

Larry Wilkerson: US & Iran NOW in GROUND WAR – Air Strikes Hit All-Time Peak

#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Tuesday, April 7th, 2026, and our dear friend Col. Larry Wilkerson is here with us. Welcome, Larry.

#Lawrence

Good to be with you, Nima.

#Nima

Larry, let me start with Donald Trump's ultimatum. The deadline, he said, is 8 p.m. Eastern Time today. He posted, "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want that to happen, but it probably will." And, Larry, here's the latest call Fox News had with Donald Trump. They spoke with him just moments ago, and here's what they reported.

#Speaker 03

I got off the phone with the president. He called, and I said, "Listen, if you were to put odds on it, what are the chances this ends up being a negotiated deal?" He said he wasn't going to put odds on it, but he said 8 p.m. is happening. That's what he said. He said if we get to that point, there's going to be an attack like they haven't seen before. Now, he's sticking to that at this point. He said if negotiations move forward today and there's something concrete, that could change. But at this hour, he didn't want to put odds on it. He said it's moving forward with the plans they have. That's a huge deal. And obviously, we all think it's something he's putting out there to say, "Don't do this." He says he doesn't want to do it, but at this hour he's sticking to it and saying it might be likely if they don't come to the table.

#Nima

You know what's so strange, Larry, about this whole negotiation they're talking about? There are no negotiations on the part of the Iranians. There's no talk.

#Lawrence

Bingo. Bingo. You're listening to a man who is growing—and not just Donald Trump. That Fox newscaster too is growing increasingly frustrated, increasingly exasperated that everything hasn't gone the way he thought it would. And I suspect the way Hegseth told him it would go. Maybe not General Keane, but Hegseth probably was as sycophantic about telling him everything would be copacetic, everything would be terrific, it'd be over quickly—as anybody else in the administration, and even Trump himself, because they're cut from the same cloth, Petey and Donald. What you're looking at is a president who doesn't know how to get out of this. He has no idea how to get out of it.

He's just been handed a colossal tactical defeat in the desert. I think Larry Johnson and others have parsed it quite well. I've heard some of the same things, but I think we lost quite a few aircraft, and I think we lost some troops. And he's not being honest about that. He's not telling the American people, he's not telling Congress that this has happened. He took a defeat—an in-your-face defeat. It was all designed as a special mission with regard to the nuclear reactor. You could see it in his remarks in Istanbul, and boy, did he look tired. I don't think I've ever seen him look so tired, and I've been following him pretty closely for the last six months or so.

He just looked tired. He wasn't stumbling over his words, but he was slurring them a little and searching for the right English word. I've never seen him do that—he's usually very, very polished. He's obviously tired, incredibly tired. I don't blame him. But he was saying they didn't attack a nuclear reactor. They attacked the United Nations. They attacked the International Atomic Energy Agency. They attacked the Nonproliferation Treaty. They attacked international law. They attacked a country abiding by all its commitments in terms of nuclear power. That's what they attacked. You people need to understand—this is a rogue nation.

It is tearing up everything we've created in the world that we call international law, right before your eyes. And now, he didn't say this—he probably will later—he was taking questions. And now we're getting ready, after having announced it, according to Donald Trump anyway, to perpetrate another genocide. And note that I say another genocide, because without the United States of America, the genocide in Gaza could not have been carried out—not the way it was. So we're getting ready to perpetrate a second genocide on a second president's watch. And this one has just announced it to all and sundry, from one end of the world to the other. This is something I never thought I would see in my life. This is Hitler come back as an American.

#Nima

Larry, you mentioned the operation. Donald Trump yesterday tried to make his case about how successful this operation was. But you said you believe it was some sort of raid in Iran.

#Lawrence

It was, and it featured multiple C-130 aircraft—both refuelers and transports. It featured Black Hawks. It featured, as we saw, overhead air cover—F-15s in this case. It featured Little Birds, probably OH-6s, you know, like I flew in Vietnam, for example—much modernized and really high-tech now. But it featured everything you might expect Delta or SEAL Team 6, or those two together, to use. And it failed. It didn't work. All I could think about—I was listening to Larry talk about it, but I'd heard it from another gentleman—and all I could think about was the desert. Remember the desert under Jimmy Carter, when we had the big helicopter? The bus.

#Nima

The buses.

#Lawrence

Yeah. It was called Eagle Claw, I think—Operation Eagle Claw. Yeah. And it was a disaster. But we admitted it. We had a president in the White House who wasn't going to lie about it. We admitted it, and we canceled the operation. We didn't go ahead with it. Major Meadows got stuck in Iran—I knew Major Meadows. He had to E&E his way out of Iran because he was the one who was going to meet them at the place where they were keeping most of the hostages, introduce them to the location, guide them in, and everything. So this is a disaster they're hiding. They're hiding it. I haven't heard any real debrief or testimony or whatever about what really happened. I suspect a few people died too.

#Nima

We had—I'm not sure if you saw—we had a lady, the documents of a lady, in that scene. They were just opening up the documents. Let me bring up the video here, because it shows the documents they were...

#Nima

Here's the moment they find the document. You can see the lady, Amanda M. Ryder. Nobody's talking about her anymore—nobody's even mentioned her name in the United States.

#Lawrence

I can't imagine they would bring someone like that. Looked like a civilian to me—didn't look like a military person. So unless she's a nuclear expert or something like that, they must have felt her expertise was necessary.

#Nima

She was on a B-2, you know, a visa for Israel—the tourist visa people use to go and visit. And she was part of this operation.

#Lawrence

Yeah, anytime you see anything happening in Iran—on the ground in particular, but a lot of times in the air too—count on Israel being there. Count on Israel being an integral part of the operation in one way or another, either providing intelligence or actually helping with kinetic action. They're going to be there. And by the way, I'm sure you're going to ask me about this, but it's looking worse than 2006 right now in Lebanon. They're getting their butts handed to them. So you've got Iran—ooh, Trump better live up to his promise—Israel being pounded ceaselessly with missiles from Iran. Tel Aviv was described to me today by a longtime resident of that city as burning. And you've got Lebanon, and you've got Gaza unfinished. Israel is not looking too good.

#Nima

Larry, when you look at the situation right now—Donald Trump talking about “putting an end,” saying a whole civilization will die tonight—what comes to your mind? Is he talking about nuclear weapons? Because we had the same sort of rhetoric with J.D. Vance. He's in Hungary; he said he was there. I don't know if he's going to help Orbán in Hungary, because right now nobody likes Donald Trump.

#Lawrence

Nobody likes him either.

#Nima

Yeah, exactly. And how is that going to be helpful for Orbán? But putting that aside, when he says we have tools that haven't been used so far, I think the only tool he's talking about is something as big as a nuclear bomb. What's your understanding of that?

#Lawrence

Well, I listened to John this morning—John Mearsheimer. I think he was on the Judge's show, and I think I know John pretty well. He originally used the image of the escalation ladder some months ago—well, some weeks ago, probably months now—and he talked about us being on the bottom rung, or the next rung, or whatever. At that particular time, John was not willing to go the full route, if you will, to the use of nuclear weapons. He was a little more cagey this time, but he was also, like me, really worried, I think. And when it came to describing what Trump was doing, I don't think I've ever heard such forceful language from Professor Mearsheimer about what Trump had said in his announcement. He announced that he was going to commit a genocide. It's that clear. It's that plain.

He says he's going to eradicate a people. Well, it's not too far from that statement—if you think he's serious—to the use of nuclear weapons, because he isn't going to eradicate them with conventional means. There's just no way. He could stay at it for ten years and he still wouldn't eradicate them. He might bring them to their knees and get them finally to say, "You know, I quit." I don't even think he's going to do that. Even if he stays at it forever, he's going to run out of a lot of what he needs to do it with. But with nuclear weapons, it would be an entirely new dimension, and it brings Russia and China—and several other powers, Pakistan comes to mind immediately—into the fray. I listened to Sergey Lavrov talking; they asked him a question. He's in Istanbul, I believe. "Istanbul" was up on the board behind him.

They asked him a question from the audience: did he believe the Bahrain proposal for control of the Strait of Hormuz was a good one? He didn't even bat an eye—"No, it's not." That tells me they know exactly what Iran is thinking, and Iran knows exactly what they're thinking. So we're looking at the potential—were Trump to use nuclear weapons in a massive way against Iran? I do not think the rest of the world would take it lying down. I think we'd probably be off to the races, with competitors—principally Russia and China—going to their arsenals, checking things out, and getting ready. Because this is simply a step too far. It's not something anyone should be talking about, even in threats like Donald Trump's. But that's what people are now talking about. Serious people are talking about what he might have meant by that comment. That's not good.

That's not good at all. And I think we've seen that what we have for our president right now borders on maniacal—borders on megalomania. We know about the narcissism. We know about all the things psychiatrists and psychologists have said about the case of Donald Trump. But I think what we're seeing now is true megalomania. I think he's lost his rocker, as we used to say—he's off his rocker, as we used to say. And there's no one around him to rein him in. J.D. Vance isn't going to do it. J.D. Vance doesn't have the courage to do it. No one else is going to do it. Thune's not going to do it. Johnson's not going to do it. Johnson's too busy wishing for Armageddon to come about. You can't make this stuff up.

These people are serious about Jesus and about this war being for Jesus—people like Johnson, people like Ted Cruz. And Trump doesn't give a hang about Jesus. I doubt he could spell his name. But he uses it, and he's got it now to the point where he's gathered all these different allies behind him—crude, indifferent, stupid, crass cretins, religious zealots. And he's also latched, by an umbilical cord, to the next person in the world most like him: Bibi Netanyahu. Not in terms of dumbness—because Bibi's pretty smart—but in terms of just being a cretin and bordering on megalomania, getting more and more like that because he's so desperate about his own personal situation. And he's desperate now because Israel is being destroyed.

It's being destroyed on several fronts. That's got to be bad—plaguing Trump somewhat too, because I imagine some of those big billionaire Jewish Americans and others who are ultra-Zionists are pressuring him about what he should do and keep doing to Iran. They're behind him, pushing him hard, because this is what Netanyahu wants. He wants Iran in absolute chaos—disorganized, in

chaos. All of its ballistic missiles searched out and destroyed, all of its uranium searched out and destroyed. That's what Israel wants. At the same time, it wants Lebanon, it wants Gaza, it wants the West Bank, it wants all of Jerusalem. This is quite a combination of thieves and murderers.

#Nima

I think the language Donald Trump is using is similar to what Benjamin Netanyahu was using before him.

#Lawrence

It's like an echo chamber.

#Nima

Yeah, exactly. But the difference is, Larry, when you represent a country like the United States, it's a huge responsibility as the president of the United States. It's not just Israel. Now, Netanyahu can say whatever he wants, but as the president of the United States, it's important how you express yourself—your words, your feelings. And that's hugely problematic, because they see the United States. They don't see Donald Trump himself, because Donald Trump right now is the face of the United States, the top leader, the head of the country. As president, he has the power to use nuclear bombs. That's why it's so important. No one else has that kind of power. This is the problem—the main concern for people who are listening to Donald Trump talk this way.

#Lawrence

Let me say two things. One, don't make too light of Bibi Netanyahu. He's as dangerous as Donald Trump is, in his own way. He's apt to use a nuclear weapon or two also. Wouldn't that be fun—Israel tossing a few out there and the United States tossing a few more? So I don't discount Netanyahu in terms of the region or in terms of his ability to impact global relations and global security. When you put them together, you really have a combination that feeds off itself—back and forth, back and forth. And they feed off their desperation too. Both men are very desperate right now. And it shocks me when I think to myself, would my military allow this president to hurl nuclear weapons at another state? And my mind can't say positively no. That is a very disquieting thought.

I never thought I would think that. I never thought a president would use a nuclear weapon under any circumstance other than being attacked first with nuclear weapons. That's how I thought about it through the entire Cold War. We would not initiate nuclear weapons use, despite what we did against Japan. We would not initiate—we would only respond. And that's our deterrence. That's why we needed to have a lot of weapons, because they'd be destroyed in that initial strike, and we had

to have enough to respond. That provided deterrence. Now I'm looking, as you just suggested, at not only Bibi Netanyahu—a major non-NATO ally in Southwest Asia—possibly using a nuclear weapon, but us joining in.

And if my military doesn't stand up to this president and say no, and walk out and refuse to execute—well, I'm not confident of that anymore. I wouldn't have thought that as many who've executed what we've done so far would have done it. I wouldn't have thought those ships would have fired those Tomahawks at that school. And the excuse that they didn't know has been blown away for me, because I've seen the onboard camera video of those Tomahawks approaching that school—what is clearly a school. And besides, they've attacked many other targets that are just as much a war crime as that school. I would never have thought my military would participate in that to the degree they have up to this point. So what am I to conclude about their willingness to participate in Donald Trump's destroying another civilization?

#Nima

Yeah. You know, the tweet he posted on Truth Social where he called Iranians "bastards," "crazy bastards."

#Lawrence

Same thing Bibi does. Same thing Bibi does. You've got to demean them. Before you kill their men, women, children, and babies, you've got to make sure you demean them. You've got to say they're a threat. You've got to say they're terrible. You were great once, but you aren't great anymore. You're terrible now. You've got to do that. But still, don't our people have a mind? Don't they see what's being done? When was the last time an Iranian attacked you, American citizen? When was the last time a missile landed in Texas? When was the last time an Iranian got off a boat and shot somebody?

When was the last time you even saw an Iranian—if you ever did in your whole damn life? Why don't we wake up? Why doesn't this country wake up and understand it has not just a tyrant, but a megalomaniac as its president, who is about to—or possibly already has—unleashed a genocide in Gaza, and is unleashing one in Iran, and maybe is going to go further, to the nth degree, with nuclear weapons? Now, I don't think he is. It's not my feeling, in my gut, that he's going to do that—not even Donald Trump. But just the fact that there's a possibility of it disturbs me greatly, and the possibility that my military will go along with it disturbs me even more greatly.

#Nima

You know, Larry, somehow it feels to me like he thinks he's playing God—or that God gave him some kind of mission for Israel or something. It's so delusional, the way he's talking. It seems like he's... I don't even know how to describe it. This guy is so dangerous. I don't either.

#Lawrence

I don't think it has a religious overtone to it, though. I don't think Donald Trump has a religious bone in his body. But in terms of what you're describing, you're right—I think he thinks he's God.

#Nima

Larry, how does the mission—the operation, the so-called rescue operation, as they want to call it—how does that play out for the ground invasion of Iran? It wasn't a rescue operation; it was a raid. But how is that going to affect the invasion? It seems that as time goes by, they're getting serious about doing something. Today we've learned that they're hitting Khark Island—which was mentioned before as the place where the invasion might happen. They're destroying the defensive forces, the defensive equipment on that island, then planning to capture it, or whatever that would mean. How do you see these two things helping, or somehow providing lessons from what's happened so far?

#Lawrence

Let's say you put a military force of significant size—or even a modest size—on Khark Island, the forbidden island. Um, how are you going to respond? How are you going to keep it there? How are you going to sustain it? How are you going to water it and feed it? How are you going to fuel it? How are you going to resupply the ammo and everything? How are you going to do that? Because once you're identified as being there, you're a target. And Iran has shown that it has an exquisite capability anywhere in the region to target things. Just take a look at Bahrain, for example—not very far away. So I don't understand how you could do that, other than just to destroy their most important oil facility.

And in that way, you're probably going to take a lot of Iranian oil off the market, at least initially. So what are you going to do then? I talked with my oil guys, and we said, okay, Russia feels pretty confident it can weather this because it's sitting on lots of oil. Trump obviously thinks the United States can weather it because he's sitting on not only what we have—the largest supply in the world—but also Venezuela, if he needs it. It's in his back pocket, you know. They think between the two of them—and I'd be willing to bet they've had a phone conversation to that effect.

They think both of them can ride out whatever recession might be coming, induced by low energy supplies—unlike the rest of the world, pretty much the entire world, including Europe. But to what end? And to what purpose? Putin, to make money. Trump, not so much to make money off oil sales, but Putin certainly does. I don't see anything beyond that, though. And why would you want—especially if you're Vladimir Putin, involved as he is now, still trying to wrap up the special military operation—why would you want the world to be suffering so dramatically while you, ostensibly, do well? I mean, I just don't understand that, especially given all the connections we have now and the need of one country for another country's produce, production, whatever—and vice versa.

I just don't understand how we can think we can be autarkic—that we can survive in a world depending only on ourselves. And yet it seems like both men—Trump for sure, Putin maybe—are oblivious to this potential for a real global crisis, an economic crisis. And now that the Houthis are in it, and apparently doing quite well, thank you very much, they've been fairly consistent in hitting Israel themselves. There are already people talking about changing their routing plans, going around the Horn or whatever, instead of going through the Red Sea. And if that persists over time, then you're jacking up the cost of commodities—soybeans, corn, whatever's flowing.

You're jacking up that price by anywhere from 2% or 3% to maybe even 11% or 12%, depending on the commodity, the distance it has to travel, and the costs that shippers incur. So—oh, guess what? I just heard something too. This really takes me to my geopolitical, geostrategic theory, which I probably articulated the best I ever have for Glenn Dyson the other day. It just came to me—you know, you get these epiphanies. Guess what? They're bombing right now. Guess what? We're bombing in Iran right now, relentlessly. China's railroads. Didn't I tell you? We're bombing them everywhere we can get to them—and other railroads too. But we're bombing the bejeezus out of that one.

#Nima

Yeah. Larry, here are some photos of what's happened in Iran. You look at the argument from Donald Trump's side—that those planes were, you know, somehow stuck in the sand, and that's why they couldn't get out and they tried to destroy them. But if you look at picture number six, you can see what's happened—the bending in Iran, the damage that's happened to the plane. And then in picture number five, you can see there must have been some sort of crash. The aircraft must have hit the ground somehow.

That was the main reason for the damage to the plane. And it doesn't seem like Donald Trump—well, for more than an hour they were all saying how the mission was successful, that they were doing this and that, that they got stuck in the sand, the sand was too wet or something, and they couldn't get out of it. Then they tried to destroy everything on the ground. It doesn't— you know, it doesn't sound like Donald Trump spending more than an hour explaining every detail of what happened. It's like a scenario written by, I don't know, Pete Hegseth for him?

#Lawrence

Yeah. Nima, my son.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Lawrence

My son flew those airplanes in the active Air Force for most of his career—about 14 years—C-130 Hercules, in different varieties. Now, looking at those pictures, those look like the special operations variety, which is equipped with a lot of things the regular Hercules isn't. That said, a Hercules is one of the best airplanes on Earth for carrying cargo, troops, paratroopers, for landing on unprepared airstrips, and things like that. The special ops versions are very robust for doing that. So either they had terrible intelligence in terms of the soil and the landing area, or that was enemy damage—or maybe a little of both.

So just to say, well, it's the most prolific airframe in the world now, I think. It replaced the C-47, or DC-3, as the most used airframe in the world. And ours are very sophisticated now—the J model, for example—and that model there for special ops is a very sophisticated aircraft. So my guess, as a military professional, would be that something else happened to them other than wet sand. It didn't look like gear failure to me; it looked like other things. You know, your prop hits the ground when your gear fails—if it fails in a certain way—and then the prop just more or less bends itself or disintegrates. It's hard to tell from those pictures.

But that was lousy intelligence if you landed somewhere and got stuck in the sand. We didn't even do that during Eagle Claw. During Eagle Claw, we didn't even know what we were doing—and we mixed the services. We had pilots from one service flying another service's helicopters. Absolutely stupid. One of the reasons we created Delta afterward was because we didn't want to repeat that kind of error. And yet you didn't see that sort of thing. What happened in Eagle Claw was that, in the sand, one of those big, monstrous helicopters was hovering with a pilot who wasn't even used to that helicopter. We call it "whiteout" in snow; you call it "sandout" in sand. You can't see—you create this sand cloud around yourself, and you can't see.

And in not seeing, he backed into one of the C-130s, destroyed the helicopter and the C-130. So... that wasn't due to misunderstanding the landing area. It wasn't due to any of those intelligence failures. It was due to pilots who didn't know what they were doing, flying airframes they weren't familiar with. Dumb thing to do—but nothing like what this was, if it was an intelligence failure that said, "You can land there." Oh no, we can't—we're sinking. Why wouldn't you have an Israeli, or a turncoat Iranian, or whoever, go over there and bring you some soil for a sample? Why wouldn't you do what you needed to do to find out what the soil was like where you planned on landing? That story doesn't wash. Or if it does, you've got a lot of incompetent people doing this.

#Nima

Yeah. You know, Donald Trump said in his latest post, "God bless the Iranian people," after, you know, destroying the civilization in Iran.

#Lawrence

Then at the end, it's like, "I'm going to destroy you—but God bless you."

#Nima

Yeah, exactly. And then, you know, what General Keane said yesterday, Larry, was kind of amazing, because the whole argument about hitting Iran was that we're going to help the people of Iran—we're going to liberate them. But General Keane said yesterday that every single Iranian who owned a small gun or rifle was shooting at us in this operation. You know, that's totally different from what we've heard so far from the administration.

#Lawrence

Yeah, I listened to Trump talk until I was almost sick—about how the Iranians had been so brave. They'd been so brave, moving toward the barricades, and then all of a sudden, bam—right between the eyes. And the snipers—this is the president talking—the snipers were on the roofs, shooting Iranians as they came on to overthrow them, shooting them right between the eyes. A woman, he said, was hit right between the eyes, and you saw the tears as the bullet went through her head. This is the President of the United States telling lies. But I don't think he made them up out of whole cloth. I think somebody told him that crap—some of these people, like the MEK, the Pavlovi family, whatever, or like Mossad or the CIA. They told him this was an uprising and it would have succeeded if the IRGC snipers—thousands of them—hadn't been up on top of those buildings shooting people.

Remember? Remember how Pence made that remark—"Turn around and thank your missile agent. Push them forward, push them forward, get them to go forward, get them to go forward, get them to get killed," you know? But Trump was treating it as if it were a genuine revolution in progress, and those bloodthirsty Iranians in the government shot them all down. That's the way he was pushing it. Now, if he believes that—if he really believes that—then he does have somewhat of a motivation for doing what he's doing. Not to do a genocide, not to do what he's been doing, but... I just—who's lying to him to that extent? Who's giving him this crap? And who's not disabusing him of it? I'll tell you who's not disabusing him of it: that bitch, Tulsi Gabbard.

#Nima

Yeah, Tulsi Gabbard is so disappointing.

#Lawrence

"Disappointing" is an understatement.

#Nima

Yeah, Donald Trump said he sent a lot of weapons to the Iranians—a lot of weapons—and he believed they ended up in the hands of the Kurds. He said himself yesterday that he sent many of them to the Iranian people, to protesters in Iran, he mentioned. And you, Larry, when I look at what'

s happening—because I was in Iran, you remember, in December and January—it's all about, you look at what's happening in Maidan, in Ukraine, you know, the snipers hitting both protesters and security forces, right? And making chaos in the country.

#Lawrence

Yes.

#Nima

I think they did it again in Iran. They were prepared—militarily, economically—they did everything to bring down the government.

#Lawrence

Yep. And it didn't work. It did not work because they never had the bulk of the people on their side. It didn't work. It didn't work with the MEK, Pahlavi, or any of those cretins from outside Iran. It didn't work with the CIA, Mossad, MI6. It didn't work. It was Kermit Roosevelt revisited—and it did not work. And if you go back and look at that revolution—I'm serious now—when you go back and look closely at it, look at some of the really good writing on both sides, including Iranian writers. I made sure I read Iranian writers too, because I knew that English sources would be British, and American ones would be somewhat one-sided. There was some good stuff. But when you read the Iranian side of it, you understand some of the things—like when I read about Reconstruction and read Southern historians as opposed to Northern historians—very different angle on the same events.

What you see, I think very vividly, is the reason Kermit Roosevelt succeeded with the coup that overthrew Mossadegh on the second try. The first try failed—failed. Kermit was actually telling CIA headquarters, "I'm getting out of here, I'm not going to go ahead." And they talked him into staying and trying again. The reason that second try worked was because of Mossadegh. He didn't want to see his people dying around him the way they were dying—and they were dying in the same fashion you just described. It wasn't Iranians killing them; it was the people the CIA had hired, brought in, and paid handsomely to kill them. That's who was killing them. And he said, "Stop. I'll step down. I'm leaving." That's how that coup came to work—because an Iranian leader didn't want to see his people die anymore.

#Nima

Today, we had the case of Bahrain at the UN, to be voted on regarding the military operation against what's going on with the Australians for the most part—which was, you know, vetoed by Russia and China. And nobody can believe that it was a Bahraini initiative. It's going to be the U.S., together with Saudi Arabia—an initiative from those two countries, or maybe Israel.

#Lawrence

I thought the Bahraini leadership had unmasked the whole place. Where are they? I'm told, reliably, that they left. Once the refinery went up, they left. So they must be—what—in New York or something like that? They're working on their deals outside of Bahrain, I suspect, because, I mean, my information was that the royals just left, which made me ask myself, why don't the people take the country over now if they're gone? I suspect it's because they left some military there.

#Nima

I think something big is going to happen in the region, Larry—not only in Bahrain, but in Kuwait, the UAE, and those countries. You know, in the near future, something big is going to happen there.

#Lawrence

If they join the fight, they're going to get slaughtered. That's my view. The Persians are going to eat them up. I mean, that's my view. If Little Sparta—Riyadh—threw its National Guard in there, you know, its Praetorian Guard, which is just there to protect MBS, they'd get chewed up in a month. They'd be gone. There wouldn't be any military left for any of those Arab states. I mean, if you really want to get something going—something that's going to change the complexion of the entire region very rapidly—invade Iran. You know, you guys invade Iran. You Qataris, you Bahrainis, you Emiratis, you Saudis—invade Iran. Bring Egypt if you'd like. I don't even think, I don't consider Egypt an Arab country. Bring Jordan if you like. He wouldn't come. He's too chicken. But you're right.

I think if we move on to another tier of targets—another set of targets—which Iran has said it's going to do, it's been very circumspect about letting everybody know what it's going to do—and they hit that tier with the same devastation they did the first, then we have a global recession for sure, and maybe a global depression. And even with all the oil the United States has, and all the oil Russia has—well, let's say this: first of all, in Europe it'll be \$25 a liter. In California, it'll be \$10 a gallon, maybe \$15 a gallon. In my state of Virginia, it'll be \$6 or \$7 a gallon, or more. I mean, this is what happened to us when we did the 2009 disruption exercise in Beijing—\$200 a barrel for West Texas Intermediate, and a little bit more for Brent crude. Insurers wouldn't insure, shippers wouldn't ship.

That's where we'll be if Iran goes to Ras Tanura and further into Saudi Arabia and really destroys those exquisite petroleum production facilities and refineries—and probably kills a number of the crew, because you can hardly avoid it, those in that complex at the time of the missile strike. You know, they've been very careful at Prince Sultan, up in Kurdistan, where they struck the Israeli Mossad—MI6 facility. They've been very careful to just hit the people who are in it, or to just hit the airplanes that belong to the U.S. They've had some incidental casualties, but they've been very careful. Compared to us, they've been extremely careful. I don't think they'll be careful this time. I think they'll let it all hang out. If I were the King of Jordan, I'm not sure I'd sleep in my palace.

#Nima

Jordan is—well, you know, just imagine how many Palestinians are living in Jordan. You know, that's the second thing.

#Lawrence

Half a million, last time I checked. I mean, I remember when King Hussein was sitting down with my good friend at that time—I got a watch from him. Beautiful watch, too. Absolutely beautiful. No one knows how to repair it, though, because it was made especially for Hussein. It has his crest on it. But he said, "Maybe I have 30,000 that will be with me. And at that time, I have 5 million Palestinians. I have to be very careful."

#Nima

Gary, the last communication—the last response from the Iranians—was two days ago, because today we learned it was actually the day before yesterday. Today they said they've canceled all communications with the NSA through Pakistan, Turkey, and so on. There's nothing going on right now—no communication, no letters, no messages, nothing.

#Lawrence

Well, the five-point plan that Pakistan and China produced just went *boop*—it's dead. I figured it would.

#Nima

What was amazing to me was that Iran—the first line, the first point—was, if this war is going to end, it's going to end on all fronts. It's going to end with Iran, Hezbollah, Gaza, all together. It's not going to be just about Iran.

#Lawrence

I admire them for that. I admire them for being that way. They're the only people in the freaking world standing up for the Palestinians. Just like Cyrus the Great stood up for the Jews, they're standing up for the Palestinians. Now, you can say it's self-interest, you can say whatever you want—but they are the only people in the world, except for the Houthis, standing up for the Palestinians.

#Nima

The other point, Larry, was the Strait of Hormuz. Here's what the *Washington Times* said about it: the Strait of Hormuz is Iran's new nuclear bomb. And you know, when they're talking about nuclear

bombs—well, not literally—but economically, it's a kind of nuclear bomb that's happening. That's why the situation is making Donald Trump so desperate, because he's not in charge anymore. You know, he reminds me of Zelensky in his office when he said, "You don't have the cards." Right now, Donald Trump is pretty much in the same position.

#Lawrence

I've been kind of waiting for Araghchi to use that expression. He's too much of a gentleman to do it. I've been waiting for him to just look into the camera one day and say, "The President of the United States does not have the cards."

#Lawrence

The story of Hormuz, though—as we found out in '88 and '89, when we were intimately involved in it at Pacific Command—is a double-edged sword in many respects, or maybe even a triple or quadruple-edged sword, because there are a number of things affected there. And if it gets to the point where you're truly causing a global depression, then the whole world is going to come together to open it. I mean, maybe one ship from Britain, one ship from Germany, one ship from Italy—but they're going to come down there and try to open it.

#Nima

But the reality is, the Strait is not closed. The reality is that. I understand—they let the French tanker pass in. You see the Iraqi, the Indian... well, we didn't.

#Lawrence

What we did was shoulder the Strait passage that was critical, in effect. Then ships could go through because no one could mine the waters—it was difficult to mine them. The Iranians figured out a way to do it once, maybe more than once. But it gave the shippers, and the insurance companies behind them, confidence to sail through—gray bottoms, if you will—back and forth. Now, as you're saying, Iran could do the very same thing just by selectivity. And if that selectivity works in the world's favor—say 60% is getting through, 70% is getting through—they're going to give the middle finger to the United States. They don't care, as long as what's getting through is getting to them.

#Nima

Larry, do you think the end of NATO is coming?

#Lawrence

Done. It's over. It's finished. Those people in Brussels are just sitting there with their stars on their shoulders, having a gab-fest, eating chocolate and drinking coffee. That's all they're doing. NATO's done. It's toast. It's finished. It just remains for a series of elections in Germany, France, England, Britain—probably in Norway, probably in Sweden—to ramify it, to drive it home, because they're going to understand. And I have to say that Putin could disturb this. He could disturb the momentum with which he's succeeding in his second strategic objective: to see to the disestablishment of the NATO alliance. He could do something down in that southern corridor that would awaken some people in Europe—that he might not be everything he says he is, and that they need to keep their powder dry.

And that might, at least temporarily, give some adhesive to NATO. But if it keeps going the way it is right now, and all he does is consolidate that southern corridor and take Odessa—no matter how many people it takes him to do it, and they're not doing that well—if he does that, though, and I think it's inevitable, if the Russian people stay with him and he keeps his forces intact, then he's going to take Odessa. Then Zelensky is going to have a country that has nothing, really. It has no access to the sea. It's totally dependent on Russia to get to the sea. It'll have partisans all throughout that state of Ukraine who will be giving the Russians hell. But I don't think the Russians will mind that too much. They'll probably put up fences, whatever, and say, "Okay, do your thing. When you cross that fence, we'll kill you."

This could be a partition that lasts for a hundred years. I mean, think about all the partitions that have existed in Europe in the last thousand years—the so-called this line, the so-called that line, the so-called another line. I just don't have too many fond hopes for Europe settling itself out anytime soon. The key will be Germany, of course. The key will be Germany. Who do they bring in after this current group of nincompoops? And who develops their foreign and security policy? And who revamps their economy? And with whom do they ally themselves in order to do that? There's only one answer to that question: it's in Moscow. Maybe this election with Viktor Orbán—even if he's beaten—maybe it'll show us something. I don't know. I don't know. But one thing I do know is that Europe looks a lot more like 1930s Europe than it does 1960s Europe.

#Nima

Germany's situation is pretty similar to some of these GCC countries, because they've had American bases in their countries. And with the war in Ukraine, and what happened with the Nord Stream pipeline—how devastating that was for the economy—it seems similar to what's happening in the GCC countries. With the American bases there for such a long time, Larry, they've paid for everything in their own countries.

#Lawrence

And the big one—the big one—and some lesser ones in Italy. I'm kind of dealing with that situation right now with a couple of people there. They understand now, in Italy, I think viscerally, that all this is very expensive for them. Now, Italy's not making any more land, so when they give us land to build military installations, it's really politically difficult. They've now discovered that most of the land they've given us over the last 10, 15, 20 years for building depots, ammunition storage points, and so forth, is going to Southwest Asia, going to Israel—it's not going to NATO. So that's a problem there that'll flesh itself out and probably push us—pressure to push us—out of Italy and Ramstein, which is indispensable to our strategy to take on China straight on.

That's probably on the chopping block within the next decade too, I'd guess. And there are people in this country—people I talk to every day—who would love it. They'd love it because their idea of cutting the defense budget, cutting it by at least \$100 billion a year for a decade and regaining a trillion dollars for other purposes, is closing bases overseas and cutting down the costs of maintaining them. Not only that, those bases arguably—and I'd be one to make this argument—incite the empire to more military action around the world than is necessary. So if you bring them home and have them located in CONUS, or just stand them down altogether, you have less intent to use them and less reason to use them, which would be a good development, I think.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Lawrence

It also saves a lot of money. Last time I looked, just for the ones across the Atlantic, it was something like \$70 billion a year to maintain them—Italy, Germany, Spain, other places, Norway. All these bases we have, like in Norway—why is that American flag back there? This is a Norwegian base. I see the Norwegian flag. Well, that's the Americans back there. Same thing we do in Israel.

#Nima

I think the end of NATO would be hugely beneficial for European countries, because they don't really have their own foreign policy. Their foreign policy has been defined by NATO—by NATO's policies—for such a long time. It could be a new era for European countries.

#Lawrence

Yes, and it made sense for it to be that way when everybody thought the USSR was this big, monolithic, nuclear-armed enemy. We know now, from historians who've looked into the Russian archives and studied with Russian historians, that we made a lot of that up in order to keep the military-industrial complex going and growing. We made a lot of that up about the USSR—but we

didn't make up their nuclear weapons. So it was, you know, a formidable opponent in that regard. But it's not there anymore. And I don't think Putin has any designs on countries beyond the one that impacted his national security—Ukraine. And he didn't even have designs on all of Ukraine, just the portion that affected his national security, along his border. We screwed that one up big time. That was us. We did that. We did all of that.

#Nima

There's a website that was announced today in Iran. On this website, people can register themselves, saying they're ready to die for Iran in this war—because Donald Trump was somehow... Well, the president of Iran actually registered himself on that website and shared it on X. And here's the reaction from, you know, Candace Owens to what he did. Here's what she said, Larry. Let me just turn this up, yeah. She says the Iranian president tweets that he's willing to sacrifice his own life for his people. Donald Trump was willing to sacrifice Charlie Kirk and is willing to sacrifice every American life and livelihood for greater Israel. Who's the animal again? Because Donald Trump was calling Iranians animals as well.

#Lawrence

Yeah.

#Nima

Yeah. This is—yeah.

#Lawrence

He doesn't care, and he doesn't know anything about any other country on the face of the earth—especially Iran. And that's bad in so many ways, but it's especially bad because people are telling him lies and he believes them. People like Laura Loomer, Stephen Miller, and Mark Levin.

#Nima

Yeah, Mark Levin.

#Lawrence

Who came out and told everyone that nuclear weapons were going to be used. I mean, Trump's using him—I hope, I really hope he's just using him.

#Nima

Thank you, Larry. Thank you so much. Let's see what happens today, tonight, and—

#Lawrence

Eight o'clock is the witching hour, right?

#Nima

Yeah, yeah, exactly.

#Lawrence

Is it eight o'clock in Iran, or eight o'clock here?

#Nima

No, I think the time difference between Iran and Eastern Time would be something like...

#Lawrence

Seven hours? Eight hours?

#Nima

Yeah, six, seven, seven and a half—yeah, something like that.

#Lawrence

Iran has probably two or three time zones in its own geography, doesn't it? No, it's just one time zone, like Brazil. So they don't do that—they don't make differences. Smart people. Brazil's smart too.

#Nima

Yeah. We have time differences in Brazil, but they're ignored. We use a unified time zone here.

#Lawrence

Yeah, like GMT.

#Nima

Yeah. It doesn't change. You're all the same.

#Lawrence

Thank you, Larry. Take care. See you next week sometime—maybe?

#Nima

Yeah.

#Lawrence

I've got to go to the Eisenhower Media Network conference in Columbus, Ohio—the garden spot of the United States.

#Nima

On Friday, yeah?

#Lawrence

Yeah.

#Nima

Okay.

#Lawrence

See you soon. My son-in-law's going to drive with me, so I'm looking forward to it. Take care. Take care. Bye-bye.