

Lawrence Wilkerson: Israel May Cease to Exist & Launch Nuclear Strike

Lawrence Wilkerson is a retired Colonel in the US Army and the former Chief of Staff to the US Secretary of State. Colonel Wilkerson discusses why the war against Iran could destroy Israel, and also the consequences if Iran develops a nuclear deterrent. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@GDiesen1> Support the research: 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 today by Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, former chief of staff to the U.S. Secretary of State, who also spent a long career in the military and at the White House. Thank you very much for coming back on the program.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Good to be with you, Glenn. I hope it's—well, I hope it's getting a little bit better in Europe, but I'm told by other people—one Norwegian friend this morning said, "Nope, it's getting worse."

#Glenn

Well, the weather is looking good otherwise. Politically, everything else—no, it seems to be going quite poorly, as in most places in the world. But yeah, a lot of these problems appear to have gotten worse, of course. Things were already bad, but they're getting a lot worse due to the war against Iran. And, well, the most recent statements we got from Trump—first he gave this 48-hour countdown for the destruction of Iran's energy facilities, then he extended it to five days, then to ten days. I wanted to know what you think will happen at the end of this countdown. I mean, can Trump really afford to go up the escalation ladder now? And also, it's unclear what this countdown is for. Does he actually believe he can get this from Iran? Is it public diplomacy to manage narratives, or do you see it as something meant to hold the government together? I'm just wondering how you interpret these recent events coming out of the White House.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

If I were to be absolutely honest with you—and I will be—I think it's Trump trying to buy back time that he knows is running out. He doesn't know any other way to do it, and he's got a sycophantic enough cabinet that they go along with it. I don't think he has any idea how he's going to get out of this. He's in it—he's in it deeply. He's finally, I think, come to the realization that he's in it, and in it deeply, and he doesn't have the tools to extricate himself. The main person who got him into it to this depth is Bibi Netanyahu, and Bibi has absolutely no sympathy for him whatsoever—in fact, he'd take him with him in a heartbeat if it were to hell and back. So he's probably finally realizing, even through his megalomania—which is intensifying every day—I think Jeff Pace is right about that.

He can't finish—not only sentences—sometimes he can't even finish individual words coherently. And he's stuck. He's trying to buy time right now with all these different, you know, five days, ten days, thirteen days, whatever it might be. But he's also, very frighteningly, marshalling lots of force across the globe. Not significant military force in terms of an invasion of Iran, because we simply couldn't do that. And if he were to attempt it, I think we'd probably be looking at impeachment, joined by his own party. What he's doing is assembling all manner of special operations forces and auxiliaries there too—like the 160th SOAR, the Special Operations Aviation Regiment, like the Rangers from Washington, and the Rangers from other places in this country.

All manner of special operators he's going to try to use in some esoteric way—think Cargill Island or some of the other islands in the Gulf I heard mentioned this morning—or other places, like he did in Venezuela, with this kind of instant precision afforded by the delivery vehicles and the extraction vehicles and such. And it's impossible. You're not going to do that in this scenario like you did in Venezuela. And you're certainly not going to do it with all these disparate forces being brought in from different points on the globe—aircraft from Ramstein, aircraft from Italy, aircraft from Japan. I just don't know what he's thinking, other than, "I'm going to pull off a really quick one like I did in Venezuela."

And it's going to be so—ha, ha, ha. And I have done so much damage, for example, to Cargill and Iran's principal port, that I'll get some movement in the talks—which aren't even being conducted. Those were total lies by Witkoff yesterday. I'm told by a very reputable authority that he hasn't seen a single Iranian. He's been dealing with Pakistanis or Omanis or other people offering their good offices—thank God—but he hasn't talked to a single Iranian. And in that vein, let me tell you what the most important Iranian, in my mind, just said. This is Arachi, at the UN meeting—a specially convened emergency meeting—because the UN is pretending it wants to look at, now, the bombing of the school in Iran, where many schoolchildren were killed.

And Arachi had this to say—and these are just quintessential Arachi-type statements—but they sum up the situation really well. "Two bullying nuclear weapons regimes." This is him giving his statement to the UN emergency meeting: "Two bullying nuclear weapons regimes have attacked my

country. This is the second time they have torpedoed diplomacy." He was kind there. He didn't say that they, in the middle of diplomacy conducted in all good spirits, bombed the hell out of him. "Normalization of crimes against humanity is not sufficient to describe this."

The attack on the school was just the latest chapter. This all began with Palestine—it all began with Gaza. Now we have 27 days of illegal war against my country. You, America, you, Israel, you, the United Nations, have established that there is no regard for humanitarian law. Six hundred schools in my country have been bombed. Hospitals have been bombed. Nursing homes have been bombed. Ambulances, both stationary and mobile, have been bombed. Water sources have been bombed. Food sources have been bombed. These are all war crimes—all a product of the world ignoring Palestine.

Brought it right back to that—the original crime, if you will. Then he ended with, "But we have resolved," and I have no doubt they have. That's who he should be negotiating with. Witkoff is scared to death of Arachi. He wouldn't dare go into the same room with him because Arachi is a superb diplomat, and Witkoff hasn't a clue. He and Kushner are just making money on their diplomatic envoy tours. So that's where we are—we're at a point of utter confusion in the empire. And that cabinet meeting was a personification, if that's the right term, of it. I don't know where it goes from here, but I know it isn't good.

#Glenn

Well, you mentioned buying time. What does he need to buy time for, though? I mean, how can—

#Lawrence Wilkerson

He's just buying time for the sake of buying time.

#Glenn

Yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

That's it. He's buying time just to be buying time. And he's moving all these forces around as if he's some kind of magician with military power, when in fact people like General Keane ought to be telling him, "This is costing billions—and to no end. Other than what, Mr. President? What is it that you are attempting to achieve?" I listened to Keane this morning—you know, General Keane, that asshole. All he does is proselytize for the people he's making money off of. He's talking about how everything is going to come down to, "We're going to attack them, and we're going to attack them with these forces that are currently being marshaled."

The MEUs—the two MEUs, the one from Okinawa and, I think, the other one coming from somewhere in CONUS—and the 82nd Airborne element, and these people who are special operators. We're going to attack them. Where are we going to attack them? Well, we're going to attack them on various islands. We've had islands offered by the UAE. Oh, you mean that island out there you've been contesting with Iran for, what, about 50 years—Little Sparta? What are you going to do from that island? It's not even near the strait. What are you going to do from that island? Just sit there and preach? I'm sorry, General Keane.

You've made the absolute error that if I were on a game floor with a major or lieutenant colonel participating in that game, and he turned around and told me what you just told me—that we're accomplishing all of our objectives—I would have thrown him off the game floor. Listen, son, you're not here to accomplish your objectives; you're here to accomplish your mission. Your objectives being accomplished are supposed to lead to the accomplishment of the mission. What's your mission? And you would have been unable to tell me. You would have been categorically unable to tell me what your mission was. That's where we are. That's where we are. In military terms, this is the worst performance I've ever seen by a leadership cell from the United States. It's terrible. It's utterly terrible. And I blame them all—from Keane to Hicks to the president.

#Glenn

How do you make sense of this new leadership? A lot of people were worried about this, because what's happening now was very much predictable. For once, the Iranians were quite open about what they were going to do, despite Trump's claim that no one could have predicted they would attack all these bases and shut down the Strait of Hormuz. Yes, well, reasonably, I guess how quickly they shut down the Strait of Hormuz came as a surprise to many. But the overall direction, I think, should have been predictable. But what is it with the administration? It seems to be—not just in his demeanor and the vulgar language—but we also see these other components, like all these strange prayer meetings. And, you know, I'm a Christian. I don't mind prayer; it should have a role in the culture, perhaps. But in politics and in the war rhetoric, it doesn't belong there. If anything, it's quite absurd. Yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

It's a complete bastardization of Jesus Christ—no question about it. It's an adoption of the Old Testament that Jesus Christ repudiated. His whole time on this earth, his 33 years or so of life, was spent repudiating the Old Testament. He said it again and again and again. And now we have these people—from Franklin Graham to Pete Hegseth, Ted Cruz included, and a host of others like Mike Johnson, the Speaker of the House—who want to resurrect this Old Testament God and use it as a cudgel to beat their enemies with. And their enemies are everyone from Democrats to the Iranians.

They like what Trump is doing. I can't believe that the leadership of both parties, though, is going to continue this progress toward destruction, because the cost of it—not just in dollars for a country that's already \$40 trillion in aggregate debt—but the cost for the world.

This morning we were looking at shipping, at commerce in general, and at key products in that commerce. One of them was helium, for example. You can't make computer chips—at least the more sophisticated ones—without helium. Well, a large portion of the helium, we didn't even know this when we were looking at commodities and so forth, comes through the Strait of Hormuz. It's like the urea; I didn't know that much urea came through the Strait of Hormuz. We are disturbing the world economy in such significant and profound ways right now that it might not recover for years. We are already in recession—if you just look at two quarters in a row, we're already in recession. There's a really good chance we'll go into depression.

And all because—well, not all because, since a lot of this was foretold by our profligate fiscal policy—but this has sped it up, deepened it, and made it almost instantaneous. I don't think Scott Besson or Donald Trump have a clue that they're doing this, nor did anyone we were talking with this morning. I don't think they know what they're doing to the global economy. If they do, they should all be taken out and shot tomorrow morning at dawn, because this isn't just the empire. This is a lot of people—seven, eight billion people—who are going to be impacted seriously and significantly by what we're doing if we don't stop very soon. And I don't even know if it'll stop if we stop, because we've already started it.

#Glenn

Yeah, I was going to say, even if we stop—even if the war ended tomorrow or today—a lot of the problems are already, you know, in place.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Five hundred ships are now off the strait with no place to go, all loaded with crews. Granted, the crews are only ten to twelve people, but, I mean, that's all it takes to run these big ships today. But they're standing off the strait with nowhere to go—three thousand mariners, almost four thousand ships.

#Glenn

Well, this is the vulnerability, though. After decades of globalization and interdependence—everyone making themselves reliant on the whole machinery working smoothly—and then suddenly someone attacks Iran. I mean, this is, yeah, truly disastrous.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Actually, when I was at the Naval War College, I wrote a paper on it and studied, among other things, all the straits in the world that were critical. I used as my guide for criticality the buildup at that time that was going on to produce the Law of the Sea Treaty. I looked at what those straits might be under the Law of the Sea Treaty's regime. You know, the straits are either international or they're parceled—so they're partly in this territorial sea, partly in that one—and then the center, where the ships actually pass, is internationalized.

I'm not making an exact portrayal of it, but they did a good job of showing where all the critical choke points were—critical seas, inland seas, for example, like the Sea of Okhotsk, which was of big interest to us during the Pacific War with the Soviet Union at the time. And I came away from that realizing there were about six or seven in the world that, if you got control of them—and control meant you had to have all the paraphernalia of that control: air, sea, subsea, maybe even space—you could bring the world to its knees.

#Glenn

And it's coming true.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

It's coming true. In a most desultory and disgusting way, it's coming true. And the Strait of Hormuz was not actually the most serious of the top five identified, but it was one of them. The Bab el-Mandeb was much more serious, and then the Red Sea. We're doing it—we're doing it to ourselves. And as you pointed out, it's partly because we let ourselves become so globalized. But it was pretty good; it worked pretty well as long as everything functioned. You throw something like this into it, and that's what I did in my scenarios—I threw things in there, and I saw a very, very badly disrupted world when I did. And you know, we weren't as globalized then. This was 25 years ago. We weren't as globalized then as we are now.

#Glenn

Well, it seems that Trump is a bit of a one-trick pony. His approach to most adversaries is this massive threat—show overwhelming strength—and then come in as the dealmaker to get an all-or-nothing deal. The problem, though, is that if Iran holds all the cards in terms of going up the escalation ladder, and the kind of deals that Trump wants aren't really possible for Iran, because they see this as an existential threat. They're not going to give up anything. They don't even want to go back to their status quo, because it was becoming intolerable. And even if there were a deal that seemed reasonable, there's no trust anymore. It's very likely they'd be hit by missiles while they were there signing the deal. So it's...

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Israel's never going to let it go anyway. To the last Israeli, they're going to keep it up, keep it going. And by the way, I think we're getting close to the point where we might actually be thinking about the last Israeli. It's getting really dire for Israel.

#Glenn

What do we actually know about the situation in Israel? We don't get much footage out of there at the moment—none at all, really, I think.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

The very fact that, in Hebrew, Netanyahu announced last night—in a moment of peak hysteria or just plain imbecility—that he was going to call up another 400,000 says a lot. The battle in Lebanon is not going well for them. Hezbollah has shown a remarkable ability to stop tank columns, kill the lead tank, kill the rear tank, and then start picking off the ones in between. You've got Israeli tankers abandoning their vehicles and running up the hills beside the columns, trying to get away from the fire. They've already taken out seven or eight Merkavas in a single column. They're not having a good time of it, in other words.

I do now understand why he said he was going to call up another 400,000, but then the question in my mind arose immediately: you just called up 300,000, 30% of whom didn't show up. Where are you going to find these other 400,000? And even more to the point, where are you going to find those who will show up? Are these over-65-year-olds? Are these under-18-year-olds? Who are these people you're calling up? You don't have that big a nation. And you've probably seen the scenes—one IDF general pulling his hair out and actually crying on camera, a couple of mayors doing the same sort of thing. It's becoming extremely dangerous to be in Israel in any capacity other than in a bomb shelter.

Nothing is going up, virtually everything is coming down. There's no air defense left in Israel, and Iran hasn't run out of missiles. In fact, it can now use cheap drones to do major damage in Israel, because they have nothing left to even shoot the cheap drones down with. Add Lebanon and the real tasks they're confronting there into that mix, and then add what's still going on in Gaza. And you have Naftali Bennett making these egregious statements. The reason Bennett is making these statements is because he doesn't think Netanyahu has finished Hamas in Gaza—and he's right.

He hasn't. This vaunted, massively successful, hugely prideful military—the IDF—in its ground component has still not defeated Hamas in Gaza. And Bennett's angry at Netanyahu for taking his eye off the ball, for letting the UN and Trump create this, you know, "Trump City" or whatever. So Israel is in turmoil right now. I... I hate to say this, and I've been predicting it for a long time, but I don't feel any joy in seeing it come true. Israel is going to disappear. As a Jewish state in the Levant, Israel is going to disappear. And Netanyahu is going to be the presider over that disappearance.

#Glenn

Well, I saw in the Times of Israel that it was reported the IDF Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Samir, warned that the IDF—again, this is the chief of staff speaking—could collapse on itself due to a manpower shortage. That’s quite a warning. He said, you know, if you’re putting up a red flag, I’d put up all ten red flags. This seems like the time not to double down, but to find an off-ramp. You say there is no off-ramp, and Israel could cease to exist. So...

#Lawrence Wilkerson

The off-ramp requires Netanyahu to face the music, though, I think. And that’s a big impediment for him finding one, because if he does face the music, he’s probably going to jail.

#Glenn

But I just have a hard time. Also, if you look at Iran’s demand of the United States, it’s to leave the region. If it doesn’t do so voluntarily, Iran will essentially pressure the Gulf states to do it by conditioning access to the Strait of Hormuz and by bombing out all the U.S. bases. But it doesn’t look like either the United States or Israel—two countries that have tied their security to global and regional primacy, that are heavily militarized, and that have the leaders they do now—are willing to say, “Well, we miscalculated, we’ll give the Iranians what they want,” and walk back from this war that many people have been pushing for decades. So, do you think there’s a possibility, instead of Israel ceasing to exist, that they’ll reach for their nuclear weapons?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

In that regard, I have some very disquieting news from Ted Postol, the emeritus professor at MIT who’s been advising a lot of us on nuclear issues. He called me at William & Mary while I was down there Tuesday night, and we talked at length. I think he convinced me—or I should say, I think what he’s saying is—there’s at least a 75%, maybe 80% possibility. I don’t know what percentage he would put on it, that the Iranians have sufficient enriched uranium now, and a facility deeply underground, so they could build a bomb, put the warhead on a Karam Shah or similar type Mach 3 or Mach 4 missile, and deliver it—maybe even more than one. And as Ted was talking to me, I went back to Kang Seok-joo and Lee Goon and Jim Kelly, our assistant secretary for the Pacific, going to Pyongyang and taking an economic package that was fairly robust.

It had taken a lot to get it through George Bush, and even more to get it through Dick Cheney. As compensation for their giving up the pursuit of a nuclear weapon in Yongbyon or Kang Sok-ju—I can’t remember which one—Jim looked at them, and in Korean, translated immediately, they said, “We already have the bomb.” And that ended the diplomatic mission. It was over. Jim came home. I think we’re looking at that sort of talent, capability, and intent, if you will, deep underground in Iran. And if they’ve made the decision to do what Ted Postol thinks they’ve decided to do—and they

certainly have the capacity, the material, and the expertise—then we're in a new ballgame. Very shortly, we're in a very new ballgame, because Iran will have not one or two, but three or four, maybe five. As the Koreans said, they had six to twelve nuclear weapons. Where do we go from there, if that's the case? And how does Iran demonstrate that?

That's a huge question in my mind now after talking with Ted. It also brings us back to Netanyahu, because I still think Netanyahu is the most likely person to use not one, but multiple nuclear weapons when he gets in a real bind—and is fully aware of that bind—which might be produced by these sort of adumbrated elections that are coming up. Will he do it? Will he let the genie out of the bottle and use nuclear weapons? I take you back to our chief statement, first bullet: "I'm being attacked, we're being attacked, Iran's being attacked. We're a non-nuclear state, and we're being attacked by two nuclear weapon states—one admitted and one not admitted. Maybe it's going to be three here very shortly."

And then you have to go over to Riyadh and ask yourself: what's the deal Mohammed bin Salman has with Pakistan, and will Pakistan live up to it? So we're entering an entirely new dimension—which is why Ted called me to talk about this conflict—a dimension that, in addition to what's happening in the global economy, which won't go away and may indeed produce, within the next six months, a depression, a global depression, we're looking at the possibility of a nuclear exchange—and a serious one. We also have Putin having talked with Xi, and both of them agreed—at least, this is good intelligence, I think—that they're going to do what they can to help keep the straits open.

And I assume that means under Iran's conditions—that is to say, any state supporting Israel or supporting us in this war won't be allowed to transit, and everyone else can. How they're going to enforce that on the water, as it were, I don't know. But we're bringing this to a head in a way that doesn't look good when you step back and ask, what are the potential outcomes in this situation? There are so many bad ones. And then you look at who's leading the empire—the baboon, the idiot leading the U.S. empire—and the orangutans assembled around him. I can't be any more graphic and still be accurate. You really have deep, profound concerns.

#Glenn

It seems like this is going wrong on so many levels. On the battlefield, it's obviously going terribly wrong, which of course could escalate into a nuclear exchange. As you said, Iran could already have a nuclear deterrent in case Israel goes down this path. We have the global economy melting down. You see the Trump administration, which seemed to have its day in the sun after the attack on Venezuela, now seeing its own administration start to fall apart. It just seems this has a lot of dimensions to it, and all of them are pretty much terrible. Do you see any other wider ripple effects of this war? I mean, for example, simply having a lack of access to gas impacts key economic centers—be it Taiwan with its semiconductor industries. How do you see this possibly spreading or having, I guess, wider ramifications?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, we did a little stubby-pencil work down on campus and tried to look at how many countries—particularly those on somebody's hit list, like Taiwan—had how many days of supply before they began to fall apart, especially industrially or technologically. Taiwan came to mind again, but we were looking at other countries too—those involved in conflict or on the verge of it, like Pakistan and Afghanistan. And we came to the conclusion that there are so many hot points on the globe right now, lit even brighter, if you will, by this crisis in Southwest Asia, that you could make a pretty strong case for what would very much look like a global war, very shortly accompanied by, as we said, a global depression.

And countries actually engaging in it, trying to solve their depression-related problems. Not to put too fine a point on it, but just look at what's going to happen in this country, I think. When you get crises like the ones now occurring in Southern California—where a gallon of gasoline costs far more than back here in the East, and in other states where it's not low, but it's not eight or nine dollars a gallon—someone told me yesterday that in Florida it went up to \$3.59 or something like that. So that's unusual. Let that ripple across the country, and let the other impacts that we're going to feel—unquestionably going to feel—if this really turns into not just a recession, which it already is...

As was pointed out this morning, it already is a recession by the definition of a recession. We've had two quarters in a row—it's a recession. Now it has to go down a little bit further to become a depression. And once it becomes a depression, we're in a position that historically is very difficult to get out of. If we're complicating it even further—making it harder to get out of—by putting almost 4,000 ships off the Strait of Hormuz with nowhere to go, and other things like that, because what we're doing is backing things up all across the globe, then we're just augmenting it and deepening it. It's almost as if, Glenn, there are some people who want a global conflict.

I mean, I hate to say something like that, but it almost looks like some of the financiers—you know, the Rothschilds, the JP Morgans, the Medicis, those types in the world today—are fomenting a global conflict and won't be satisfied until they get it. I think they're going to face very, very heavy and deep recriminations if they do, because this is not going to be fun for anyone. You're not going to be able to go into the market, ride in and out, and make fortunes off this, because you're looking at—well, you're looking at its most profound and deepest concern level. You're looking at a nuclear exchange, and then you're looking at a large nuclear exchange.

And as Ronald Reagan even came to realize in the latter part of his second term, we don't want to do this, because it's the end of the human race. Bingo. We're walking down a very dangerous road right now. And the thing that troubles me so much is we're walking down it in my country, in the empire. We're walking down it with fools—absolute fools. And I don't just mean one or two; I mean a whole horde of them, from Hegseth in his Christianity and Trump in his grifting, to Gabbard and her lack of courage, to Besant in his absolute disdain for children dying. You name it. The Secretary of Energy, who yesterday made an absolute ass of himself. Why? You know, I asked my students,

why do you think we made the Secretary of Energy the latest statutory member of the National Security Council?

Why did it take so long, and why did we make it? Well, the answer was because he oversees nuclear weapons. Bingo. That's national security to the ultimate. And yet, what a fool we have as the Secretary of Energy. I was thinking back to the one—I can't remember his name now—but he was a nuclear physicist, and he helped Obama mightily with the JCPOA. One of the reasons he was able to offer such extraordinary expertise to those negotiations was because he was a nuclear physicist. Yes, he was Secretary of Energy, but he was a nuclear physicist—probably the only one we've ever had who was truly qualified for that job. And now look who we have: a baboon in one of the most dangerous departments of all. A baboon. So we're in trouble, Glenn. We're in deep trouble.

#Glenn

Well, if Ted Postol is correct, the Iranians have—if not crossed the line yet—then they can cross it. And indeed, if they face an existential threat and think the US and Israel, in desperation, could reach for nuclear weapons, they have the material and the know-how. It seems not improbable that they would develop a nuclear deterrent. I was just wondering how you see the US and Israel reacting to this, though, because it's not as if it would be—well, you know, if you see Russia or China having a nuclear deterrent, then the first reaction is, okay, we have to be a bit more restrained.

But it looks as if the rhetoric around Iran is that they've bought into this idea that they're all irrational, crazy mullahs who just want to destroy Israel and the West. And as Pete Hegseth might think, this is therefore a war for God—good versus evil—all that nonsense. How would the U.S. and Israel react to an Iranian nuclear deterrent? Because they probably wouldn't see it as a deterrent; they'd see it as a doomsday device or something.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, let's look at another aspect before I get to that for you. This morning—and I wasn't completely aware of this—I knew there was a target list, as it were, but I didn't know how extensive and specific it was. I saw some of it this morning. Iran has a target list for the region: read Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain—they've already pretty much destroyed. They have a target list of all the main, truly decisive points in the region for all these countries. An interim step for them. Let's just postulate for a moment that we do put troops on the ground somewhere—limited troops, because we don't have enough—but a lot of them there.

The rumors right now are that the number is about 4,500. The 82nd group that's coming in, and all these other troops, are basically special operations forces like we used against Venezuela. So you've got the Rangers, you've got the Special Operations Aviation Regiment—SOAR—out of Fort Campbell. You've got all these people assembling troops around places like Ramstein and so forth, where they can descend on Iran. Let's say they do that—they land on one or two of those islands in the Gulf,

possibly including Kharg—and they do a little damage here, a little damage there, and so forth. Then Iran says to itself, “Well, now it’s time for the interim step,” and they attack all these targets.

That’s going to bring every single Gulf state to its knees, because these targets are the critical ones. They include things like the output facility for Saudi Arabia, which produces around 12 million barrels of oil per day. Some of it goes through the pipeline near Jeddah and out through the Red Sea. By that time, the Houthis will probably be interdicting that again too. Some of it goes through the Strait of Hormuz—the majority that way. So we’re talking about bringing all the states in the region to their knees before they do anything else. What will we do then? Good question, Larry. What will we do then?

Because we’ve already lost our allies, I think, for all practical purposes—but we will have totally lost them. And not just lost them in the sense that they don’t want our protection anymore, but lost them because they’ll be basket cases. One has to ask: what will their own people do at that point, when the ruling parties are pretty much wiping themselves out? So that’s the interim step. Then you get to the answer to your question about nukes. Do I think Donald Trump would even consider that Iran was a target he shouldn’t use a nuclear weapon on? Not for a minute. Do I think Bibi Netanyahu would feel that way? Not for a minute. So what do we have then? We have the empire and its vassal state in the Mediterranean—Israel—using nuclear weapons on an ostensibly non-nuclear state to destroy it.

Well, the only way you're going to do that is if you use a lot of nuclear weapons. I do mean a lot. I mean a U.S. ballistic missile submarine in the North Arabian Sea unloading its Tridents. What do you think is going to happen when that happens? I hesitate to even consider it, because there are other people on the other side who have the same arsenal. In fact, there are two countries on the other side that have the same arsenal—Russia, even bigger than ours; China, slightly smaller than ours but getting larger, and certainly capable of wreaking havoc. So we're talking about the three predominant nuclear powers in the world then facing one another, with the proposition that the U.S. just used massive nuclear weapons on Iran. I don't want to go there. I don't want to go there. I'd prefer maybe the grave before I go there.

#Glenn

Yeah, well, you’d think the U.S. wouldn’t go down that path, given the risk of pulling in the other nuclear powers.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And Trump has said, to his credit, that he won’t. He’s said he won’t—but how many times has he said he wouldn’t, and then subsequently did?

#Glenn

I was going to say this would make sense, given how predictably disastrous it would have been—but attacking Iran to begin with was already predictably a disaster, so it doesn't fill me with optimism. Let me just ask you one last question, though. What do you think—what are the possible ways out of this, then? Because, as you said, the Iranians can go up the escalation ladder. They can go tit for tat. They can take out all those Gulf states if they want to. The U.S. can't really do much in terms of penetrating the Iranian fortress besides using nuclear weapons. So unless we're going up that escalation ladder with all those consequences, we definitely don't want to risk that. What is the possible way out here? You know, because with Yemen, Trump could declare victory and go home—but he can't do that here, because it's not a possibility. So what are we looking at? What's the possible diplomatic pathway out of this, keeping in mind that the last two negotiations were used to launch surprise attacks?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think you just said it. I don't think it's very likely, but you did just say it—and you said it when you said it. And because it's not very likely, you see the predicament we're in. What you said was: declare victory and leave. And that means leaving Israel to its own end—and it will be an end. That's the best thing to do: declare victory and leave. Let Iran stand on its own, without a single U.S. sanction on it, because we would lift those sanctions. We'd goad the Europeans into lifting theirs too, and say to Iran, "Rebuild your state." I'd even offer some reparations if I were there. I would never have created this situation in the first place, but if I were suddenly dropped into it, I'd offer some reparations.

And I would tell that little quisling state of Israel, "Do what you can, but stop the killing." And I'd back myself up on the Gaza situation too. It's not going to happen—I'm pipe-dreaming. It's not going to happen. But declaring victory and leaving might. That kind of thing would probably appeal to Trump, because he thinks he can spin anything with his people, and he only cares about his people. He can spin anything into their believing it. And he's probably right—with a significant core of his MAGA group still, he could spin this into a victory if he tried hard enough. Then come the midterms. He's going to lose, and he's going to be impeached. So, are we going to have the midterms?

That's the next huge question for us, even if we get through this by some miracle like I just described. He's still got to win the midterms, and all the polls show he's going to lose—his party's going to lose disastrously—and he knows impeachment is around the corner from that. Because I think even his own party will jump on it at that point. I remember Dick Nixon, and I remember how the Republicans agonized over joining the impeachment proceedings. And then, in the end, they went over to the White House and showed him the impeachment documents. And Dick said to himself, "I think I'll resign instead of being the first president successfully removed from office by impeachment," because they were so powerful—the articles were so powerful. That's what needs to happen to Trump.

#Glenn

Well, I have a feeling he's not going to go down without a fight, yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Probably in a straitjacket. That's the way he'll leave the White House—in a straitjacket. I mean, I'm laughing, but I'm crying. That's probably the way he should leave the White House.

#Glenn

It's sort of tragic how we ended up here. I thought I am—yeah. Well, as I spoke recently with Glenn Diesen, I was making the point that there was reason for so much optimism initially, because in the first term he didn't start any new wars. He was pretty much the first president not to do that. It was all premised on the idea that the U.S. had to adjust to this new international distribution of power—that it had to end the forever wars in the Middle East, pull out, and put an end to the Ukraine war. Not that the objectives were altruistic, but just that we had to focus on China and the Western Hemisphere. And then here we are, one year into it, still in Ukraine and now launching the worst war in the Middle East—

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I read John—I watch him pretty frequently, and I know him a little bit. We started Quincy together, the Quincy Institute. He thinks it's all Israel's fault, ultimately. I mean, our fault for letting Israel do it, but nonetheless, Israel's fault. I think it's bigger than that. I think it's more profound than that. Yeah, I'll give you that Israel owns Congress, and they own lots of other aspects of our life—so many aspects now that I think Americans are actually revolted as they're finding out how much they own. And that's healthy. But I don't think it's all that. I think it's imperial hubris, too. And I think I saw that hubris up close and personal when the Cold War ended and H.W. Bush got beaten and driven out of the White House by a huge coalition backed and funded by Israel. But nonetheless, we've just been off our rockers since that time. It's almost as if the victory in the Cold War made us demented. And that's so strange, because it wasn't a victory—Gorbachev gave us the Soviet Union. We didn't take it.

#Glenn

Yeah, that's Jack Matlock's argument as well, because, you know, he was there negotiating the end of the Cold War. And he also warns that when the end of the Cold War was rewritten—meaning, instead of ending through negotiations in '89, it was recast as a victory in 1991—it changed, or at least affected, the DNA of the political leadership. The idea became that peace isn't created through

mutual understanding and diplomacy, but by staring down the opponent and defeating them. And in that, of course, in victory, one can plant the seeds of one's own destruction. That was certainly Richard Cheney's philosophy.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Fear, he said, more than once—I heard him. Fear is far better than love. Yeah.

#Glenn

Wow. Thank you for taking the time on this very depressing topic. As always, I really hope you're mistaken about this possibility—but yeah, fair.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I'd be more than willing to go into the streets in sackcloth and ashes, wailing and gnashing my teeth.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I'm wrong. I'm wrong.