argues that Donald Trump’s objectives in Iran have not been achieved, raising serious questions about the direction and consequences of this war. Key topics discussed: Has the US-Israel war on Iran failed? Intelligence failure vs ideological motivations behind the attack Internal divisions: What Joe Kent’s resignation reveals about the Trump administration Iran’s strengths & weaknesses — including its missile capabilities Europe’s confusing role: Cyprus, sanctions, and the Strait of Hormuz India-Israel relations and the politics of nationalism The alarming question: Could nuclear weapons be used again? This conversation goes beyond mainstream narratives to examine the real balance of power between the US and Iran, and what it means for the future of global conflict. Watch till the end for Larry Johnson’s warning on nuclear escalation and the global consequences of this war. Like | Comment | Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis Follow us on Substack: <https://substack.com/@indiagloballeft> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Indiagloballeft> Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/indiagloballeft/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559411353392> Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/69Y9iCWUv8ha3ATsPWtWk0?si=ee1f0de3de094f17> Telegram: <https://t.me/+WNlqoiv1Rhg5NjEx>

## #Mudiar

Hello and welcome to another episode of Indian Global Left. If you’re new to the show, please consider subscribing. You can also become a YouTube member, a patron, or donate a small amount using the link in the description box. Without further ado, let me welcome our guest tonight, Larry Johnson. Larry is a former CIA analyst and geopolitical commentator. Larry, welcome back to Indian Global Left.

## #Larry

Well, let me compliment you on your couture — you look like Don Johnson from \*Miami Vice.\* Thank you.

## #Mudiar

There's a lot of breaking news — assassinations of Dr. Ali Larijani, the chief of the Supreme National Security Council; Basij commander Gholam Reza Soleimani; and now the recent news of the assassination of Ismail Khatib, the Iranian intelligence minister. We're also seeing attacks on Iran's gas fields. But before we get into the specifics, could you give us a sense of your broader analysis of how the war has progressed over the last few days?

## **#Larry**

Israel and the United States made a big bet that they could carry out a decapitation strike — that all they had to do was kill some top leaders and the Iranian people would rise up and overthrow the Islamic regime. Turns out that was completely wrong. This is a gross intelligence failure on the part of Israel and the United States. They reportedly knew and either ignored the warnings, or they never considered the fact that, number one, Iran has a far larger supply of ballistic missiles — missile cities underground, factories underground building them, and launch silos underground that can't be easily detected.

And then on top of that, when Iran shut down the Strait of Hormuz to normal commercial traffic, they basically grabbed the world by the balls. In doing so, they've created a major threat to the economies of India, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Cambodia — not just there, but also in Europe, and indirectly the United States. China — while many analysts try to say this is really damaging for them — I think China is actually pretty well insulated from it. But the one who's really benefiting is Russia. The cutoff of the Strait of Hormuz removed roughly 20% of the world's oil supply from the markets immediately.

And so we're now in day 19, and in about three hours we'll be in day 20. Nobody anticipated going three weeks with this, number one. But it wasn't just the oil — it was the liquefied natural gas that comes out of Qatar, which is about 25% of the global supply. That's really hitting the countries of Asia, East Asia in particular. And then the third one — I had no idea until I started digging into this — more than 35%, over a third of the world's fertilizer, comes out of the Persian Gulf. Now, this is a ticking time bomb, because the lack of fertilizer right now, during the planting season, means that many of those crops are not going to grow or won't be properly nourished.

And so when the harvest comes — you know, three months, six months from now — there's going to be a food shortage, a global food shortage. The West didn't contemplate that. Their hopes of a quick war with Iran have evaporated. And this latest step by Israel, attacking Iran's major oil fields, means that Iran will now turn off or destroy the oil fields in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and whatever the United Arab Emirates has. So the hopes that this would be a short-lived economic disruption are gone. This is going to turn into, I believe, a global economic disaster.

## **#Mudiar**

I wanted to ask you about your use of the phrase “intelligence failure,” given that the New York Times reported on a U.S. national intelligence assessment that gathered input from 18 different intelligence agencies. It said that attacking Iran — even a decapitation strike on the Supreme Leader, the former Supreme Leader now — would not create, quote-unquote, “regime change.” And yet this happened. So what I’m getting at is: was this an intelligence failure, or did it happen for ideological reasons — for neocons and Zionists — despite the intelligence suggesting otherwise?

## **#Larry**

Well, it's more complicated. And let's clarify something about the intelligence agencies. You know, you're just repeating what's commonly said in the news media, and the news media is fundamentally wrong. The intelligence assessment that was reportedly presented to Trump by the National Intelligence Council—normally, the NIC is made up of national intelligence officers. There's a national intelligence officer for Latin America, one for Europe, one for Africa, and so on. So you end up with about six or seven senior analysts. Most of them come from the Central Intelligence Agency, though some can come from the Defense Intelligence Agency or the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

This assessment, once it was prepared, probably would have been coordinated only with the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and the National Security Agency, which collects SIGINT. There really aren't any other groups that I'd call original collectors of intelligence. The FBI, you know, a lot of the material it collects is actually evidence for legal cases, so that's normally not included in intelligence assessments. But you still had the four core intelligence units, and they provided an assessment saying this was not going to produce regime change. That said, it's not clear how widely, or how accurately, they predicted the results of shutting down the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's ballistic missile capability.

It does appear that they've significantly downplayed what Iran is capable of. I've always maintained that the intelligence community really has no clue how many missiles Iran has, because they're underground. Unless you get somebody who's actually involved in that process—someone in production who can tell you how many they've made—there's no way of knowing, because they also build the missiles underground. So, you know, I think that failure came from their calculation that they'd be able to hit Iran and take out its offensive capability. I also know from conversations with friends in the military who were involved in this operation that they believed the U.S. air defense systems would prevent any significant strikes from Iran. That clearly has proven to be false.

## **#Mudiar**

We've been hearing about discontent within the Trump administration regarding this war. The latest news is the resignation of U.S. National Counterterrorism Center head Joe Kent. What's your sense of how big that is—how many people there are who aren't just sycophants or bootlickers of Trump, who actually have the guts to speak out?

## **#Larry**

Well, apart from Kent's qualifications by virtue of his prior military service and work with the CIA, he was an operator. He wasn't an analyst, but he also knew the importance of intelligence. In his position, he was the top person in the entire U.S. government who knew what the intelligence said about Iranian threats. So when he resigned, stating very clearly there was no imminent threat, he was telling the truth and exposing the lies. Unfortunately, Tulsi Gabbard dishonored herself because she put out a follow-up note basically trying to defend Trump, saying that ultimately Donald Trump determines whether or not there's an imminent threat. No, that's not how it works. The president's welcome to have his own damn opinion, but the intelligence is what the intelligence is.

And when you go through the intelligence and realize Iran does not, and has not, posed a threat to the United States—well, Iran has never carried out a terrorist attack inside the United States in the last 47 years. So, you know, that number one is a lie. Number two, the claim that Iran is the number one sponsor of terrorism—also a lie, a complete falsehood. So the notion that Iran was gearing up to do something to the United States, when in fact Iran was engaged in negotiations and it was the United States and Israel that launched a war of aggression—and I use that term specifically because it was the primary charge brought against the Nazis at the Nuremberg trials—they launched a war of aggression. In my view, Donald Trump has done the same as Adolf Hitler. I don't make that comparison lightly, but it's the kind of thing that, if Donald Trump can ever be arrested and tried for that, he should be... against humanity.

## **#Mudiar**

And it's not just Trump—it's the whole coterie of people around him. Yes. Larry, I wanted to ask you to speak a little bit about the strengths and weaknesses of Iran in the war, given that the mainstream media has been presenting a picture as if Iran is just collapsing militarily. Now that this hasn't happened politically, they're saying Iran is running out of missiles, as you said. Even the intelligence community has no way to figure that out because most of it is buried underground. Tell our viewers—or tell me—do you have any sense of how many missiles they have? We've been reading these completely concocted numbers like three thousand, five thousand—no reference, nothing, just numbers pulled out of a hat or whatever. What is the strength of Iran's missile system and drone system?

## **#Larry**

Well, the drone system, number one, is quite strong, and they're not going to be defeated on that front. On the missile front, all I can do is speculate. But if pressed—if I were in a casino and asked to place a bet—my bet is that Iran's got a stockpile of missiles in excess of 10,000. They're firing them now at a rate of about 150 a day. Okay, so in 10 days you get 1,500; in 30 days, 4,500. So they could possibly be, at the end, if they were firing all those ballistic missiles at that rate, they could have expended them by, let's say, the first or middle of May. But they may have more, and at

the same time, they're not sitting there static. They've got production facilities underground, and they continue to churn them out. So Iran very well may have a much larger stockpile than we know.

What we do know is that they have effectively destroyed the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf. They've rendered the base and the naval facility in Bahrain basically inoperable. At the Prince Sultan Air Base, they're having to withdraw troops, as I understand it, because that air defense system has been depleted. The United States no longer has any air defense. And that brings in another aspect that many people are failing to acknowledge: the Israelis and the United States have very, very limited quantities of air defense missiles. In fact, I've run the numbers, and in certain areas of the battlefield, the U.S. is already depleted. Their overall quantity—of PAC-3 missiles for the Patriot and missiles for the THAAD system—could be completely gone by next week across the board.

## **#Larry**

Sorry. So, you know, Iran's done—they don't have a good air defense system to intercept Tomahawk missiles or JASSM, these glide bombs that are launched from outside Iranian territory. Even though the West claims they've suppressed Iran's air defense system, we still don't see much evidence that the U.S. or Israel are regularly overflying Iranian territory. They're standing off and launching these missiles like the JASSM. It has a range of up to 500 miles.

That tells me there's still some effective air defense system that can take down aircraft. It may not be able to intercept a ballistic or cruise missile, but it can certainly take down an aircraft, and therefore Iran still has ample capabilities. The bottom line is that the United States does not have the military force to compel Iran to surrender in the short term. I think Iran will be able to sustain this war easily for at least six months, and I don't believe the West can sustain it that long because of the economic costs.

## **#Mudiar**

Donald Trump says he wants to increase the military budget to \$1.5 trillion. This is at a time when debt and deficits have been rising at a staggering pace, the economy has slowed down, and bondholders are raising the cost of borrowing. So, quite apart from the fact that there are problems and political backlash against the war—I mean, the poll numbers show this is one of America's most unpopular wars, even from the start—we're seeing huge economic costs from it.

## **#Larry**

Yeah, no, it is the most unpopular war. You know, what Trump—normally, in the past, like the decision to invade Iraq in 2003—was accompanied by a massive PR campaign by Bush and Cheney. And when that invasion started, you had roughly three-fourths of the American public, you know, about 75% of Americans, supporting it.

## **#Ayushman**

Yeah, go America!

## **#Larry**

You know, you had a similar phenomenon back in the first Gulf War in 1990, going after Saddam Hussein. Trump didn't even—he didn't make an effort to build support. So right off the bat, he starts with only about 25 to 28 percent of Americans supporting the attack on Iran. Now he's frantically trying to build support, and I think it's going to fail. The other failure was that he didn't even consult with the allies, with the Europeans—"This is what the threat is, this is what we're going to do." You know, I was at State Counterterrorism back in 1990 when Saddam invaded Kuwait. Now, the fact of the matter is that the United States basically gave Saddam what he believed was permission to do that, which is a whole other issue.

Before we launched the war, my office was involved—my immediate boss, too—in going overseas to brief key countries throughout the Middle East: Jordan, Egypt, and European countries as well—Italy, Turkey—and presenting them with the intelligence we had about Iraqi involvement and terrorism, etc. Trump didn't even do that this time. Now he's all over the board. On the one hand, he says, "We've won. We've defeated Iran. Iran's completely defeated. We're decimated. Hey, Europe, help me. I need your help to open the Strait of Hormuz." Now, which is it? If you've got a massive victory, you don't need the Europeans' help. If you don't have a massive victory and you do need their help, it tells you that what you thought you could accomplish, you've failed to accomplish. And the Europeans turned around and said, "Hell no, we're not doing that." So Trump's caught.

## **#Mudiar**

I wonder how you're reading the Europeans' response to this. I mean, it seems quite confusing and rather haphazard, if you like. One day they're blaming Iran for starting this war—they'd already invoked the snapback a few months ago, reimposing sanctions as if the U.S. sanctions weren't enough. Then they went on blaming Iran again. Many of them even said they would send troops to the Akrotiri and Dhekelia bases in Cyprus.

But now they're also saying—Chancellor Mars is saying—that they would not participate in this war. Australia is saying they're not sending troops to open up Cyprus or the Strait of Hormuz. General Secretary Mark Ruth says they're collectively doing enough to keep the Strait of Hormuz open. What we're seeing is that Iran effectively has a veto over who passes through the Strait of Hormuz, and more and more countries are negotiating with Iran directly instead of doing anything collectively. I wonder what your sense is of the European response, apart from confusion.

## **#Larry**

Yeah, well, “confusion” is a kind description of what they’re going through. They’re now cut off from essential oil and natural gas. Whatever they buy going forward is going to come out of the United States at an exorbitant price, which will further inflame already weakened economies in Europe. Germany in particular is the one most likely to implode the quickest. And it was all unnecessary. I can see Europe reaching a stage of desperation where they’ll approach Iran and say, “Hey, let’s make a deal.” If I’m the Iranian generals right now, I’m going to work with the Houthis—we’re going to shut down the Red Sea, too.

You know, the Strait of Mandab al-Bab is it—at the southern end of the Red Sea. Shut that down, and there’s no longer transit through the Suez Canal, no oil coming out of the Persian Gulf. The demand would be: we’re going to close off normal global commerce until the rest of the world rises up and joins us in telling the United States to stop attacking Iran—tell the United States and Israel to stop. I think Iran is definitely entitled to that right. The rest of the world can no longer facilitate the murder of Iranian citizens. This has to be brought to a stop. So that’s where I think Iran holds the trump card: there’s no cost-free way for the United States to try to open the Strait of Hormuz. If they do try, I’m not saying it’s militarily impossible, but it’s going to be incredibly costly—both in terms of loss of life and the sheer money that has to be spent to assemble those assets.

And it ignores the fact that there’s a real possibility of Russia and China getting involved to provide Iran with additional support. So this still has great potential to expand into a global war. We’re going to want to pay close attention to what’s happening in Taiwan over the next week, because Taiwan only has, I think, about six days left of liquid natural gas before it’s exhausted. And what’s it going to do then? That’s going to affect a lot of production that currently goes on in Taiwan, and it’ll make Taiwan so economically vulnerable that China may be able to just step in and say, “Hey, we’ll offer you a deal. We’ll help you get back up and running—but you’re going to acknowledge you’ve always been part of us, and we’re done with this separation nonsense.” That very well could happen.

## **#Mudiar**

That might also be a window into buying more Russian gas and oil—particularly for Taiwan, but especially for the Europeans. They wouldn’t have any deal with the Russians. I mean, the Americans blew up the Nord Stream, obviously, and the European elites won’t talk to the Russians.

## **#Larry**

Well, Russia’s made it clear it’s not going to do business with Europe anymore. Europe’s done—they’ve washed their hands of it. Russia’s walking away. They’ve got plenty of demand. China wants as much as it can get out of Russia right now, with oil and natural gas. India, too, is extremely vulnerable. I mean, Prime Minister Modi is an idiot. He went to Israel and did the equivalent of performing public sex acts with Bibi Netanyahu—it was despicable—and then pledged some kind of

security alliance with Israel. The only thing I can conclude is that there's some significant Jewish money in India flowing into Modi's pockets and leading him to make that sort of declaration, because he stupidly did it two days before the war started. I think he had no idea the war was going to start.

And then once it started and Iran shut down the Strait of Hormuz—holy smokes—India was like, "Oh my God, wait, whoa, wait a second. That's 80% of our oil!" Right? So then they went to Russia. And again, previously they'd sort of dissed Russia. You know, they said, "Okay, yeah, we'll buy your oil—it's sanctioned—but you've got to give us a \$5 break off a \$59-a-barrel price." So Russia said, "Okay." And so, you know, India was taking advantage of Russia in that regard. And not only that, India was essentially attacking BRICS. Now, when the weight of the embargo came in and the implications of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz hit, India had a change of heart. They went back to Russia: "Hey, buddy, let's get together." And the Russians played it very cool—"Oh yeah, sure, my friend. Yes, absolutely. We've got all the oil you need."

The only difference is, before, you were paying \$55 a barrel. Now you're going to pay full price—no discounts. India's caught. What's it going to do, say no? It doesn't have another source. What I've heard—though I haven't seen any confirmation—is that I fully expected Iran might have punished India and said, "Yeah, you're not getting any more oil out of the Persian Gulf." But it looks like Iran did just the opposite. They took the high road and said, "Well, yes, as a fellow BRICS member, of course we'll make sure your oil can get out of the Persian Gulf." If that's true, I think it's actually boosted Iran's position and status within BRICS. Going forward, the "I" in BRICS could be Iran, not India. India really damaged itself in this—with China, with Russia, with Iran—and I don't know if Modi can recover.

## **#Mudiar**

Iranian foreign policy has been particularly impressive and principled. I mean, it's not just about India. Even with the Gulf Arab states, they've been trying to act very responsibly. Even the attacks on non-U.S. bases—the hotels and all that—they've at least offered a justification, saying these were U.S. personnel who had retreated to those buildings, and that's why they needed to attack, rather than just striking randomly. I mean, there was one point that was obviously misinterpreted and misquoted from President Zelensky, about apologizing for having created trouble for their neighbors because they didn't want to be held responsible.

Of course, it was misinterpreted and taken out of context. But the bottom line is that Iran has been extremely responsible, and it's not surprising that Iran seems to be doing a deal with India, despite Modi bootlegging Netanyahu just on the eve of the war. To come back to your point about whether he knew it or not—either he's extremely ignorant, because most people knew the war was going to happen and all those Vienna talks were scheduled, while the Geneva talks were just a façade to prepare for the war—or he did it on purpose, because he's handicapped by the Israel lobby. And the same is true for the IRIS Dena, which was sunk in the Indian Ocean. So either the Americans didn't tell Modi, which again is an embarrassment from his perspective, given that India has decided to be

part of that imperialistic Quad, or the Indian Navy is just incapable of policing its own waters. Either way, it's very embarrassing for Modi.

## **#Larry**

Well, let me turn the tables on you and ask a question. How do you explain Modi's behavior toward Israel? From an Indian perspective, what was driving that?

## **#Mudiar**

Yeah, I would say the primary thing is Islamophobia. I mean, Modi's big rise has been centered around galvanizing the Hindu population, quote-unquote, because, as you know, Hinduism is divided among multiple castes. So to bring them together for the ballot—not for other reasons—but to bring them together is kind of like white supremacy. You have to create "the other" to bring the rest together. So the Muslim has been the "other," so that they could galvanize different Hindu castes. And the big theory is that Israel is surrounded by millions of Muslims, and India is in the same situation—externally, that's the Hindu supremacist theory. I mean, nationally, Hindus are a majority, but internationally, they are a minority, just like Israelis.

So this is the sort of Hindu supremacist plank. His visit to Israel is basically catering to the domestic crowd. In fact, there are some polls—not very accurate, because the sample size is not just small but also skewed toward the Hindu far-right. But what they show is that around 28% of the population supports Israel in an Israel-Iran conflict, while about 21–22% supports Iran. So even in a sample that's biased toward Israel, because it's closer to the government, the division isn't that one-sided.

But if you take the opposition, which is huge in India—because we, again, have a first-past-the-post system—it means that if you get 31% of the vote, you effectively form the government, which also means the opposition is about 70%. The support for Iran is huge. So that's the political side of it. Just to add my two cents, there are, I think, security and military reasons too. India has the Kashmir problem. India has been occupying parts of Kashmir, and it has no popularity among the population there. The recent approach of the far-right government seems to be borrowed from the Israeli model in the Occupied West Bank—where all terrorism, any kind of national liberation movement, any talk about freedom, basically has to be presented as terrorism.

And so the model—whether it's effective or not—is the one borrowed from Israel, because the ideologues would say, "Look, Israel has solved the Gaza problem. Israel has solved the Occupied West Bank problem." And so that's the model we need to follow. I mean, of course, that's completely false, completely ineffective, and completely unjust. But that's the model they have. So these are the two pillars, I think, behind why Modi does it. I don't see any other reason for him to do

it on material grounds. I mean, we have many more laborers working in the Gulf countries, we import a lot of oil from the Arab region, and his closeness to Israel doesn't sit well with his domestic population.

## **#Larry**

Well, you know, that's the other thing about the number of Indians working in the Gulf countries, particularly the United Arab Emirates. They keep those foreign laborers in conditions of virtual slavery. I mean, their passports are confiscated, they're housed in squalor—no other way to describe it. They work long hours for little money. And, you know, it's a modern form of slavery that's allowed to go on. I guess enough money gets repatriated back to India that, from the Indian government's standpoint, they've got no desire to really interfere or try to protect the rights of their citizens.

## **#Mudiar**

I mean, it really is. Just to add, I guess this is slightly more complicated, given that the conditions for the working class in India are already so bad. I would say—and I've visited the Gulf, I've visited extensively in the Emirates—I don't think it's fair to say that the working conditions in the UAE and other Gulf countries are worse than in India. I mean, you can argue about political rights—citizens' rights—you don't get to vote there, and yes, your visa is tied to your workplace, and so on and so forth. Even for minor offenses, you may be repatriated. I mean, yeah, on the political questions it's debatable; one can make that argument. But on the economic front, I think there's a great desire among the poorer working class in India to emigrate to the Gulf countries, because if you can do that, you earn ten times more money and can send a huge part of that home, which is a big boost for your family.

And I mean, effectively, you jump the class ladder through the money from repatriation. And of course, states like Kerala and others—those are where these educated people go from. The super-educated go to the West, but among the working class, they do repatriate a lot of money, and that's useful for the government because they tax it.

## **#Larry**

Now, one other element that factors in here is, again, it boils down to a religious difference. The Shia have a completely different approach to dealing with people than the Sunni do. It's worth noting that, despite the claim that Iran is the number one sponsor of terrorism in the world, when you go down the list of the groups that are the most active—those involved in killing civilians for political purposes to achieve a political outcome—those are groups like ISIS, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, all of which are Sunni. Now, you know, I've had some emails from Sunni Muslims complaining, "Oh, you're singling us out." But guys, the facts are the facts. And the fact of the matter is that Iran has been involved in very little terrorism, despite Western claims to the contrary.

But it gets back to this—you know, you normally don't see Shia Muslims doing suicide bombings. And we just saw recently, last week, the attack on the desalination plant in Iran. Now, up to this point, Iran had been saying, "Hey, if you attack one type of our facility, we'll retaliate and hit the same kind." In this case, though, Iran did not retaliate against the desalination plants in the Gulf, in part because they know that if they did, they'd be putting potentially millions of people's lives at risk, since 80% to 90% of their water supply comes from the Persian Gulf through these desalination plants. In Iran, desalination only accounts for about 8%.

But it goes back to the founder of Shiism, Imam Hussein, and the fact that in his final battle, where he was martyred, his forces—about 70 men—were deprived of water for three days. They were up against an army of 3,000 and lost. In this sense, modern Shia are not going to deprive or do to the Sunnis what the Sunnis did to them. So there's some honor in that. Similarly, as I started looking into it—you go back to, and this happened way before you were born—the start of the Iraq-Iran war in September 1980. By 1982, the United States was supplying Iraq with precursors for chemical weapons. Then, in August 1983, Iraq used chemical weapons against Iran and continued to do so for the next six years, until August 1988. During that time, there were at least 20 chemical weapons attacks.

During that entire time, Iran never said, "Okay, we're going to do tit for tat. You hit us with chemicals, we're going to hit you with chemicals." Iran didn't do that. They never used chemical weapons. What I'm highlighting here is that even in extreme conditions, the Iranian Shia have demonstrated a principled commitment to their religious belief. I mean, it would be easy to say, "Hey, we're getting attacked here, this is unfair, therefore we're going to strike back." No, they refused to do so, which is why they've also refused to build a nuclear weapon. So the Shia, you know, from a moral standpoint, have demonstrated a kind of moral superiority to the West and to Israel—something those countries have really disgraced themselves over in their attacks on Iran.

## **#Mudiar**

This is super important, given that the mainstream media—the New York Times, the Washington Post, and others—have completely erased this fact. If you look at recent press coverage, Boko Haram, ISIS, al-Qaeda—they're gone. They've dropped out of the reporting. I mean, that history is gone, erased, rewritten. Now you have a so-called reformist party government in Syria, and all it talks about is al-Nusra. Is that what you call reformists? Is that the new euphemism? Yeah, that's what they're doing. So all that history of al-Nusra, al-Qaeda, and ISIS—they've just... and you would know this better, given that's your research interest in terrorism and counterterrorism and how these narratives evolve—but I find it astonishing that it has just disappeared.

And now what has taken its place is Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Hamas—and these vague talks about the resistance in Iraq. I mean, they, of course, don't use the word "resistance," but they talk about the IEDs during the occupation. All I'm trying to say is that they don't talk about Hezbollah's history—how it was born as a resistance movement during the invasion, from 1982 through the

2000s. And we can go through the history of Iraq, its occupation, and the resistance—born out of Iraq, by the way, not Iran. I mean, it's shameful to say that Muqtada al-Sadr, the Sadrists, and all those who resisted the American occupation in Iraq were just proxies, just as it's a disgrace to say that Ansar Allah in Yemen is a proxy of Iran. It's mind-boggling.

## **#Larry**

Yeah, yeah, no, it is. And particularly when you dig into the so-called terrorist acts by Hezbollah—the one where they're blamed for the attack on the Marine barracks in October 1983, killing 241 Marines. Yeah.

## **#Larry**

Alastair Crooke, who's a genuine expert in that area, says no, that was Amal—it wasn't Hezbollah. And Amal was a group of Lebanese Shia, but they were organized back in 1972.

## **#Larry**

So they were seven years before the rise—the creation—of the Islamic Republic of Iran. So it's not exactly like Iran created them as a proxy, not at all. It's also worth noting that many of the so-called terrorist attacks attributed to Hezbollah were attacks against military targets or government buildings. They weren't attacking restaurants or commercial airliners. Some of that may have happened in the early years, but through the late '90s and into the 2000s—over the last 26 years—they've been focused primarily on going after Israeli military targets in particular.

## **#Mudiar**

I guess we can have one final question. I wanted to ask about your response to something I discussed with Colonel Wilkerson. He's been arguing that it's not unimaginable that this could lead to the use of nuclear weapons. His argument, for our viewers—you'd know it—is basically that the U.S. wouldn't be able to sustain this war for very long for political, economic, and military reasons. And Israel, once it realizes that and sees it can't do anything without the U.S., might resort to using nuclear weapons. So I wanted to ask your thoughts on how close we are to a second use of nuclear weapons.

## **#Larry**

Well, I can't rule it out. The problem is this: much of the world's perception about the use of nuclear weapons is based on a lie. And the lie is that it was because the U.S. dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki—that's what forced the Japanese to surrender. I just wrote an article a few days ago, looking back at the bombing campaign, and this article does two things.

## #Mudiar

The bombing campaign of Tokyo and other cities?

## #Larry

Yeah, of Japan—of Japan. Because it explodes the myth that if you just bomb people enough, they'll give up. The bombing of Japan, the killing of civilians, started with great intensity in March of 1945. It began with the firebombing of Tokyo, which killed over 100,000 civilians, and it continued with great intensity through March, April, May, June, and July. Then on August 6th came the bombing of Hiroshima, and on August 9th, the bombing of Nagasaki. So during that period—from the first of March until August 9th—the United States had killed almost a million Japanese civilians through bombing. And remember, Japan's population at the start of 1945 was about 72 million.

So we killed close to—let's say—about 1% of the population. And the mythology taught in the West is, "Oh, that's why the Japanese surrendered." But in fact, documents and papers recording the debate within the Japanese military command show that no, they were willing to continue the fight until the Soviet Red Army moved to the east, in accordance with Joseph Stalin fulfilling a promise he had made to Franklin Delano Roosevelt at Yalta. Once the Soviets entered the fray, the Japanese had been calculating, "Maybe we can negotiate with the Russians, they'll cut us a deal, and we can play them off against the Americans." But no—the Soviets upheld their promise.

And you can actually make the case that the reason Truman used the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was more to send a message to the Soviets—basically, "Hey, look what we've got that you don't." But during that entire time, when he killed about 720,000 people through bombings, that did not cause the government of Japan to collapse. Right now, the United States has killed probably fewer than 5,000 people in Iran. So thank God we're not talking about the kind of numbers we saw in Japan. But Iran's a much larger country, with about 91 million people. So this myth—this wrong belief—that you can launch a nuclear weapon and it's going to be a game changer... yeah, it's going to kill a lot of people.

Yes, it's going to cause a lot of damage, but Iran is a big country—it's about four times the size of what Japan was. In contrast, Israel is much smaller; you'd only have to hit two cities to take out about 55% of the population. I believe that with the death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, his son, Mojtaba Khamenei, may be in a position to reverse the fatwa issued by his father. I don't know. The ideal solution, in game theory terms—which I'm sure you're familiar with—the best outcome right now for Iran would be to produce at least two nuclear weapons and show that it has them. Because then that would force Israel to say, "Okay, we don't have the cost advantage anymore."

If they can launch a nuke, they can take out Tehran—that's 12 million people. They've still got well over another 79 million. Whereas if Iran does the same to Israel and takes out Tel Aviv and Haifa, you've lost 55% of your population and two key industrial cities in Israel. At that point, Israel's got

to sue for peace. I hope it doesn't go there, but you can't rule it out, because the people making these decisions are not rational, sane human beings. Much of what they're doing is driven by emotion on the Western side. I would argue that the Iranians are acting in a much more measured, intelligent, rational way.

## **#Mudiar**

We'll leave it there, Larry. Once again, thank you so much for your time—good to have a discussion after a while.

## **#Larry**

Okay, well, I wish you and your family the best. I know they're dealing with some health issues, so my thoughts are with them.

## **#Mudiar**

Thank you.

## **#Ayushman**

Hi, my name is Ayushman. I, along with Mudiar Jyotishman, have started this platform. Over the last two years, we've tried to build content for the left and progressive forces. We've interviewed economists, historians, political commentators, and activists so far. If you've liked our content and want us to build an archive for the left, I have two requests for you. Please consider donating to the cause—the link is in the description below. And if you're not able to, don't feel bad; you can always like and share our videos with your comrades. Finally, don't forget to hit the subscribe button.