

# Larry C. Johnson: Iran's 'Dead' Defense WIPES OUT US Jets & Black Hawks

## #Nima

Hi everybody, today is Monday, April 6th, and our dear friend and brother Larry C. Johnson is here with us. Welcome back.

## #Larry

Man, we survived another week. Here we go—week six of the war to end all wars, I guess. Yeah, yeah. Man.

## #Nima

Larry, let's start with one of the most important events from just yesterday and the day before. We've seen a new operation in Iran, and, you know, many people have their doubts about what really happened there. It was said to be an operation to rescue one of the pilots—supposedly the second pilot of an F-15E—or maybe it was something else. Before we get into that, here's the map of Iran, Larry. Look here: what we've learned is that the fighter jet, the F-15, was somewhere around this area. Then they said it was closer to Khuzestan or Kohgiluyeh Boyer-Ahmad, one of those two places. Then what happened was, we saw the operation take place here, in the southern part of Isfahan, which is far from where the incident occurred. And the other point, Larry, is these new images showing they were trying to hit the roads that connect to the region where the operation was supposed to happen.

## #Larry

So when you say "they," you mean the United States? Yes.

## #Nima

Yeah, the United States—I'm talking about the United States—hit this. These satellite images confirm that the U.S. bombed every single road near the special operation landing site. Right, right. And here's the second photo. But after all, when you look at what happened—in your opinion, what was that? It was an operation, you know, to save the pilot. It was something they decided to do to save the pilot. Then they went there, and maybe they changed their plan in the middle of the operation to

save him. I don't know what happened, because you have to plan all of this beforehand. It's not like you just start operating and then decide everything as you go. It seems they were planning this long before it happened. You're taking that?

## **#Larry**

Okay, so let's first deal with the F-15. It was hit by Iranian air defense, and the plane went down. We don't know precisely where it crashed. You know, what's interesting is that the earlier reports suggested the jet was, as you pointed out, over toward the coast or in Khuzestan. They didn't place it anywhere near Isfahan, where ultimately the pilot was found. So what I think was going on—and again, this is my speculation, just trying to make sense of it—is that this F-15 was involved in what they call “operational preparation of the environment.” It was carrying out strikes designed to prepare the way for what was going to be a U.S. special operations mission to attack or conduct a raid on the Isfahan nuclear facility.

I guess that's in the tense up there, I believe. Whether the goal was to recover material or to damage and blow the building up, I'm not sure what the particulars of the mission would be. That's why I think the early information saying it was out toward the coast was deliberate deception—it was meant to make the Iranians believe it wasn't anywhere near Isfahan. What was unusual about this is that the guy in the back seat—the number two pilot, or what they call the weapons systems officer, the WSO—wasn't the typical junior person. Normally, that seat's taken by a young lieutenant or a captain, maybe even a major. But this time, the man in the back seat was the vice wing commander of Mawafak Salti Air Base in Jordan. So he was a colonel.

He was someone who had a lot of valuable intelligence that, if captured, could have been very damaging—could have compromised a number of U.S. operations. Or at least they would have had to assume the information he had was compromised and change up a variety of things. So he became a priority. Recovering him became a priority. Now, this is where the story, to me, doesn't make sense, and I'm not sure what conclusion to draw. The viewers and listeners can draw their own conclusions. He reportedly had either a broken ankle or a broken leg, and with one of those injuries, he supposedly walked five miles from northwest of that mountain down—so you'd travel in a southeasterly direction to get to that mountain—and then he climbed up the mountain. I don't know if it was 2,000 or 3,000 feet, how high up he went, but...

## **#Larry**

Reportedly, the beacon—the locator that was supposed to be on him—either he didn't have it or it didn't work. The CIA was the one that finally found him. So then what's called the Joint Personnel Recovery Center, or JPRC, launched the combat search and rescue mission. Now, the JPRC is a separate unit. Its entire mission is that if a U.S. pilot or pilots go down, they go out and recover them. They're staffed primarily with what are called pararescue jumpers, or PJs, who are an extraordinary group of talented people. They're trained to do advanced medicine—not just first aid,

but combat medicine—as well as parachuting and maritime operations. It's a damn rigorous qualification course to get through.

So normally they would go out. But what I think happened here is that the mission this F-15 was on—to prepare for the possible raid into Isfahan—already had a unit of Navy SEALs with some members of the 75th Ranger Regiment. I'm not sure which battalion. They were already staged, positioned, ready for an operation. I didn't know if it was going to be carried out that night, the next night, or today—you know, at some point—but they were staged and ready. And as part of that, they had four AH-6 Little Birds. It's a small helicopter that can carry two operators on either side. Those were already inside the C-130s. So it's not like they were sitting there on the ground, ready, and then lifted off and flew to this site.

And whether through serendipity or on purpose, this pilot wound up on that mountain—so they say. That's why they flew. They had already prepped that airfield, which was sort of an agricultural strip—something out in the desert that could be used, but it wasn't a regular airport by any means. If JSOC followed protocol, which I believe they did, they had already scouted that airfield beforehand, even before this F-15 went down. So they knew it, they'd checked it out, and they knew they could land there. The story that's come out is that they landed those two C-130s carrying the Little Birds and a contingent of 75th Rangers and/or SEALs. You would have had four Little Birds in total.

You're going to need four pilots, and then at least four operators per bird—guys who sit on the skids on the side. So that's sixteen. Those planes reportedly landed and then got stuck in the sand. That doesn't make sense to me. That's the story, but they would have already checked out that landing strip before just showing up there. I can understand one bird getting stuck in the sand, but two? That doesn't make sense. So while all this is going on, you've got an A-10 that was in a particular area. It got shot down. They claimed it was trying to provide close air support. But again, if this jet went down that close to Isfahan, and the effort was to divert attention from Isfahan...

They've already admitted the CIA was putting out disinformation to steer people away from the area. So you've got to wonder if the A-10's downing actually had anything to do with that, or if it just got caught up in a different mission. The first pilot was recovered by two helicopters—they're called Pave Hawks. They look like Black Hawks, which people are used to seeing, but these are special Air Force versions built for special operations missions. They got hit with small-arms or ground fire. You can see the helicopters trailing black smoke, but it didn't disable them. They were able to get back to safety outside Iranian territory. So, you know, they effected the rescue. It's reported that one of the Little Birds flew up on the mountain ridge and picked up this colonel who had a broken ankle and a broken leg.

Makes you wonder how he was able to walk and get up there. But that's, you know, that's the story. Then they get down, and supposedly they're in this massive firefight, and the aircraft were disabled. So now you've got like a hundred people on the ground—how the hell are they going to get out? Well, then they said there's a special operations squadron—I think it's the 427th. They fly a CASA...

let me see, CASA 275—no, I forget the number of the aircraft. Oh, CASA 295, that's what it's called. And one or two of those were needed to lift the passengers out. It's a short takeoff and landing aircraft, so that means it had to come in. But if they'd been in this firefight, that means those planes were taking fire too. So, again, we're not getting the full story.

But I think in this case, what happened was the unit that arrived to do the rescue had been scheduled to conduct that raid into Isfahan. I'm presuming that's where it was—maybe it was to be Bashir or some other location. But because they were all kitted up and ready to go, they turned to them, since there were other CSAR activities going on. And, you know, they reportedly rescued the pilot, saved him, and got him back. But we don't know about casualties. I'd be shocked if there weren't any—both some killed in action and some wounded in action. We don't have any of that information. If there's a silver lining to this, it may be that it gives the United States second thoughts about conducting any further ground operations in Iran, because this one could have really turned out to be a big disaster, and they got lucky on some points.

## **#Nima**

As you mentioned, there's footage coming out showing that some documents were discovered, and it shows one of the—well, I don't know what your understanding is, Larry. Do you think those Black Hawk helicopters were hit while they were flying over, or did they hit the ground? What was that? Because when you look at the scene, it seems like they hit the ground.

## **#Larry**

Yeah, it looked like some of them—well, the story from CENTCOM is that we couldn't get the planes out, and the helicopters, they were AH-6 Little Birds, not Black Hawks. So the U.S. sent in another aircraft to drop bombs on the area and blow them up in place. Maybe that happened, maybe it didn't. What some of the video evidence shows is that the propellers are bent, suggesting there was a crash. You know, when they crash and hit the ground, the propeller digs in while the plane's moving forward, and it bends the blades back. You can see that. So we just don't know. All we do know is that the official story, the way they're telling it, doesn't make sense.

## **#Nima**

And here's the footage, Larry. You can see the documents from some of these forces—one of them in particular.

## **#Larry**

Can you go back to when they're holding up that little green card? Yeah, right there. Can you zoom in on that at all? Is that possible?

**#Nima**

Yeah, it's impossible to zoom in there.

**#Larry**

Yeah. But anyway, this is a female—Ron claimed it's got a female pilot. They've got her documents. The card on the left is called a CAC card.

**#Nima**

It's called Ryder, Amanda M.

**#Larry**

Yeah, Amanda Ryder. Okay, yeah.

**#Nima**

Amanda Ryder. Amanda M. Ryder. Yeah, that's the name.

**#Larry**

Yeah, so they're not saying a word about that right now. It'll be a matter of whether they recovered it or, you know, got the flag. It's not clear to me what kind of aircraft this was. We don't know if it was a helicopter or a jet, but, huh. Yeah, it looked like it was hauling some cargo—ammunition, yeah.

**#Nima**

Yeah.

**#Nima**

But I think it shows how they were planning something big in that region.

**#Larry**

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So, like I said, we're not getting the straight story. And I understand part of that— they're trying to maintain some form of operational security. But what this incident does is highlight that this airfield, you know, it's an abandoned airfield right next to one of Iran's national parks. And it's 21 miles from there to Isfahan. So the question was, you stage that— we call this a FARP, a Forward Arming and Refueling Point— from there, how were they going to get into Isfahan? Was it the Little Birds? Maybe there were supposed to be some other Black Hawks that would have

come in. Maybe. So if I'm the Iranians, if I'm the Revolutionary Guard, I'd be doing a complete survey right now of every area in Iran where nuclear materials are stored.

And within a 30- to 50-mile radius, identify any potential airfields, then put security at those locations and maybe conceal it so you can ambush somebody coming in. But, you know, they need to take that seriously, because it looks like this operation was going to be carried out. And because this plane got shot down, I think it derailed the operation. That's my interpretation. Others—there are others who believe this was a ruse. I'm not sure how that works, you know, a ruse to divert attention from another operation. It just seems that if this was a ruse, it was incredibly complex and had so many moving parts that a lot could go wrong. So that's why I'm not inclined to believe that.

## **#Nima**

It seems, Larry, that there were some casualties. I don't know about the people who were wounded. Even Donald Trump himself said the pilot was seriously wounded. I'd assume many of them were hurt at the scene during this operation, before leaving Iran.

## **#Larry**

Mm-hmm.

## **#Nima**

And the other part, Larry, is that while this operation was underway in Iran, we saw Iran attacking Kuwait and hitting targets there. It seems there was some sort of connection between what was happening in Kuwait and what was happening in Isfahan, in the southern part of Isfahan. What was the connection between the two, or were they two different kinds of operations in the eyes of the Iranians?

## **#Larry**

Well, okay. Where was the first one?

## **#Nima**

I'm talking about the southern part of Isfahan with this operation, this attack. As it was happening, Iran at the same time was targeting Kuwait, and they said these were American forces in Kuwait—American facilities in Kuwait.

## **#Larry**

Okay, I'm with you now. They may very well have been targeting the base those folks had taken off from. That's entirely possible. And now that this has happened, the element of surprise is gone. The

United States may decide that what was anticipated to be an operation is now canceled, because it's essentially compromised—the target, and some of the tactics that were going to be used. Again, this is all open. I'm not dealing with any kind of classified or inside information. Based on my experience, I think this is the most likely course of events.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. What do we know, Larry, about—what can we speculate regarding the forces being used in this operation? Were they the same forces the United States used in Venezuela? No, no, no.

## **#Larry**

Yeah, these are the kind of units—and some of the personnel may have been involved in Venezuela, you know, the pilots of the Little Birds, the Rangers, and so on. From the looks of it, this is a unit under the command of the Joint Special Operations Command, JSOC. It appears they used a Navy SEAL unit—in this case, members of SEAL Team 6. They also used what are called Tier 2 elements from the 75th Rangers, who provide support, and Task Force 160 flyers from the Special Operations Aviation Regiment, the SOAR. So yeah, this is a highly specialized unit, and they may have actually had some experience in Venezuela. You can't rule that out.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. Here's Larry. Donald Trump is talking about a new ultimatum—it's for tomorrow at 8 p.m. He has a new ultimatum, and he's talking about attacking Russia, power grids, and bridges in Iran. But we know what's happened so far. Last night, they were attacking many apartment buildings in Iran—in Tehran, in Qom, and other cities—killing various people. You know, many kids were killed in these attacks, by the way. It seems that the initial reports show many children were killed. And on the other hand, they attacked Sharif University. Sharif University is one of the higher-ranked universities in Iran—it's like MIT in the United States, something like that. And...

## **#Larry**

Yeah, this is more about trying to destroy Iranian culture and Iranian society. These are not legitimate military targets, and it's a sign of desperation on the part of the United States that they would engage in this. They also went after, I think, a petrochemical facility, and then Iran wasted no time responding and hitting a comparable facility in Abu Dhabi. These Gulf nations are much more fragile in nature, and their ability to survive this and come out intact economically is very low.

## **#Nima**

Larry, you've mentioned this operation. It seems that if the main objective was to capture Natanz—you know, I'm talking about the nuclear facilities there—then they've failed to achieve that. So what

else can they do? It seems that all this talk about a ground operation in the Strait of Hormuz and, you know, on Khark Island or Larak Island, near the Strait of Hormuz, is just part of some sort of media operation. Then they went after Isfahan. Because the goal, as Donald Trump keeps saying, is to extract the enriched uranium from Iran. What else can they do in that direction? They'd have to put forces on the ground. Without that, they're not going to be able to do it. That's the problem right now. And this operation gives some sort of indication of what Donald Trump and his administration might do if they go that far.

## **#Larry**

Well, actually, you know, you suggested that they have an objective and a goal. I'd argue the opposite. They don't know what the hell they're trying to do, because the objectives or goals change day to day. One day it's about regime change. Then 24 hours later, oh no, it's about opening the Strait of Hormuz. Then another 24 hours later, no, no, we don't need the Strait of Hormuz—hey, if the Europeans want it open, let them do it. Oh no, we've got to stop Iran from building a nuke. So, you know, the goal, the objective, changes day to day.

And that's why what the U.S. is doing militarily looks so chaotic, right? Because it's not following any kind of clear plan for, you know, like I said, making sure Iran doesn't have a nuke. If that's the objective, fine. Or opening and taking steps to get the Strait of Hormuz opened. Now, the reality is, as I've said before, there's no military solution to getting the Strait opened. That's going to have to be done through diplomacy. And right now, Iran's showing no incentive or interest in diplomacy—at least not under the conditions the U.S. is offering.

## **#Nima**

Here's what Fox News reported about Donald Trump's ongoing attempts to negotiate or send messages to Iran.

## **#Speaker 04**

He told me on the phone that while he was trying to get a deal, the Iranians kept trying to push back the negotiating timeline—saying, for example, "Next Tuesday we'll meet." And the president said, "No, next hour." Because this is a president who wanted to get a deal. He wanted to get the job finished. Ultimately, the Iranians were trying to stretch out that negotiating timeline, and the president ordered the strike against critical infrastructure in Iran to send a message that the United States is not playing games—either on the battlefield or at the negotiating table.

The sense I got from President Trump is that he's very serious about these threats against the Iranian regime, especially regarding their unwillingness to make a good-faith agreement, despite the fact that he's given them multiple off-ramps. He also told me that he's prepared to take Iranian oil if they refuse to make a deal. That's a major development in this conflict, and the president made it

very clear in his post on Truth Social that Iran's power and energy infrastructure will be targeted in the days ahead if a deal isn't reached tomorrow.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, I think he's going to talk. He's going to address the nation again at 1 p.m. today.

## **#Larry**

At 1 p.m. today?

## **#Nima**

Yeah, he's going to talk again, and I don't see anything different coming in his argument. He's going to repeat himself and say the same thing we've just heard. Because it seems that, in their mind, the Iranians are playing a game. It's not a game on the part of the Iranians. They know how—how crucial, how, you know, I would say—it's the survival of Iran as a nation that's at risk for them. They understand the reality of what's going on. They don't want this continuous war. What's your understanding, Larry, of what the reporter just said about the communication he had with Donald Trump?

## **#Larry**

Yeah, well, Trump's all over the board. Again, what's the objective? He keeps saying, you know, "I'm going to take the oil." No, "I'm going to destroy all their infrastructure—roads, bridges, power." And, you know, Iran must negotiate about what? Opening the Strait of Hormuz? Getting rid of nuclear power? And then this laughable comment by Trey Yingst, you know, that Iran's not negotiating in good faith. Hello? Iran was the one ready to go back and meet in Geneva on March 2nd. It was the United States that bombed them—launched an unprovoked attack. So, you know, the United States has zero credibility now. You can't trust their word at all.

So this is, you know, really, I think it's a sign of desperation on Trump's part. He realizes that they're getting hammered in the polls, and it's not going to get better because the price of gas is going to keep creeping up. He's not going to have any control over that. And I think maybe the one o'clock thing is going to be a press conference to celebrate the incredible rescue of this pilot. Meanwhile, you've got those documents from that Amanda Riker—was it Riker? Yeah, Riker. You know, that's disturbing. There's not a word about that. Not a word. So they're trying to keep that under wraps. If the Iranians have her, they'll produce her at some point.

## **#Speaker 05**

Yeah.

## **#Nima**

I think, Larry, the calculation on the part of the Iranians about the GCC countries is changing a lot after this operation. And they're going to hit targets in these Arab states. But what do we know about the intensity—or really the number—of American forces in these countries? Are they still in Kuwait, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, or are they trying to move them to Jordan or maybe somewhere else, like Cyprus?

## **#Larry**

Yeah, I don't know. And understandably so—the U.S. is keeping that classified in terms of disposition. It would appear there are no longer U.S. forces in Bahrain. There are still U.S. forces in Qatar at Al Udeid Air Force Base. I don't think there are many in the UAE, but the UAE has sites that have been used to launch attacks against Iran. In Saudi Arabia, there are still U.S. personnel. I don't know if they're still at Prince Saud Air Base—that's so close it's been hit several times by the Iranians. They may be farther to the west, at King Fahd Air Base. And, you know, Kuwait's been taking quite a beating. Given that it was reported on Saturday there were attacks at the base where the special operations forces were deployed, maybe they've now redeployed. But that, I don't know.

## **#Larry**

You're muted.

## **#Nima**

Larry, in this document—Amanda Ryder—it shows that... let me bring it up for you again, because there's something here that's important.

## **#Larry**

Yeah, that's right there.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, it shows, Larry, that she got a B-2 stay permit from Israel.

## **#Larry**

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, because it only allows tourism and business. And then, you see, this is—I think...

**#Larry**

Yeah, that's interesting. It shows the integration of U.S. and Israeli personnel. Yeah.

**#Nima**

Yeah.

**#Larry**

You know, so is it possible that she was on an aircraft that belonged to Israel, not the United States? And that's why the U.S. isn't, you know, focused on it—because it wasn't our aircraft. It was an Israeli aircraft, you know.

**#Nima**

And we can probably conclude that it was a combination of both an American and an Israeli operation.

**#Larry**

Yes, yes. Yeah, yeah.

**#Nima**

You mean the aircraft and fighter jets, or are you talking about just the forces—Israeli forces with Americans?

**#Larry**

You know, there are Israeli F-35s—both, you know. And this suggests, was she on an Israeli aircraft or not? That's a possibility. But what's fascinating is, they've got those documents—they didn't just fall out of the sky. And the person—where's the person attached to them? Is she dead? Is she captive? Did she escape somehow and leave that behind? I just, you know, I find it odd. That kind of document, you keep with you. Um...

**#Nima**

Here's what the Israeli ambassador to the UN said about the targets in Iran.

**#Speaker 05**

...of legitimacy to target those civilian sites. And I would advise the Iranians to believe President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu, because they've shown in the last month that they are capable of striking any target in Iran. And now we have to wait and see whether we'll continue to play this game with the Strait of Hormuz. You know, what they're doing there—it's beyond imagination. The blackmail—they actually collect money from countries in order to allow them to use the strait. We shouldn't allow this piracy in 2026 to continue.

## **#Nima**

I think part of the operation, Larry, in the Strait of Hormuz is this game of balancing power in the Middle East. Iran is showing that if you want to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, you have to get permission from the Iranians. But on the other hand, Israel and the United States are trying to say, "We can open it up for you." For example, for the UAE it's important—for Kuwait, for all these countries that are nearby. As time goes by, it seems they're getting closer to Israel. They're not on the path of understanding the reality of what's happening in the state of Iran. But how do you see the way Donald Trump— even yesterday, you saw that post from him—he's just calling them out. It's like someone back in high school talking with his enemies.

## **#Larry**

He's hysterical. Trump is just absolutely hysterical. And again, he changes day to day. One day he's like, "Oh, we don't care about the Strait of Hormuz. Let Europe worry about it. We don't rely on anything coming out of that—we're energy self-sufficient." And then the next moment he's calling them crazy bastards and dropping F-bombs on them.

## **#Nima**

Stop—like a madman, just screaming.

## **#Larry**

And then, you know, that Israeli ambassador, Danny Danon—man, he's one of the most unlikable people in the world. So look, the Gulf states are in trouble, particularly the ones that are most vulnerable, the ones that could cease to exist: Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE. The UAE really is—it's been an artificial creation for 50, 55 years. It emerged in 1971.

## **#Larry**

It is, you know, ostensibly an Islamic country, but it's not. The vast majority of its inhabitants are Westerners, and they cater to a very wealthy clientele. It's basically like an upscale Disneyland-slash-Las Vegas experience. Lots of hookers—prostitutes—show up there because there are guys with a lot of money willing to spend.

Now, with the blockade, all of the critical industrial and economic areas of activity in the UAE have ground to a halt. They're not making any money. There was some fear that they had run out of food, but the number of people living in the Emirates has declined dramatically—they're getting the hell out. So, you know, Dubai is described as a ghost town by some, and the same goes for Abu Dhabi. So, you know, Iran has discovered that it can basically force a change in the foreign policies and government activities of all the Gulf states. So far, Oman and Qatar appear willing to negotiate with Iran. Saudi Arabia and the UAE remain defiant, but the UAE, I think, is on its last legs there.

## **#Nima**

Larry, just breaking news here. IRNA, the news agency in Iran, reported that Iran has responded to the American proposal—it's called the 45-day ceasefire proposal. Iran rejects a temporary ceasefire and demands the following: a permanent end to the war across the Middle East, including Lebanon and Gaza, with guarantees; implementation of a new transit protocol that recognizes Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz and allows Iran to collect tolls; the lifting of economic sanctions on Iran; acknowledgment of Iran's right to peaceful uranium enrichment under the NPT; and payment of reparations for economic damages suffered during the war. These are the demands from the Iranians, and they've sent them through Pakistan to be delivered to the United States. So, they've responded to Donald Trump, and I think that's what he's facing right now.

## **#Larry**

Yeah, they haven't changed. I mean, those have been their demands. They hadn't formally stated them in the first or second week of the war, but that's what I outlined. I said, you know, if I were them, these would be my demands. And, you know, great minds think alike. It's pretty straightforward. Right now, the United States will say, "No way, we can't concede to any of that." All right, let's see how you're feeling in a month, with your economy collapsing. Will that change your mind? That's where I think the economic pressure is going to come in to change all of this. I just wanted to see what the stock market's doing. So, the stock market opened up—the Dow was down, now it's up a little bit. But this is artificially inflating the prices. They're going with the assumption, "Oh, the war's going to be over soon, and then things will get back to normal." They ain't going back to normal, folks. We've got to stop kidding ourselves.

## **#Nima**

Larry, I think what you mentioned about the Arab states is particularly important, because after all, there has to be some sort of security architecture for the region—for the Middle East—in which, I would assume, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, all of them, should understand the reality of the region right now.

## **#Larry**

Right.

## **#Nima**

But how do you see the UAE and Kuwait in that calculation?

## **#Larry**

They don't exist. They're done. I think Iraq's going to take over Kuwait—finish what it tried to start 36 years ago. And the UAE, you know, it's going to be absorbed back into Oman. The United Arab Emirates is a separate entity, I think, but it's not going to continue to exist. Again, it's an artificial creation. Now, the Emirati Air—oh, fabulous airline. You know what? I've flown on it before. It's really something, as is Qatar Air. But... you know, there's a definite political, geopolitical, and financial realignment in the Persian Gulf underway. And countries have persisted in trying to say, "Oh, we're going to depend on the United States to save us." The United States is not coming to save you. You bet on the wrong horse, guys.

## **#Nima**

I think, Larry, the trap that Donald Trump is in right now is huge, because the IDF yesterday admitted that they thought their estimate of the Iranian ballistic missiles was 2,500. How can someone come up with that sort of...

## **#Larry**

It's called—I think the technical term is SWAG, which stands for Silly Wild Ass Guess. You know, I said from the outset that I thought they had maybe closer to 20,000 missiles, maybe more, because the missile cities are underground. The production facilities, to my understanding, are underground. So, in the world of intelligence, the only way you can count what's going on is if you're able to get photographs and record material being taken into these underground missile cities. From that material, you can then estimate how many missiles could be built from sheets of aluminum, steel, whatever.

But the factories—if they were above ground, and then when the missiles were completed they came out—you could count them that way. But not when it's underground. You can't count; they have no way of knowing. So Iran is just happily plowing along, continuing to unload, you know, dozens of missiles in each wave. And they do, you know, roughly three waves a day, sometimes four. And today was the day they really coordinated in full with the Houthis and Hezbollah. So, from three different sides, Israel is getting pounded—from the south, from the north, and from the east.

## **#Nima**

I think that's why Iran is comfortable with this war of attrition, by the way. They know they're getting hit. You talk with people, you understand the reality of death and destruction happening in Iran right now, but they have no other solution to this issue. They have to come to some sort of permanent end to this conflict. They cannot afford another ceasefire. This is the reality of what's going on in Iran. On the other hand, I think the way Donald Trump and his administration were somehow optimistic—saying 90%, 70%, 80% of Iranian ballistic missiles and launchers, together with the air defense system, were destroyed so far—was because of decoys in Iran. They hid a lot of decoys that gave them this kind of delusional thinking that they were done with Iran's air defense system or ballistic missiles. That was hugely problematic for their calculations.

## **#Larry**

Right. Yeah, no, they... I've heard it through the grapevine that this particular loitering missile is described as a kind of glider. It gets up and glides around. It's not directed; it's waiting for a target, and it uses infrared—not any kind of radio signal. So the United States really doesn't have a defense for it. I just saw, before coming on air with you, that another F-35 declared an emergency over Iran. And I don't know if Iran has received any upgrades in air defense systems from Russia or China since the start of this war. What is clear is that the United States cannot fly with impunity over Iran. Does it have a superiority edge? Yes, absolutely. But it's not complete supremacy, because Iran is still shooting planes and drones down.

## **#Nima**

And the Iranian air defense is mobile. It means you have to move the vehicles around. That's why, in these mountainous areas, you see the difficulty of getting there—into the mountains, into those hard-to-access areas.

## **#Larry**

You know what another factor is going to be in another four or five weeks? Weather. Because it turns hot as hell. I remember when I was at Al Udeid Air Force Base in May of 2006—so, almost 20 years ago—and oh my God, the heat at that time. That heat is going to increase maintenance requirements on all this aircraft, and it increases the amount of time required for takeoff because the air is much heavier. So, you know, the whole weather factor is now going to affect the United States more than Iran, because Iran's got these guys in underground cities that stay the same temperature year-round—not too hot, not too cold, just right.

## **#Nima**

The rhetoric of Pete Hegseth was that this war is not going to be like Iraq or Afghanistan. It's not going to be an endless war. We're going to do it quickly, we're going to get out quickly. And that's not the case when it comes to the numbers, Larry, or the money spent so far. I think it's not even comparable to what happened in Iraq and Afghanistan. Is that how you see it?

**#Larry**

We're close. The expenditure on this war is probably well over \$45 billion now, maybe approaching \$50 billion. That's a lot of money in a short amount of time. And, you know, if this continues, it'll be in the triple digits—\$100 billion, \$200 billion—when it's all said and done. The U.S. can't afford this, and yet they've jumped in with both feet into this trap.

**#Nima**

And it's not just the United States. Look at the suffering of other nations—countries in Europe, the Middle East, Japan, South Korea. India, you know, they're buying oil from Iran.

**#Larry**

Yeah, and they're paying for it with rupees or yuan. They're not paying for it with dollars.

**#Nima**

Yeah, rupees and yuan, yeah. I don't know—the scale of what's going on is huge: militarily, economically, geopolitically. And Donald Trump, all he cares about right now is what's happening around the Strait of Hormuz.

**#Larry**

Well, it depends on the day. You know, yesterday he tweeted about the Strait of Hormuz. Let's see what he says today. Today it may be some shifting demand. As I say, he's not in control. If people think he's following some grand three-dimensional chess strategy—nonsense. They're making it up day to day. And a lot of it hinges on whether they're going to remain popular—what's happening to them in the opinion polls. That's what's got them concerned.

**#Nima**

Yeah, the gap is so wide right now between Iran and what the United States wants—what the Iranians are demanding.

**#Larry**

And don't forget Israel.

## **#Nima**

Exactly, Israel. Israel is the most important. I think one of the reasons Donald Trump is trying to push this 45-day ceasefire plan is because of Israel. Right now, the situation there is bad. Last night they were hitting Tel Aviv and other places in Israel, just destroying everything. You know, they get targeted and they can't intercept these missiles. They're not even capable anymore of intercepting rockets from Hezbollah.

## **#Larry**

Right. That's because their air defense systems have been depleted. You know, I talked about that from the outset—that there was only a limited number left. And now, after six weeks, let's just take a conservative estimate. We're at, let's say, day 42, roughly. OK, so it's day 42 into this operation. And then on top of that, you've got, let's say, 30 missiles a day. OK? So what is that—over 1,200 missiles right there? And if you're going to use two Patriots for each of those missiles—and now we're just talking about Israel alone—well, that's 2,400. The total production of Patriots from the beginning was only 4,620. So right there, you're saying that in a period of 42 days, you would have consumed more than 50% of the total inventory. And what we call the total inventory is actually much less than that. So no, they're depleted. They're out. And that's why Iran can basically hit whatever target it wants, at will.

## **#Nima**

There were reports showing that the United States is running out of JASSMs and these cruise missiles.

## **#Larry**

Yeah, that doesn't surprise me either. You know, I'm not sure what the JASSM production was, but I'm sure it wasn't done on a mass scale at all.

## **#Nima**

Larry, before wrapping up—the point that Professor Ted Postol raised recently, in the last talk I had with him—he said that Iran has depleted these interceptors in Israel. Right now is the time for drones going into Israel. These drones are hugely accurate with their targets, and they can hit everything in Israel. If Iran stops using ballistic missiles and goes only with drones, they could destroy the Israeli government and its facilities in Israel right now. And this is the game. Do you think we're going to see a huge number of drones going into Israel at this pace?

## **#Larry**

Yeah, yeah. No, I think there's not going to be a dramatic uptick. It's just that the drones are going to get through with greater effectiveness. You know, Iran is not—they're not panicked. They seem to be quite controlled in what they're doing here. So, I'm looking up the JASSM right now. I just want to see before we get off—let's double-check. Yeah, so the JASSM is the air-to-ground missile, the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile. Okay, so it's fired from a distance. Its range goes from 200 to 500 miles, so it's pretty formidable. By September 2016, there were 2,000 delivered, and by 2022, that number had gone up by another 1,600. So, and then you look at how much...

## **#Larry**

How many have been dropped? Each one costs about \$1.1 to \$1.5 million. So they don't have an unlimited supply, and they've done foreign sales to countries like Australia, Finland, Poland, and Japan. So...

## **#Larry**

At the start of this operation, they may have had a total of 7,200 produced. But how many have they used up? The odds are they've used quite a few—several thousand. So they could be running short, definitely.

## **#Nima**

Larry, they found Amanda on his social media—sorry, on her social media. It says she started at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln.

## **#Larry**

Huh.

## **#Speaker 05**

Yeah.

## **#Nima**

And this is Air Force.

## **#Larry**

Yeah. Yeah, so they've got—I'm not sure where they got it, how they picked up that ID—but they got it. And she may have been captured. Yeah.

**#Nima**

I think Donald Trump might talk about her—I don't know, he may mention her name today. We'll see.

**#Larry**

Well, I think not. I mean, they want to keep this quiet. If they focus on the fact that the Iranians have a female pilot—oh my goodness—that's going to set off even more of a political firestorm. They'll just pretend it's not happening.

**#Nima**

Yeah, yeah. Thank you, Larry. Thanks so much.

**#Larry**

All right, my friend. We'll see you on Friday. It's going to be another exciting week—unfortunately. Yeah. See you soon, Larry. All right. I'm looking good with this shirt, by the way. You too. Okay, bye.

**#Nima**

Bye-bye.

**#Larry**

Bye-bye.