

Larry Johnson & Col. Wilkerson: Fighter Jet SHOT DOWN — Iran War SPIRALS

#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Friday, April 3rd, 2026, and our dear friends Col. Wilkerson and Larry Johnson are here with us. Welcome back.

#Larry

Hey there. I'm glad you broke out the power shirt today. Look at you. And it's Good Friday—yeah, Good Friday.

#Nima

Yeah. Let's start with the latest news about a fighter jet being shot down in Iran. First, what was the reaction from the SAMCOM? They said nothing of that sort has happened, and the footage and pictures coming out of Iran are from the Iranian media. Then we have new reports coming to CNN and The New York Times. And here's what CNN reported on that.

#Nima

Media outlets have released images that appear to show debris from a downed U.S. fighter jet, saying the fate of the pilot is unknown. Well, Matthew Chance is in Doha covering some of the latest developments. Matthew, let's start with what we know about this downed jet in Iran. State media is saying it's a U.S. F-35. We've seen the images they've posted—what do we make of those?

#Nima

Yeah, it wasn't an F-35. You know, we had initial reports saying it was an F-35, then they changed it to an F-15E. Colonel, what's your understanding? What was that, in your opinion? What type of fighter jet was it?

#Lawrence

Well, I couldn't tell from the photos, but I think the latest reports are clear—The New York Times, across YouTube, all saying F-15E. And that would make sense, though I don't know that it makes any more sense than before. You know, we already had an F-15 shot down by Kuwait. I was kind of expecting we'd wake up to a B-52 being shot down, because they're such lumbering colossuses.

They've got a lot more security now than they did back in the days when they bombed Vietnam to a pulp. But I was kind of thinking that might happen. The F-15E is usually a pretty solid aircraft, so it must have strayed, had a maintenance malfunction, or ended up somewhere it shouldn't have been—inside the envelope of a particular Iranian system. I don't know, I'm just speculating. But you know it's going to happen, and it's going to happen again, as long as we keep this idiotic conflict going.

#Nima

Yeah. Larry, they're still trying to find the pilot. Go ahead—what's your take?

#Larry

Yeah, I've got one of my readers—who's also one of your viewers—just sent me a note saying, hey, the pilot has been captured. And I've seen the footage, just before we came on, of a Black Hawk smoking. I mean, it had been hit. So apparently a Black Hawk has now gone down in Iran as well—CSAR, probably. Yeah, yeah. So now you've got the nightmare for Donald Trump beginning to unfold in its full glory. Because remember, they've "defeated" Iran—Iran doesn't have any air defense, they've wiped out their air force, they've wiped out their navy, Iran has nothing left. And now they've shot down an F-15 and a Black Hawk helicopter. And they've got a pilot. We'll see if they also grab the crew, if there's any surviving crew from the Black Hawk. So now you're going to see images of a U.S. pilot in Iranian hands. And, you know, it's just a reminder that Trump's narrative about the complete defeat of Iran is not working out so well.

#Lawrence

I'm sure you're going to go into this too, Nima. But since I have limited time, I want to make sure you cover it. You've seen the reports on what's resulted from Trump's very impolitic comments about MBS. Well, we have a whole new relationship developing in the region—a relationship between Zelensky, who was very quick to jump on it, and MBS. And the statements I've heard coming out of the royals in Saudi Arabia indicate that this is a final break with regard to their reliance on the United States of America. There will be no more.

#Nima

Yeah. Larry, when you look at it—I happen to know the region where the fighter jet was shot down.

#Lawrence

What was it? Which region was it?

#Nima

It's in the southeast of Iran.

#Lawrence

Okay.

#Nima

I'm from that region. I know the area, I know the people—know them well. They're mostly armed, they know how to use weapons, you know, rifles and so on. But they're also very cautious. Because they know how to handle arms, they know how to manage situations like this. If they capture the pilot, they're not going to hurt him.

#Nima

I'm sure of that.

#Nima

And on the other hand, Colonel—Larry—when they sent this sort of thing, we've seen various helicopters there. Yeah.

#Larry

Is that common? It's so strange. Yeah, it's called CSAR—Combat Search and Rescue. You know, this goes back to a good friend of mine. He was the last colonel to command the Air Force Special Operations Wing out of Hurlburt before they made it into a one-star billet. He flew helicopters in Vietnam—the rescue copters. And like in Vietnam, what would happen is a pilot would get shot down, and they'd send out the CSAR. The number of times those rescue helicopters got shot down was fairly numerous. You actually got more casualties out of that than you did from the pilots who were shot down. So they've had—well, I don't know where they're staging out of, maybe Qatar or Prince Saud Air Base—but when the pilot went down, they went in to try to rescue him. And apparently, if what this one person is sharing with me is right, at least one of those choppers got shot down. Yeah.

#Nima

Colonel, Pete Hegseth, on the other hand, is firing important commanders in the middle of this war. What are they trying to do in the United States? We had reports from The Intercept that they're not reporting accurately on the number of casualties. They're talking as if they've destroyed Iran's ability to fire back—CNN even reported on that. What's happening under Pete Hegseth and his kind of management at the Pentagon?

#Lawrence

Well, my initial reaction to Randy George's release was that it was probably war-related, and it may very well have had that as a component. But what I'm hearing now, very strongly from friends, is that he was absolutely incensed over Hegseth dipping into the brigadier general's list and removing the two women, I think, and two Black officers. He was so angry about it that he said, "Let him go." I mean, he really got vocal with him over it—saying he shouldn't do that, he couldn't do that, that it was unprecedented, blah, blah, blah. And then I heard that the chief of chaplains was released because of something related to the war—interest in the war, or opposition to how it was being conducted. But that was mostly personnel-related, too.

It was what Hegseth was doing to the chaplain corps—everything from taking their rank insignia off to eliminating whole groups. And this is really strange. He's eliminating entire groups of people who can be represented by chaplains in an official way within the military. All of these groups he's cutting are officially recognized by Arlington Cemetery as being able to have their symbol on their tombstone if they die and are buried there. This is crazy. I mean, he's flying against tradition, against protocol, and actually against regulation. But he's changing the regulations, apparently. So a lot of this was personnel-oriented more than war-related, but I'm sure there was a big component of that, too. The personnel issues were probably just the straw that broke the camel's back.

#Larry

Let me just point out what we're seeing here. I'll call it the politicization of the military—turning the military into a praetorian guard as opposed to legionnaires. Within the Roman system, the legionnaires were there to fight for Rome; they fought for the nation. The praetorian guard was there to protect a particular politician. And in this case, it really started in earnest under Barack Obama, continued under Biden, and, you know, under Trump as well—where you're trying to remake the leadership into partisan political supporters and identify people who aren't your supporters as those who must be eliminated. It's very, very dangerous, because this is crossing a line that's going to destroy the military, I believe.

#Lawrence

You remember my saying, Nima, I agree 100% with Larry, and I'd even go further. You remember my saying earlier that the January 6th coup didn't fail because the system held—it failed because the coup plotters were incompetent. And one of the major aspects of their incompetence, if not the main factor, was that they didn't have the military on their side. Milley chose to stand aside—not only chose to stand aside, but afterwards made it very clear to the military why he did so and why he thought he was right, and he was resoundingly welcomed in the military, particularly in the middle ranks. So I think they're shaping up, and I think Larry's right about this.

I think they're shaping this Praetorian Guard more than any previous administration, because they're shaping it to make sure that the Trump legacy—in whatever form or fashion, the MAGA legacy, whatever—is protected. Even to the point that, if they have to take over the republic in some violent way, they'll have the majority of the military on their side. What they're doing right now is setting up a two-part military. So you'd see a battle within the military ranks before there'd be any compliance with a civilian order to suppress a rebellion in the United States, or to implement the Insurrection Act—or, God forbid, go even further than that.

I think they're prepping for this. I said to someone this morning, I thought Hegseth would go—I figured he'd probably be the first one to go. Bondi's gone, Noem's gone, and I think a couple of others are short-lived. But Hegseth is still here, and I understand why now—because he's crafting the instrument of Trump's, and of Trump's legacy, in the retention of power. Can't let that go. Nobody else is going to take that over, probably, and move in that direction—and with the speed, really, the speed that Hegseth has moved.

#Nima

It seems that Kash Patel—they're talking about Kash Patel as well. The whole system is somehow shaking, Larry. Is that because of the war? Or is it because of something beyond that?

#Larry

Yeah, well, go ahead. Yeah, no, go ahead—you go ahead. You're on a short leash anyway. I took Larry to mean I'm getting shell-shocked. Oh, okay. Yeah, no, this is my understanding—without revealing the source—is that Susie Wiles is alarmed now, finally, by the polling. They're getting killed in the polls. They recognize that the Republicans, if this continues as I believe it will, are just going to get wiped out, which will then make it impossible for Trump to accomplish anything in his remaining two years in office—if he survives those remaining two years. And that gets us off into a whole other discussion about, you know, if I were counseling the Democrats, I'd come in and say, hey, leave Trump alone.

Do not impeach. Let him keep being the face of the Republican Party, because the longer he's out there, the more people are going to dislike him. The last thing we want to do is impeach him, remove him from office, and then have J.D. Vance come in—because J.D. Vance might actually have enough common sense to play the politics of it right, and he could take what would be a sure win for the Democrats and upset that apple cart. So, Trump—they're doing a shake-up because, you know, Bondi's gone, and there are problems on the military side. So we've got to separate that out.

From the military side, you know, remove those three generals. They're going to get rid of Tulsi Gabbard. I think she'll be blamed for the intelligence failure—that she didn't properly inform Trump about the dangers of going into Iran. Oh my God, talk about karma. And then Daniel Driscoll, he's

the Secretary of the Army—he actually seems pretty squared away. My understanding is he’s just beside himself over what Trump is doing with the Army and putting them in this kind of jeopardy. You’ve got that, but then on the other hand, you’ve got Kash Patel. They recognize he’s a liability. I mean, good God, I never thought he’d be this bad, and he’s just awful.

And then this Secretary of Labor, a Latina lady, apparently has a liquor cabinet in her office and is notorious for chasing young guys around. So she’s a bit of a sexual harasser, reportedly. Okay. So, you know, they’re going to offload some of them. But it is Trump’s administration—they’re trying to recalibrate because the midterms are coming up, and it’s not good. By the way, I keep getting—there’s one of your viewers in Iran, and he’s forwarding this information as we’re talking. You’ve got pictures of a Black Hawk on fire, going down. He said the Black Hawks were flying over a place called Dalem. I don’t know if you’re familiar with that.

#Nima

Yeah, Dalem is in the southern part of Iran, near the Persian Gulf.

#Larry

Yeah.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Larry

So that’s where all this activity is taking place. You talk about political pressure on Trump—this is going to amp it up substantially, particularly if the Iranians capture the pilot or pilots alive and then put them on television. Because, boy, the mainstream media won’t be able to leave that one alone. They’ll be all over it. You know, this was before your time, but Col. Wilkerson and I remember what happened when the Americans were taken hostage at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. Ted Koppel’s career was born at that point—day one, day two, day three—*Nightline*, you know.

#Lawrence

I remember Mogadishu too. That was a bit catastrophic for us.

#Nima

Carl, looking at what Donald Trump said yesterday, in your opinion, what was the main objective? What was the main point of his address to the nation?

#Lawrence

Well, I thought maybe he was going to do what we had all recommended—that is, declare victory and leave. He started out sort of trying to do that, I think, but then he got his, you know, as usual, his lips mixed up. And he did what he usually does, which was to say nothing, really—not to express a real mission, not to express a real goal, not to say anything about what the Iranians have very categorically said they would do to negotiate, not addressing any of that. And I think, just to back up for a second, that it was at Mar-a-Lago when he said what he said about MBS, which was probably as bad a set of remarks as he's put together—and that's really saying something in this presidency—where he essentially said that MBS kissed his ass.

And MBS has said nothing back in a derisive way. But that changed, I think, the entire nature of our relationship with the principal power in Southwest Asia other than Iran. And now they're making deals with Pakistan. They're making deals with Jalani and Syria. They've shifted their entire approach. They're not going to send that pipeline up through Israel—that's dead in the water. They're now making deals with Jalani and others in a different direction, if you will, to bring the pipeline up through there, which is a very important endeavor for Saudi Arabia, with lots of money behind it. So Trump has made so many enemies in the world now. And look what Zelensky has just done—he's just reinforced his own position in Ukraine.

Despite what the Russians might do, he has in fact refurbished his position—both with the world arms market and with the critical part of the world where the biggest war is going on right now, courtesy of the empire—and where Europe is increasingly disenchanted with that empire, making its own rules and finding its own way in the world, finally. So we're watching the whole situation change much faster than I thought it would. And it's being driven, to a certain extent, not just by Iran—that's a huge factor—but by Trump, all by himself and his administration. They're forcing this change to happen much more rapidly, and therefore much more dangerously, than it should have. And we're going to see that in huge proportion if he keeps up this business of not knowing what he's doing or saying what he's doing.

And he allows Iran to move on to the second tier of targets that are substantially more dangerous—more dangerous to the global economy than that first tier. And if they hit them with the same devastating accuracy and intelligence behind their strikes that they used on that first tier, we've got a global depression. Take the thing they just did in Saudi Arabia that belonged to Amazon—that's the kind of target I'm talking about. That was probably on the second-tier target list, and that's what's going to happen all around the region. There's going to be no respect for anybody's world capability or world connections—just total destruction. And if that happens, Iran's sitting there on a strait that's going to make it lots of money, keep making it lots of money, while the rest of the world is hurting in so many different ways and on so many different issues. This could be...

#Lawrence

This could go global really quickly—really quickly.

#Larry

Well, let me just point out an oddity—actually, two oddities—about Trump’s speech. This is the first time I recall him sticking to a script and not deviating from it. I mean, he basically read that script and didn’t ad-lib at all, or hardly at all. It was, you know, in contrast to what he normally does. The other thing was his voice intonation and how he looked. I mean, it reminded me a little bit of Dustin Hoffman in the movie **Rain Man**. He had this monotone voice throughout, without any kind of inflection or emotion—very strange. So, I took that as a further sign that the concerns, the worries about what they’re getting into here in Iran, are starting to build up. And, you know, right now in Iran it’s almost 7 p.m., and if we’re going to do anything militarily this weekend, I wouldn’t be surprised to see it start within the next three to four hours. And, you know, this is Donald Trump trying to recreate Dien Bien Phu or Gallipoli—one of the two.

#Lawrence

I would predict that if we do start something, it’s going to look like that Caesar Black Hawk. Yeah.

#Nima

Because right now we’re talking about one or two pilots, but then there are going to be a lot more.

#Nima

And I don’t know how Donald Trump would—or what he could.

#Nima

Larry, do you think it’s going to be just the United States if they go, or will we see other forces joining in?

#Larry

Yeah, no, they’re not going to have any other NATO forces. You know, I’ve been following this on open source. There’s this X account called the Intel Frog. I don’t know where they’re getting the flight information, but they’ve been tracking it since March 12th, because there was a surge starting then of C-17s flying to basically five different airfields: Joint Base Lewis-McChord up in Washington; Hunter Army Airfield in Georgia; Pope Army Airfield at Fort Bragg, right next to JSOC headquarters; Oceana Naval Air Station, basically Little Creek, Virginia; and Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Now, there have been a total of 74 flights. Each C-17 can carry 102 paratroopers, or 102 soldiers with a combat load—that means their packs, weapons, and so on.

#Larry

So, you know, if you've got 74 planes with 102 each, what you're looking at is, at least from the special operations community, a potential deployment of around 7,500 soldiers. I don't see any Marines in that group, so these are all Army units.

#Larry

You know, the number of trips out of Bragg—there have been 12 out of Pope Army Airfield. So that means you could basically deploy one battalion of the 82nd Airborne, and then that would leave two or three squadrons out of Delta Force that could possibly have been deployed. But my point in all this is, they've been talking about 50,000 troops. No, they don't have that many. The flights out of both Hunter Army Airfield and Joint Base Lewis-McChord are from the 75th Ranger Regiment. I think the 1st Battalion is at Hunter and the 2nd Battalion is at Lewis-McChord—or maybe it's the other way around.

No, you're right. So you've got the Ranger regiments there. They're capable of jumping in, and they're designed to operate with the Tier 1 force—Delta Force or SEAL Team 6. So, you know, I think they're going to do something crazy. You don't deploy those folks overseas just for show. When they do that kind of deployment, it's either for an exercise—and this clearly is not an exercise—or it means they're going to actually put them in some sort of kinetic activity.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Lawrence

I've even heard, Nima, that there was some talk about carrying the enriched uranium out, or some other nonsense like that. And someone actually sat down and did the weight calculations—good luck carrying that.

#Larry

Yeah, and I think, you know, they could potentially—one target could be Bushehr, which is close to the coast, or maybe right on the coast. So, you know, they could use that as a target to go in and take control of whatever nuclear fuel is there. I mean, it's ridiculous because the Russians have been working there with the Iranians, and it's a peaceful site—it's not a military target.

But the problem they face for the special operations forces is, if you try to go after any of the other nuclear sites that are in the interior of Iran, they don't have the range with the helicopters to get there without setting up a forward refueling station. You'd have to fly airplanes in, drop off a bunch

of fuel bladders, and then the helicopters would come in, refuel, and be able to reach the target. I mean, that's just way too complicated. And Iran—you know, we did that, good God, 46 years ago when they tried to mount the rescue of the hostages in Tehran. But Iran's come a long way in 46 years.

#Lawrence

Just one final comment from me before I take off. We are proving once again—and we're proving it in spades—that, as Foreign Minister Araghchi said to Al Jazeera English, you cannot bomb a people into submission. No matter how many bombs you drop, no matter how accurate they are, no matter how many planes you have flying, you cannot accomplish anything by bombing their schools, their mosques, their food facilities, their water facilities—on and on and on—all of which are war crimes, of course. You cannot convince them to do anything but oppose you with every bone in their body. And that's what we've done. Listening to Araghchi, that's what he was saying. I mean, he laid it down: ceasefire, cessation of hostile attitudes, and reparations. That's my negotiation. And it'll just get rougher as time goes by. We're in a mess—a total mess.

#Nima

Carl, they don't want to negotiate because they assassinated Kamal Kharazi in Iran, along with his wife.

#Lawrence

And he also said a couple of times, why would we want to negotiate with these lying sacks of—well, I'm paraphrasing, you know—and he just declared that there had been no negotiations, making Witkoff's cabinet appearance an absolute lie. There are no negotiations. No Iranian has talked to an American, and vice versa.

#Larry

They're talking through third parties, or even fourth parties.

#Lawrence

And I believe him. I believe him. Anyway, I've got to run. Thank you. Okay, take care. Have a good day, Colonel. Thank you. Have a good day. Over to you. See you soon. Yeah.

#Nima

Larry, I think we should mention what's happening with the new reports on CNN. They're saying it seems that about one-third of Iran's capabilities have been destroyed by the United States so far.

That's the report. But from what I'm hearing from Iran, it's totally different. Still, at least we have this report on CNN. What's your assessment? What's your understanding so far? And what evidence are they giving for where this information comes from? Is it the same intelligence that's being provided to the U.S. president?

#Larry

Yes. Well, let's go back. Before this started, we did have reports that General Kane, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as Tulsi Gabbard, Joe Kent, and the intelligence community, were basically telling President Trump that the chances of success were not good—that there were a lot of obstacles to this proposed attack—and that there wasn't an imminent threat. So he ignored all that. This gets to the question of what the CIA analysts and the Defense Intelligence Agency analysts—those would be the two principal ones on the military side, the ones who do military order of battle—actually knew about Iran's supply of ballistic missiles and its inventory.

Well, the earlier reports we had showed that they really had no idea what they were talking about, because the analysis was that Iran had only about 3,000 missiles. Well, they burned through all that in about two weeks and have kept firing ever since. So now you've seen the intelligence community come back with this number, like, okay, we've only destroyed a third—so Iran must have 70% more. You know, I don't think anybody really knows. I mean, I'm just guessing. I estimated their inventory to be somewhere around 20,000, and I'm basing that in part on these videos online showing missiles stored underground, mile after mile after mile. The intelligence community has limitations—there's only so much you can do with technical collection like overhead imagery or intercepts of conversations.

This is why the CIA was originally created back in 1947—to actually get human sources who could provide information that wouldn't normally be available to the public. You'd have somebody working inside a production facility. But right now, even the Israelis, as good as their intelligence is in some areas, have real limitations too, and they admit it. Like we've seen with Hezbollah—they were capable of penetrating Hezbollah's leadership. They knew where meetings were going to take place so they could target them. They were able to get into the production cycle with the phones and pagers. But they didn't understand what Hezbollah's actual military capability is—not just what it was, but what it is now. And so they went ahead and launched this ground operation into southern Lebanon.

And frankly, they're getting their ass kicked. You know, Hezbollah, despite supposedly being destroyed and weakened, is just tearing them to bits. The casualty rate, which the Israelis are desperately trying to cover up, is through the roof. Every Merkava tank has a crew of four, so when you destroy over a hundred tanks, that's a potential casualty count of at least four hundred right there. So I think Israel has made some mistakes, and they've got limited information in certain

critical areas. And yet they've confidently told Trump, "Oh yeah, there's no popular support for the Islamic Republic. If we just get rid of Ayatollah Khomeini, the rest of the country will rise up and overthrow the Islamic Republic." Nope—turned out not to be true.

#Nima

Larry, in the new post from Donald Trump, he says that with a little more time, we could easily open up Australia for most, take the oil, and make a fortune. It would be a gusher for the world.

#Larry

Yeah, that's just crazy.

#Nima

It seems like he's going to keep this war going until his presidency is over. I don't see his—because the way he's talking, it's always "a little more, a little more, two weeks, three weeks," and then "go after."

#Larry

Well, he is—if he follows through. You know, it's understood that this attack, the attempt to take and hold ground in Iran, is going to happen soon. This weekend—whether it starts tonight, around our time, or tomorrow, Saturday, or early Saturday our time—remains to be seen. But if he does that, then that will really be, I'll call it, the beginning of the end of his presidency, because the U.S. is going to suffer casualties. Right now, I'm seeing reports coming in saying that the pilot of the F-15 is dead. And with the Blackhawk—it's not clear about the Blackhawk pilots. There are at least two, and probably at least one other crewman, maybe two, in there. If they're all dead, you know, then it's going to put Iran in a really interesting position.

They will. They'll present the bodies. You're going to force the United States to come pick them up, and that's going to make the U.S. acknowledge that they've got more dead military personnel than they've let on. So, Trump's caught, because there's no—you know, he says we can blow open the Strait of Hormuz. No, you can't. As long as Iran retains the ability to launch drones or missiles at ships in the Strait, it won't be open. Just that threat alone—the fact that it can be done—will keep countries, and the insurance companies like Lloyd's, from insuring ships. And with no insurance, those ships aren't going in or out.

Now, that said, we're getting reports today as well that so far they've allowed tankers going to China and, uh, Pakistan, I believe, to come out of the Strait of Hormuz and continue their journey. But now it looks like—I just got a notification—that a French tanker and a Japanese tanker have gone through as well. And that means the French and the Japanese are paying the Chinese in yuan; they'

re not paying in dollars. And those, you know, even if those tankers are out now—well, good grief—it's going to be a while, three or four weeks, before those tankers reshore. But yeah, it looks like the pilot was rescued. So the U.S. did rescue the pilot. The F-15 went down, but that pilot was rescued. Yeah.

#Nima

Larry, it's not just about, you know, Japan and France. We've seen two of these Arab states in the Persian Gulf calling Iran and trying to find some sort of solution for what's going on in the Strait of Hormuz. I don't know who they are—it seems, in my opinion, it could be Qatar or some other countries, maybe Kuwait or Bahrain, or I don't know, Saudi Arabia could be part of that. But after all, they're getting to the point of understanding that if they want to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, they have to talk with Iran, because the United States is not going to be there, as Donald Trump himself mentioned yesterday. They're not going to help them.

#Larry

Well, yeah, of course. Um, I think Iran is playing this pretty smart. Number one, they're negotiating with Oman about, "Hey, let's work together on this. Let's agree on the fees we're going to charge per ship to pass through the Persian Gulf." They're going to be like the bouncer at the door of a disco—people want to get inside, you've got to pay a cover charge. You want to come to the Persian Gulf? Pay a cover charge. And they'll split it, because, as you know, the very western tip of Oman sits opposite Iran right there, so it's natural that they'd be partners in this. Then, once countries that need to get oil out...

#Larry

They'll probably be coming out with Iranian oil for now. Iran will be negotiating, giving at least the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, the Qataris, and the folks from Bahrain a chance to talk with them, because Iran's deal is going to be this: divorce yourself from the United States, work with us, and whatever you want to export, you can export. There's going to be a fee—it's going to help us rebuild the damage that's been done to Iran by Israel and the United States. I think Saudi Arabia is ultimately going to make a deal. Qatar already is making that deal.

The ones that won't last and will be gone are Bahrain and Kuwait. I think Kuwait is going to be taken over by Iraq—you know, they'll be reincorporated into Iraq anyway. And the United Arab Emirates—I mean, it's been a fake creation from the beginning. What was it, 1971 or '72, when the Brits said, "Okay, meet the new country, the United Arab Emirates, welcome." It's just a colonial creation, nothing more. It has no real indigenous population that would be singing about how proud they are to be Emiratis. So Iran's in a pretty interesting, strong position now to negotiate.

#Nima

Israeli media reported that one of the biggest manufacturers of drones was hit by Iranian missiles. We know that most of Israel's arms production is on the ground, on the surface—they're not doing it the way Iran does. So, Larry, do you think if the war continues—because we know the Israelis are somehow telling the United States to keep it going—what's their assessment? And how would that be beneficial for Israel if the war continues?

#Larry

If the United States pulls out and stops supplying Israel, they're done. So this is really in the United States' hands. How much has Israel overplayed its hand? You know, when Bibi Netanyahu shut down the Church of the Holy Sepulcher last Sunday for Palm Sunday, that started to ignite a firestorm, particularly among Catholics—here's Israel attacking Christians, which shouldn't surprise anybody. I mean, these crazy Zionists, that's what they do. They hate Christians. They like to pretend that it's Islam that's anti-Christian, and you have to keep reminding people that Muslims, whether Sunni or Shia, venerate Jesus as a prophet. The Jews don't. They don't see Jesus as a prophet.

They have no respect for Jesus whatsoever. Similarly, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is venerated as a holy woman within Islam, but not within Judaism. In fact, in some portions of what I won't call Jewish scripture—but it is—she's described as a whore, you know, not exactly a sign of respect. So Israel is so overstretched right now militarily that, yeah, it can try to, but without a supply of bombs coming from the United States, it can't keep up the level of strikes against Syria, Lebanon, and Iran. And now it's getting bogged down again in southern Lebanon, with Hezbollah retaliating against the Israeli invasion. So Israel can do a lot of encouraging to keep the war going, but it can't do it on its own.

#Nima

Larry, do you think there would be some sort of division in the Persian Gulf? Or if they decide to go after some kind of security architecture for the region, are they all going to be, you know, united? We know what's happened, for example, in Yemen. There was a difference between the UAE and Saudi Arabia, and the UAE is not a country that can really sustain those kinds of conflicts. That's why they backed down, if you remember, against Saudi Arabia. Is something like that happening in the minds of these leaders? Because after all, they want to survive. They don't want to be destroyed. They want to survive and hold on to what they have in their own countries. Even though the people aren't happy, they still want to stay in power.

#Larry

Yeah, I don't think the UAE or Bahrain will survive. I think they'll be, you know, folded in. I see the UAE probably going back to Oman. Remember, it was an artificial creation by the Brits back in '71 or '

72, so that would be greater Oman. I don't see the glory of what Dubai and Abu Dhabi have been—as far as these major cities that attracted a lot of foreigners. Right now, those foreigners have been bailing out of the country; they're getting out if they can. And all the, you know, all the prostitutes who were there, imported from Europe and Eastern Europe—Ukraine, Russia—they've gone back home. So it's not the party city it once was. It'll be interesting to see what Saudi Arabia does. They've had a mixed relationship with Iran.

Initially, MBS was very anti-Iranian. Then, thanks to the intervention of the Chinese and the Russians, he sort of reconciled or came to more cordial terms with Iran. But now, with the start of the war on February 28th—despite their claims that they wouldn't be involved—they absolutely were. They facilitated the attacks on Iran by allowing U.S. planes to operate from Saudi territory. So now, as you pointed out, with Trump insulting MBS by saying, "Oh yeah, he's kissing my ass," that's really going to endear MBS to Trump, right? And with the damage they're suffering, the Iranians might offer him a deal—and he'll take it. I think the outcome of this war is going to be a complete restructuring of the politics of the Persian Gulf.

#Nima

Larry, Donald Trump—the whole agenda on his part was to save the dollar. And whatever he's done so far, in terms of the war in Ukraine and now a new war in the Middle East, is totally the opposite—completely against what he was talking about. How do you see the Strait of Hormuz? Because, as you and Col. Wilkerson mentioned, the new regime or mechanism in the Strait of Hormuz would be based on the yuan, or maybe a new currency. It's not going to be based on the dollar. So how do you see this going against the agenda Donald Trump had before being elected?

#Larry

Well, again, he was counting on the Saudis in particular, and I guess the Emiratis too—maybe the second-largest purchasers of U.S. Treasury bills. They've relied on the Persian Gulf as one area that would help finance U.S. debt, buying up U.S. treasuries. Well, that's sort of come to a screeching halt over the last five weeks. You know, if the Saudis need money, they don't have a big savings account sitting in some bank, so they've got to generate cash. One way you do that is by selling your T-bills—which I think they're doing.

And as you correctly note, China is taking advantage of this whole situation by reminding these countries that if you hold T-bills, you give the United States some control and leverage over you. China has been in the process of converting a lot of U.S. debt into debt funds, where the people buying the bonds are now buying Chinese bonds, not U.S. bonds. So I think we're at the very beginning of a complete makeover—a restructuring of the international financial system. The dollar isn't going to disappear overnight or in a day or two, but it's still significant that the Chinese are becoming an alternative player in this whole arena.

#Nima

Larry, the breaking news is that an F-16CJ apparently went down over Saudi Arabia after making an emergency landing. It was...

#Larry

Yeah, so there's been some kind of upgrade in Iranian air defense. There were reports that the Russians had brought in either S-400 or S-500 systems. And if those are, in fact, in play now, we've seen more reports of aircraft being shot at or shot down in the last four days than we did in the previous four weeks.

#Nima

Yeah, it seems that the whole network of radars and those AWACS was really helpful to the airplanes, to the fighter jets as well. Right now, without that kind of information coming into headquarters, it would be difficult for the fighter jets.

#Larry

Well, no, I understand. So Iran took out the ground radars, and those radars were basically there to detect launches of missiles and other aircraft across the whole AOR. When those were taken out—because Iran destroyed 13 of them within the first two weeks of the war—they needed a replacement for that. And that's where the E-3 AWACS comes in. The AWACS really operates like a ground radar; it provides that radar coverage, but it's doing it from the plane. So the destruction of that the other day created further problems for the United States.

And they're bringing in another one to try to compensate. But the Air Force's ability to track aircraft and other aviation threats is still diminished. So, as I said, something has changed on the ground inside Iran because of this sudden spate of incidents—like the F-16 you reported that had to make an emergency landing somewhere in Saudi Arabia. Reportedly, two F-15s were shot down in the last 24 hours, one off the coast of Iran and the other inland. You know, something's happening here—what it is isn't exactly clear.

#Nima

Yeah, Larry, it seems to me that Iran didn't really show what they had in terms of using their air defense system. That's why they somehow caught the United States by surprise. Could it be that they didn't show their capabilities—that they held back because they knew the United States might go for a ground invasion, that it would escalate the war? Because during a war, it's so difficult to improve the air defense system. Is that the case?

#Larry

Well, I'm not sure what the capabilities of the Iranian system are. It appears, from what we've seen going back to the start of the war, that it wasn't capable of destroying Tomahawk cruise missiles. It wasn't capable of destroying JDAMs or JASSMs—those glide-launch bombs, etc. It does appear that it can detect and shoot down F-35s, F-15s, F-16s, and KC-135 tankers. Why that didn't happen earlier is probably because those planes didn't venture into Iranian airspace. Now they are. And if the reason is that the United States wrongly believes it has defeated and eliminated Iranian air power or air defenses, well, it's finding out the hard way that Iran still has some pretty robust capability. So, yeah, look, this war isn't going to end anytime soon. The Western financiers have bet a lot of money and believed, initially under Trump, that this war was going to be over soon.

You saw what happened to both the stock market and the oil market in the immediate aftermath of Trump's speech the other night. You know, when he came out—I guess that was Wednesday—when he started talking, the stock market was up and the oil market was down. By the time he finished, it was going in the opposite direction. The stock market was falling, predicting it was going to end—and it did. It lost about 500 or 600 points on the Dow at the opening. Meanwhile, oil—Brent and West Texas, WTI, West Texas Intermediate—had been down below \$100. And right now, as we speak, where is it? Where's our oil price? I had it here a minute ago... oh, there it is. West Texas Intermediate is now up to \$112. It's gone up over 11%.

#Larry

Brent crude is at \$108. So Trump had the opposite effect. Previously, he'd been able to say things like, "Oh, it's looking good, this is coming to an end," and the oil price would drop while the stock market would rise. Now he no longer has that magic ability.

#Nima

CBS reported that President Trump has been briefed on the U.S. F-15E fighter jet that went down over Iran earlier today. And Larry, you mentioned something important—we've seen the new footage, the new pictures, of Israeli cruise missiles being hit by Iran's air defense system.

#Larry

Right. Yeah. Well, is it cruise missiles or drones?

#Nima

Cruise missiles. Cruise missiles.

#Larry

Yeah, I haven't seen that footage.

#Nima

Let me see if I can pull it up for you.

#Larry

I mean, I believe you, but I just haven't seen the footage.

#Nima

No, no, I'm just trying to find it here. But Larry, when it comes to Russia, we learned that yesterday MBS was trying to talk with the Russian president. What do they basically want from Russia?

#Larry

Now, did MBS call Putin, or did Putin call MBS?

#Nima

MBS called Putin.

#Larry

Oh, it's like cueing up that old Beach Boys song—"Help Me, Rhonda." You know, saying, "Help me, Putin. Help, help me, Putin."

#Nima

You know, basically, the difficulties they have are the war and the situation in the Strait of Hormuz—both of which are too much, you know, all tied to what's going on with the war.

#Larry

Yeah. What you saw the day before—it may have been earlier yesterday, or at least the day before—the Saudis, Qataris, Emiratis, Bahrainis, and Kuwaitis tried to bring the UN Security Council a resolution that would have said, "Okay, we've got to condemn, not only condemn Iran, but put together a UN force to go and force the Strait of Hormuz open." And the Chinese, the Russians, and—surprisingly—the French said, "No, no, no, no, no. That's not happening. We're not doing that. Forget about it." So that may be why MBS is calling. He realizes, okay, if he wants an end to this thing, he's going to have to have some Russian support. And I think, just as Lavrov tried to tell him, the dummies wouldn't listen. They're trying to tell him, "Hey, you're blaming Iran, and you're not

condemning the United States and Israel for starting this mess? That's ridiculous. You're not even being fair."

#Nima

Yeah, I think there's a lot that could happen this weekend, Larry. Let's see what happens, and we may need to talk about it.

#Larry

Yeah, I mean, you know, we'll know within 24 hours—36 hours max. My understanding is that the original plan was to go forward with this ground assault.

#Lawrence

Yeah.

#Larry

Whether they'll now put that on hold, particularly in light of some of these aircraft being shot down, may change the calculus. The problem is, Trump has shown no sign of backing away from continuing the war. He's going to intensify it before he de-escalates.

#Nima

Yeah, thank you, Larry.

#Larry

Hey, well, the hour flies by. Sorry, Col. Wilkerson had to leave us, but we carried on. All right, my friends, we'll be in touch. Thanks. Bye. Bye-bye.