

Larry Johnson: Iran Destroys U.S. Aircraft - Trump Will Expand the War

Trump panics as the U.S. war against Iran goes terribly wrong, and threatens to escalate. Johnson is a former CIA intelligence analyst who also worked at the U.S. State Department's Office of Counterterrorism. Read Larry Johnson's Sonar21: <https://sonar21.com/> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We're joined again by Larry Johnson, former CIA analyst and author at Sonar 21 — a great place for information. I'll leave a link to Sonar 21 in the description. Thanks again, Larry, for coming back on the program.

#Larry Johnson

Hey boy, I wish we had other things to talk about—like great vacation spots around the world, or, you know, some wonderful cuisine to cook on Easter Sunday, something like that. But good God, we're in the midst of madness.

#Glenn

We were just talking before we started recording that Trump may have lost his mind. I mean, I often make the point that I was one of the people who were excited or optimistic about his re-election. I kind of bought into the whole peace ticket—ending the Ukraine war, ending the forever wars. I mean, he was bringing on Tulsi Gabbard, and I thought that was a good reason to be optimistic, since the alternative was essentially more Washington, more war. But I guess it doesn't matter who you vote for—except Trump appears to be the rhetoric. It's... yeah, it's quite concerning. He just gave an announcement saying that Iran has until Tuesday to make a deal, and then, and this is a direct quote, "Otherwise, I am blowing up everything."

#Larry Johnson

I mean, read the rest of it, too. The language he used was just unbelievable. Let me see if I can find it and get the quote exactly right. He said, "Tuesday will be power plant day and bridge day all

wrapped up in one in Iran. There will be nothing like it." And then he said, "Open the fucking strait, you crazy bastards, or you'll be living in hell. Just watch. Praise be to Allah. President Donald J. Trump." I mean, people, I woke up to this this morning and went, what in the—this is crazy territory. This is the madness of King George.

I mean, it's like that scene—there was a movie with George Clooney years ago, and I forget the name of the actor who played this lawyer representing a young woman who'd been violated by a pharmaceutical company. In the middle of the deposition, the lawyer starts taking off all his clothes, screaming and ranting. That's what Donald Trump just did here. He might as well have taken off his clothes and run around the White House naked. The time for the 25th Amendment to be enacted has come. Trump's cabinet needs to say, "Okay, let's get him into a nice white coat with the arms that wrap around the back. He can give himself a big hug," and walk him out of the White House. He has completely gone off the rails.

#Glenn

Well, I guess this was always a risk of the Trump presidency—that this whole strategy was always the same: do maximum pressure and then get a deal. Well, his maximum pressure on Iran was war, and now he doesn't know how to get out of it. I think that's why the panic has set in, because he can't stay. I mean, this is going to result in disaster. And he can't leave either, because without the Strait of Hormuz, the whole region would be reshaped to Iran's advantage, and it would also mean the end of his presidency. So he's really trapped himself in this. It should have been predictable, I think. There was no real justification for this war—it has a low chance of success and, of course, extremely high risk, especially given the lack of an exit strategy.

Again, very similar to a lot of these forever wars. But how do you see things going now? With the ramp-up, I mean, I can see that he's going to blow up everything possible. He might even go for Karg Island. Iran's retaliation would be against the Gulf states, not directly against the U.S., so it might be a price he's willing to pay. It's a bit like with the Europeans—they're willing to fight to the last Ukrainian. He might be willing to do the same with the Gulf states. Yeah. But over the past few days, what do we make of the planes being shot down, the rescue missions? What's your takeaway from this? Because the skies were supposed to be unimpeded. They were supposed to have air dominance. That's what he told everyone.

#Larry Johnson

So let's differentiate between what Trump wants to do, what the U.S. military can do, and what the U.S. military is willing to do. I think those are three different areas. The chess pieces, prior to Friday morning in Iran, were all lined up for a U.S. ground operation. It may have involved something like—well, I guess they had found an unused airfield about 200 miles into Iran, roughly 100 miles inside

the Iranian border, near Natanz. They would go in there, land, refuel helicopters at that site, and then continue on with special operations forces to hit Natanz and try to take control of enriched uranium they believed might be there. And I say that based on what I'm seeing.

Nobody's feeding me information on this, but I think, as sort of preparation for that operation, that's where this F-15 gets shot down. Now, all of a sudden—boom—the entire plan starts to fall apart, or it has to be delayed. One of the guys I worked with for years was the last colonel to command AFSOC, Air Force Special Operations Command, which was located up at Hurlburt Airfield in the armpit of Florida. He was involved in Vietnam in what they called CSAR—Combat Search and Rescue missions. And, you know, a lot of what happened in those was that a pilot would get shot down, and you'd send out two or three different aircraft—back then, two or three different helicopters and such—to try to effect a rescue. And more often than not, some of the rescuers would get shot down.

And so instead of losing just one person, you end up losing, you know, six, ten more. Well, that's exactly what happened on Friday. Now, the Pentagon said nobody else was killed. Personally, I think they're lying, because there was one video that looked like a C-130 Hercules that was hit in the air and caught fire. The fire could be explained because that C-130 also carries a load of fuel used to refuel helicopters. But it crashed and exploded. What we do know, even according to the Pentagon, is that in addition to the F-15, an A-10 Warthog was shot down. The pilot got out. Looks like they lost an F-16. They lost at least two Black Hawk helicopters—or rather, Pave Hawks. They lost two of those.

And then they admit they lost two C-130s that were on the ground and stuck. So the Pentagon claims we blew them up. Well, you know, again, I think those two may have even been connected with that operation. But when you sit down to try to rescue one pilot, we lost at least five other types of aircraft—airframes, fixed-wing and rotary-wing. Well, you know, if you had that many losses for just one, and they were consumed... The U.S., you know, the command headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base—the CENTCOM headquarters—and the Combined Air Operations Center there, I think it's still up and functioning at Al Udeid Air Force Base in Qatar and other locations, were just, you know, all hands on deck trying to find and locate that pilot because they didn't want him to be captured by Iran.

So, you know, this is more about the political optics—that we can't have Iran celebrating the capture of a U.S. prisoner. But in the course of it, we lost, let's say, close to half a billion dollars in aircraft yesterday, something like that, between all the different aircraft that went down just to save one guy. You know, this is the absurdity of it. So if their plan is to put more aircraft into Iran now that they know Iran's air defense is active—they have a loitering missile, rocket, call it what you will—they launch it, and then it's like a glider. It hovers around until it hones in on a target, and then boom. And it's not readily detected by the conventional systems U.S. aircraft use to detect threats. So now they've got to take that into account.

So Trump wants to launch a ground operation. I'm not, you know, I don't know whether it's to take Karg Island alone, or take Karg Island and then hit Natanz or Bushehr—one of the nuclear power plants—with a special operations raid, maybe try to hit an underground missile factory in Kashmir. You know, I don't know if it's one or all three, how ambitious it is. But he wants to do it. The military, I think right now, based on the losses they incurred on Friday, are stepping back and saying, "I'm not sure we can do this." Because as part of their planning, they've got to assume, okay, we're going to lose 10%, 20% of our airframes. Do we have enough CSAR—the Combat Search and Rescue crews—available to carry out that kind of mission if it unfolds? And I'd say the answer there would be no.

I mean, it would be almost a nightmare, the number of aircraft we'd have to put into the area—and that, again, would be vulnerable to getting more shot down. And then there's the question: are the military, or the senior officers, willing to do this? I think there are growing doubts on that front. The early optimism and enthusiasm that accompanied this mission when we launched the attack on February 28th—that's gone. You know, the sort of excitement that fueled particularly the younger guys, right? The lieutenants and captains who've never really experienced anything like this—they were all jazzed up, like, "Yeah, man, we get to go to war." And now, all of a sudden, the reality of war is starting to hit home. And we don't know how many were killed.

Again, in this attempt to rescue the pilot, I believe there were probably at least six people killed and several wounded—maybe more than ten. So, you know, it's a pretty heavy price to pay for rescuing one pilot. This now goes back to the debate about our combat pilots—the Tom Cruise "Top Gun" model. Does that even make sense anymore, given the technological advances that have taken place and the capabilities of remotely piloted aircraft? You can fly an F-35 remotely; you don't need a pilot in it. In fact, without a pilot, that plane can actually perform better, because a significant expense in these combat aircraft is building in life-support systems, since the human body can only withstand so much G-force.

I don't know what the exact point is where the blood just shuts down in the body—you just can't live, you can't survive it. Whereas an aircraft without a human being, man, it can do a lot of maneuvering. And that's not just the U.S.; that applies to the Russians and the Chinese too. But here we've got this system—it's still an anachronism of the 20th century: if you go down, we're going to come save you. And it's an honorable thing. And listen, the PJs—the parachute, you know, the Air Force pararescuers—they're terrific. They're an incredible group. The pilots that are flying, in particular, I think there were a lot of Task Force 160 pilots involved in this. A lot of very brave, capable people being asked to do something incredibly stupid.

#Glenn

Maybe something good can come out of this, though. I mean, when the U.S. had that success against Venezuela, it fueled this hubris that led to the attack on Iran. Maybe, you know, some

humbling is good before the U.S. starts a war with Russia or China—which, you know, might end the world. That being said, of course, this is already spiraling very quickly out of control. The restraint is largely gone, which means either one can adjust to these realities or, I guess, restock the chairs on the Titanic. And it appears that might be what's being done. I'm not sure how you read this current purging of U.S. generals. I saw a hearing with Pete Hegseth where he was asked, "Do you know how many you fired?" And he didn't know—apparently it was eight. Then he was asked why, what was the reason for it, and he more or less didn't answer. So what do you make of this? Because it's an interesting time to begin purging your military leadership. I'm not sure if it's related to a ground war or what.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, actually, I don't think it is. I've been fortunate to have a conversation with a friend of mine who's a retired senior officer in the Joint Special Operations Command arena. So, you know, what he shared with me—let me just read this—he says that George, Randy George, the general who's the Chief of Staff of the Army, and Hodney were glorified administrative clerks, nothing else. They're not warfighters at all. Zero real influence in Iran. Both are big-time military-industrial corporation supporters. Both are Obama-Biden appointees. Both are responsible for force development and new weapons fielding since the Ukraine and Azeri wars.

Complete failure over four years. The best they could say is that it's possible to shorten the off-the-shelf and new technology cycle for drone warfare to three years. But basically, none of these guys who were fired—the chaplain, Hodney, and Randy George—are in the chain of command for operational decisions related to the war in Iran. They're not in a position to be asked to deploy forces or support an operation. Now, that doesn't mean they didn't voice strong disapproval—that's possible—but I'd feel more comfortable reaching that judgment if, since they resigned or left their jobs, one of them had come out and spoken publicly.

Instead, I think what we're seeing here is a political purge. Hicks and Trump—they're going after minorities. You know, they're going after Black women, Black men. I mean, it really comes off as a racist tint. They're assuming these people have their positions because of DEI. Maybe they did, maybe they didn't, but this continues a trend that really started in earnest under Barack Obama—the politicization of the senior military ranks. You want people who are loyal to the president, but their oath is to uphold, protect, and defend the Constitution, not the political career of Barack Obama, Joe Biden, or Donald Trump.

But instead, that's what it's become. You know, we saw it back under Obama when they went after General Stanley McChrystal. And the irony there is that McChrystal is sort of a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat—very supportive of the kind of policies Obama was pursuing. But he got accused of having said something unkind about Obama. So when you start changing military leadership because

of that—well, number one, military leaders shouldn't be out in public making any kind of statement about policy. Their job is to develop and lay out a military strategy and advise the president on appropriate courses of action.

But if they're given an order to do something they feel is wrong, immoral, or illegal—resign. Resign and protest. You can do that. But none have done that over the years. So what we've got is sort of the creation of a Praetorian Guard program, where you get rid of the old guard that was loyal to Joe Biden and bring in new guys who are going to be loyal to Donald Trump. And I don't want anybody in leadership who's loyal to one guy or the other. I want someone who's going to uphold the damn Constitution. So what we're seeing here is more of a political purge. I don't think it's directly connected to the war.

#Glenn

Okay, well, I guess that's good, to some extent. You mentioned the problem the United States has directly with Iran—that it can't leave without keeping the Strait of Hormuz open. It can't open it by force, so Trump is left now threatening to destroy the country, bring it back to the Stone Age, or blow up everything, in his words, unless they do what he wants. But as the foreign minister of Iran said, humbling or disciplining America is something they won't have an opportunity to do again. They can rebuild the bridges and everything.

But I also think the main concern for them is that if this is seen as a success for the U.S., then the U. S. will come back later to finish the job. So the U.S. is in a dire strait. Of course, the Iranians are suffering greatly too. But what do we know about the Israelis here? There's very tight control on the information coming out. They've put a lot of restrictions, and the Western countries—at least their media—very obediently follow that. Still, sometimes we see pictures coming out, and they're not untouched either.

#Larry Johnson

They're taking serious damage, yeah. Well, what do we know? We know that Iran has been targeting their oil refineries. They've essentially shut down the ports at Haifa and Tel Aviv. They've hit targets in and around Dimona—the nuclear reactor, the site where most people believe they keep their nuclear weapons. And then, just before we came on air, I got another heads-up from someone who follows this, saying that apparently an Iranian missile just hit a major building in Haifa. That building has collapsed, and apparently there were some key Israeli military and political figures inside.

So Israel's gone out of its way to try to pretend that nothing's happening. But from the information that does come out, you're beginning to see videos where they go into the subways in Tel Aviv, and people have actually set up tents on the platforms because they're spending so much time in these bomb shelters that they don't have time to live above ground very easily. And Israel, by virtue of its

size—it's a very small country—and population-wise, it doesn't have a lot. They've now run into grave difficulty with their offensive in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah is inflicting tremendous losses on them, both in terms of machinery and personnel. And Hezbollah now has FPV drones that are fiber-optic, so they're not subject to the usual detection and interference that conventional drones face. They didn't have that back in 2006. So on top of RPGs, other systems, and drones, it wouldn't surprise me if they've got some advanced U.S. equipment—courtesy of the Ukrainians. The weapons stolen out of the largesse of the U.S. have made their way into the hands of Hezbollah.

#Glenn

I think the troop levels in Israel are a killer seal for them, because there's no lack of political will, it seems, and they get a lot of weapons, which they need. But it's about mobilizing the required troops. I've seen some comments from the head of the IDF as well, saying that the IDF could collapse on itself if they don't resolve the manpower issue. So given this, it's a bit strange that they'd choose now to discuss reoccupying Lebanon, since that would require a lot of troops. But beyond this, I've also heard claims—at least from Joe Kent—that Israel is deliberately attacking and killing the people who would negotiate on the Iranian side with the United States.

Correct. This is—well, I'm just wondering, how do you make sense of this? Because the more the U.S. is humiliated in this war, the longer it goes on, the more the U.S. will be humiliated. This will have a backlash within the U.S.—people rising up and saying, "Why do we allow the Israelis to pull us into these wars?" It just seems like this isn't really in Israel's interest to put the U.S. in such a vulnerable position. And also, the U.S. could be chased out of the region unless it gets a proper deal. So how do you make sense of this?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, well, there was no thought given to a strategy and then a plan to implement that strategy. It's more about feelings, about emotion. Israel is guided by this extremist Zionist mentality right now. Now, Bibi Netanyahu is not really a believer—he's just going along with it because it's politically convenient at the moment. But people like Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, they're true believers in this. They actually think what they're doing is creating the conditions that will put the Jewish people in danger of being exterminated so that the Messiah will return.

I mean, it's this insane, ridiculous theological stuff, but they really believe it. They're trying their best to manufacture Armageddon so the Messiah will come to save them—and in saving them, destroy all the Amalek, finish the destruction of the evil Gentiles, get rid of the Christians and Muslims. That's really what it's all about in their minds. So we can't dismiss that as a factor. We can't ignore it or

pretend it doesn't matter—it absolutely does. But then you confront the reality. And as you pointed out, the Israeli military is a reserve army, and it was modeled, in some aspects, a little bit after the Soviet army.

Because the Soviets never had the concept of a strong non-commissioned officer corps. And when we're talking about non-commissioned officers, we're basically talking about sergeants—whether it's a staff sergeant, sergeant major, you know, senior enlisted personnel who've been in the army for ten years or more. And, you know, by virtue of that longevity, they've learned a thing or two about how to survive both bureaucratically and in combat if necessary. So what happens is, when new officers come in, you've got a lieutenant who shows up—he's like 22 years old, okay?

He just got out of West Point, graduated college. They don't know anything. And then, you know, that's where they start to get indoctrinated. They're usually with a company, like in the U.S. Army, with a staff sergeant who's about 30 years old. So this 22-year-old is accompanied by a 30-year-old man, and if that young officer is smart, they'll listen to what the 30-year-old has to say. Well, in the Israeli army, you get a 22-year-old captain and a 22-year-old staff sergeant. I mean, you get people who, at their age, haven't really had the experience. It's more like a political promotion.

And so that's what the Israeli army lacks. That's why they're so poorly disciplined. That's why they're terrible with their tactics in the field—because they're led by people who don't know what the hell they're doing. And we've seen this over and over throughout the years. Now they're talking about trying to... They had activated 300,000 reservists for the war in Gaza, and they haven't won that. They haven't defeated Hamas after two and a half years. And now they're talking about the need to call up an additional 400,000 reservists. I don't think they have that many people who would actually do it.

I mean, the total population of Israel right now is reportedly around 10 million. It may have gone down with people leaving the country. But even with 10 million, when you're talking about calling up roughly 10 percent of your total population, that's almost the entirety of men and women between the ages of 18 and 40. It just doesn't work, because that's supposed to be the heart and soul of your workforce, too. So if they're getting pulled out, who's left to carry on what minimal economic activity is still happening?

#Glenn

Well, as the U.S. has trapped itself, the Israelis are exhausting themselves. What do we know about the direction Iran is taking? That is, you know, the second Khamenei now and the overall strategy of the Iranians. Because, well, on one hand, it looks like one of the really notable things is how Iran is just following the U.S. up this escalation ladder. Whatever the U.S. does, Iran shows it can do the same. And I guess that's the biggest deterrent—it's very predictable. One of the reasons I think

Trump hasn't yet burned down all of Iran, as he now threatens to do on Tuesday, is exactly because they can do the same against America's allies. But what do you see as their wider strategy? Is it just to force the U.S. to leave without the Strait of Hormuz? How do you see this?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, no, I think Iran's ultimate strategy—and one I believe both the Russians and Chinese endorse—is breaking U.S. control and influence in the Persian Gulf. So many of the Gulf Arabs, particularly the Emiratis, Qataris, Kuwaitis, Saudis, and Bahrainis, have been dependent on the United States. And the U.S., in turn, has been dependent on them. You know, especially with the Saudis and the Emiratis buying a large number of U.S. Treasury bills, they have fairly significant leverage over the U.S. economy.

Trump always saw them that way because they were accepting payment for oil in dollars. So this Persian Gulf oil became an important source of money flowing into U.S. coffers, helping to keep the economy afloat. But, you know, Iran's strategy, I think, is twofold. First, to show these countries that there's a serious physical and economic cost to being friends with the United States and allowing it to conduct military operations from their territory. The Saudis, Kuwaitis, and especially Bahrain have paid a heavy price for that—Emirates as well. So that's number one.

Number two, maintain control of the Strait of Hormuz so they can economically squeeze those countries to the point where they'll have to make a deal with Iran—and not just Iran, but also Oman. Iran is shrewdly working with Oman, saying, "Okay, let's basically create a cover charge. You want to come into the Persian Gulf? You've got to pay a cover charge. You want to sell anything in or out?" To that end, Iran is saying right now, "We're not going to let anything go out that benefits the United States or Europe. Anybody aligned with Israel or supporting Israel's attacks on us—they're not getting a dime out of here, including the governments." There are serious concerns about food supply in the United Arab Emirates.

The situation may not be as dire because so many people who lived there previously have left. So you've got a substantial reduction in the number of people needing to be fed in the Emirates. The same applies to Qatar. And Kuwait and Bahrain—any expatriates living there, they bailed out. The U. S. bases that used to be in Bahrain are destroyed. Iran is in the process of destroying what remains of the presence in Kuwait. Same in Saudi Arabia. The Prince Saud Air Base has been repeatedly struck, and a number of aircraft hit. Pictures are emerging showing CH-47s—that's the big helicopter with two large rotors, one at each end.

At least one of those has been destroyed, if not more, in Kuwait, on the ground. So Iran's strategy is to take control of the Gulf—take control of the oil, the liquefied natural gas, everything else—and the fertilizer coming out of that. Because of the world's need for those resources, they'll be able to control who gets in and who gets out. And, candidly, there's nothing the United States can do about that. And China—you know, some think that because China has investments in the UAE and in some

of these countries, that's true. But what's happened now with Iran has shifted the game so that people who want to come in or out have to pay the fee in yuan, not in dollars.

So it's actually strengthening the Chinese financial sector. And we just saw, yesterday or the day before, that Deutsche Bank has now started to offer Chinese bonds in lieu of U.S. Treasuries. So China is beginning to forge some economic relationships with the West that are actually detrimental to the United States. I think that's what Iran is seeing as part of this strategy—cut off, get the United States out of the Persian Gulf, shift the Gulf to where it's going to benefit China and Russia. In that part, Iran sees itself as a critical future partner with both China and Russia in economic growth. So I think that's the broader strategy here.

#Glenn

Yeah, the economic war—I think that's a bit overlooked and an interesting component of this whole thing, because in most wars there's always a strong economic incentive. That is, we always see when the U.S. goes to war, the oil companies' stock value goes up, the weapons manufacturers go up. We also see economic benefits—for example, the proxy war against Russia. As the war goes on, the Europeans, of course, become even more dependent on the U.S. They're willing to sign horrible trade deals, they buy weapons from the U.S., and the Ukrainians can be stripped of their natural resources. There's a lot that can be done to pursue economic benefits in a time of war.

But with the Iranians, they really seem to have gone straight for the throat here—going after the economic side of this whole war, not just by shutting down the Strait of Hormuz, but now, as we see, selling oil in yuan. This is already happening. It's quite extraordinary, and there's not much that can be done except completely destroying Iran and hoping that mass brutality will force it to kneel and do whatever America says. But that's also hard to imagine. So it begs the question: where exactly is this going? Because on Tuesday, Trump will either have to back down in a very humiliating way, or he'll burn down the entire Middle East. It's hard to say which one it'll be.

#Larry Johnson

Well, you know, there is room for confusion on that, because we know in the past Trump made similarly dire threats against Hamas—like, "If you don't release the hostages by Saturday, all hell's going to be brought down on you." And nothing happened. So I'm hoping that's the case here, that he's just blowing smoke, blowing steam. If he does decide to go after and try to destroy Iran's ability to export oil, he's compounding the economic pain that U.S. citizens are already suffering. The price of gas is going up—it's accelerating, not decelerating. A week ago, here in Florida, on February 27th, we were paying \$2.54 a gallon. As of a week ago, it was \$3.64 a gallon, so it's gone up by \$1.10.

#Larry Johnson

And then yesterday, when I went to fill up again, it had gone up another 30 cents. So it's now actually \$3.95. It's going to break \$4 very soon. And, you know, I know there are some places in the world where people say, "Oh, that's cheap." But I'm telling you, this is Florida, which is used to relatively inexpensive gas. That's happening across the country. In fact, there are some places here in Florida where they ran out of gas—there was no more to be had. So the unhappiness among Americans over the economic costs that are accompanying this war—and what they don't understand is, let's assume that, under the magical thinking in this world, the Iranians on Tuesday say, "Okay, we give up. The Strait's wide open."

Anything can come in and out. We're sorry. Okay, the damage that's been done to the production facilities in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain is significant. So it's not just a matter of flipping a switch and the oil starts flowing again. There are going to have to be some major repairs, and that could take months—or, in the case of something like the aluminum smelter, years—just years to get some of that back online. And even if the flow of oil starts, those ships out there right now, the ones already at sea, are charging \$140 a barrel for that oil. The oil futures for Brent are lower—it's around \$111 per barrel.

#Larry Johnson

Because they're betting that this price surge is going to end. So that \$140-a-barrel oil right now is probably going to go up to \$200. The cascading effects of this kind of boost in fuel are enormous. And then we start getting into the complications of what this war has done to international air travel. There are a number of airlines that may very well go bankrupt because, number one, they're faced with higher fuel costs. They're going to have to raise ticket prices for passengers. Qatar Air used to fly regularly in and out of Doha—they're not doing that right now. Similarly for Emirati Air. God, and that is a great airline, I've got to tell you. I've flown on it before, in business class—it's luxurious. But, you know, they're not doing too much. So it's putting an end to those kinds of flights.

The European airlines that used to fly to China—now how the hell do they get there? They can't fly across Russia because of sanctions. So what this has opened up is a whole new economic window for China. Chinese airlines, man, they fly direct to Europe. You want to get to Paris or Rome? Yeah, go out of Beijing or Shanghai, because they fly directly across Russia. They don't have to worry about sanctions. So the Chinese now can fly places that U.S. and European airlines can't. We haven't even seen that shake out yet. That's what I'm saying—there are so many layers and levels in the economics of this that even financial analysts really aren't paying much attention to it yet. I don't know if Iran understood that at the outset when they closed down the Strait of Hormuz, but if they didn't, I'm pretty sure they've got a pretty good grasp on it now.

#Glenn

Yeah, well, once you shut down the Middle East and also lose transit through Russia, there aren't many ways European flights can get to Asia. I mean, you can go through Turkey, that little thin corridor, but still—it's pretty narrow. And yeah, I know British Airways said it was unfair, the competitiveness of China. Yeah.

#Larry Johnson

Let me cry crocodile tears. I thought it was the old "Cry Me a River." I mean, nobody told you to stop flying through Russian territory—you were the ones who put the sanctions on.

#Glenn

But again, if you fly Chinese Airways, you can go from Beijing to London, but the British can't operate the same flights because they have to go all the way around Russia. It's much more expensive—that's a longer route, more fuel cost. And yeah, overall, they can't compete with the Chinese. It's got a lot of layers to it. But just as a last question, what do you see as the wider ramifications here? Because, for example, the Europeans seem very much locked into the sanctions. They won't walk away from them. But I saw that in an interview, the former prime minister of Italy, Romano Prodi—he was also the former EU Commission president—said...

I actually had an opportunity to meet him once in Kazakhstan. Interesting guy. One of the good leaders in Europe before this class of horrible political leaders took over. He was making the point that Europe will, yet again, begin to restore the importation of Russian gas and oil. It'll do so when the Americans come in and, you know, not seize but take over some of these assets—the pipeline infrastructure, whatever it is. And once it's under American control, then the Russian gas will begin to flow again. I think it's a very good prediction. Yeah. So you can kind of see what's happening: the Russian gas will once again come to Europe, but it'll have to be under American administration.

The Europeans—if they just act today, if they do it now—they can still salvage their economies. They can prevent this deindustrialization, or at least slow it down. They could stay in control of their own energy infrastructure. But they know that if they don't, they'll lose their economic autonomy. And yet, there's no course correction. The direction we're going is very predictable, but nothing will be done. How do you see the wider ramifications now of what's happening in Iran? Because, as I said, it's not just about energy—it's air travel too. It's hitting all sectors now.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I think the Europeans are having a Thelma and Louise moment. They don't realize it. I'm referencing the movie where Thelma and Louise drive off the cliff—they're in midair, and nothing good usually comes from the landing. But the Europeans right now are pretending they're still on the road, still traveling the highway with a destination, and that it's just a matter of choosing which

route to take. They think there's nothing to really worry about—yeah, there are some minor problems, but those can be adjusted. No, they've driven off the cliff. They just don't realize it. The crash is coming.

They're not producing enough of their own fuel, oil, or petrochemical products to survive. They're dependent on a large portion that comes out of the Persian Gulf. Well, that's not coming. They're paying much higher prices now for oil and natural gas from the United States. They could have had it cheaper from Russia at one point. But even Russia is now playing hardball. You saw Japan—yeah, I wonder what the Japanese word for *chutzpah* is. You know, the Yiddish word for being pretty ballsy and asking for something. But the Japanese went to the Russians and said, "Okay, you know those sanctions where we wouldn't buy oil from you? We'll buy now."

But we want to buy at the sanctioned price—\$47 a barrel. Yeah. And the Russians went, "No, no, no, that's not happening. If you want to buy, you're going to pay the market price." And the Japanese are like, "Oh, well, we need some gas. Can we come talk to you about it?" And the Russians basically said, "If you're coming to talk about a sanctioned price, I'll tell you what—lift all sanctions. If you're going to keep sanctions on us, we're not selling you a damn drop of oil. So you figure it out." So from that standpoint, Russia is in the driver's seat in a big way. They can now push back against these countries that want to keep sanctions but still need oil and natural gas.

And when they discover that the United States—well, you know, what happens in three or four weeks when the U.S. puts an embargo on any further shipments of oil and liquefied natural gas overseas because we've got to keep it for ourselves? All of a sudden, the people who were counting on that coming in—what do they do? The lights get turned off. So, you know, that's where I think a large number of people in Washington and in the European capitals are still in some denial. They believe their own nonsense about, "Oh, we're winning this war against Iran. Iran is on the ropes. Any day now they're going to collapse." But no—now we're in the sixth week of this war.

And I think this war could easily go on for another three to four months. And they say, "Okay, well, at the end, Iran will be ruined. The world will be ruined." Okay, the world—the disruption of supply chains—is going to take place. It's going to lead to famine, hunger. I mean, I don't mean to sound so apocalyptic, but this is not a minor bump in the road. This is a major emergency, and the world still refuses to accept it as such. And if Trump goes through with the threats he made this morning, this is really going to spin things up to a new level and raise, in my view, the likelihood of an actual world war where other countries will be involved. I have a hard time imagining that.

#Glenn

Us getting off this escalation elevator now. But what's really required is what usually happens after great wars—that the great powers, or at least the large powers, sit down together and come up with an agreement. That's what we should be discussing now. Have our leaders sit down and say, "Listen, the whole unipolar moment is over. The whole idea of the political West dominating the

world after the Cold War—this system has obviously come to an end. We have to negotiate something new.”

So, to the Russians: we're not going to continue expanding NATO, we're not going to keep pushing our military infrastructure closer to your borders. To the Iranians: we will recognize you as a legitimate actor. I mean, it's just that this is never done ahead of wars—it always comes after. So it looks like there won't be any off-ramp anytime soon. Sadly, there's no positive note to finish on this time. But I share your pessimism. Even if the war ended today, the economic ramifications are already... yeah, entering the system. Yeah, yeah.

#Larry Johnson

It's going to be difficult. So the only good news out of this is that we'll still have something to talk about next week. Trent is keeping us busy. Oh my God. That's one thing. Jesus. Okay.

#Glenn

Well, thanks again, and have a lovely weekend—what's left of it.

#Larry Johnson

You too, Glenn. Enjoy your holiday spot. Try to work less—get some rest and relaxation with the kids. I'll work on it. Thanks.

#Larry Johnson

Okay, bye-bye.