

Wilkerson: Ceasefire Fails, NATO Is Dead & the U.S. Heads Toward Civil War

Lawrence Wilkerson is a retired Colonel in the US Army and the former Chief of Staff to the US Secretary of State. Colonel Wilkerson discusses why the ceasefire may be failing, why NATO is dead, and why the U.S. could be heading toward civil war. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@GDiesen1> Support the research: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We're joined today by Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, former chief of staff to the U.S. Secretary of State. Thank you very much for coming back on the program.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Good to be with you, Glenn. I always like coming to—where is it again? Norway? Sweden?

#Glenn

Same, same. Well, we have a ceasefire now—at least, so we're told—and it appears to be already falling apart. I don't want to be overly pessimistic; it could just be a rough start. But given the dispute over whether or not Lebanon should be part of the ceasefire, it seems a key component is being challenged. How are you assessing the situation—the possibility of actually arriving at peace here?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

First, as a military professional, I have to say I've been around a few ceasefires—both Chapter 6, Chapter 7, and other kinds—and it's difficult. It's extremely difficult. You've got to give it the first week or two just to get established. That's the first point. The second point is that with Iran, it might take even longer, because a lot of their communications to outlying forces, if you will, have been destroyed. So it has to be by runner, motorcycle, car—whatever they can use to deliver the messages. That's the first thing about ceasefires that's showing itself here, possibly. But the second thing—and you hinted at it, and it's more important—is that there's no inclination whatsoever on Netanyahu's part to stop in Lebanon.

Now he's killing about a hundred civilians a day—not Hezbollah fighters, civilians. And it's kind of a mystery why he's doing it, except that Hezbollah itself is handing him another defeat, just like in 2006. Even his own IDF captains are telling him, "This isn't good. We're not winning this." So he usually reacts to that kind of message by bombing the bejesus out of everything he can find—in this case, buildings, hotels, dry cleaners, you name it—all over Beirut and the rest of Lebanon. And you've put your finger on what I think is the biggest obstacle, and Iran has made that clear: if there isn't a ceasefire in Lebanon as well as elsewhere, then the deal's off.

#Glenn

Well, I saw that Joe Kent reacted to Trump's outburst that maybe it's time to—well, he didn't say leave NATO, but that's kind of the direction it's going. And Joe Kent tweeted something along the lines of, "We'll leave NATO so we can take the side of Israel when Turkey and Israel eventually clash in Syria." I guess I have a two-fold question. Do you see the United States leaving NATO? I mean, I think NATO now has the most obedient Secretary General ever, but I guess that's not the main driver here. So, will the U.S. leave NATO? And do you think such a clash is possible, where the U.S. would actually—well, if not fight the Turks directly, at least push heavily on the side of Israel?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think NATO's dead. I've said that before, and I'll say it again. I think NATO's defunct. It may take a few months, even a couple of years, to die completely—so that everyone pronounces it dead and says a prayer over its grave—but it's dead. Trump might not make any formal declaration of that, any formal declaration of the United States leaving NATO. He's not that kind of guy. He's not definitive; he's mercurial and wishy-washy. It's very difficult to get a really cogent statement out of him—more difficult today than it was in the past. So I don't think it'll be formal in that sense, but it'll certainly happen. It's a fait accompli already, I think.

Ukraine has put the dagger in its heart, but the dagger was already there when we stiffed Russia after George H. W. Bush and didn't follow up on our promises to essentially allow Russia into Europe. Every president after that, in his own way—starting with Bill Clinton and the 78 days of bombing—paid to that promise. So that's that. The other aspect is that Erdoğan, or whoever might take over for him—Fidan or whoever—in Turkey, is not stupid enough to make an enemy of the United States to its face at this particular juncture. Were he to be antagonistic toward Washington from a distance, as it were, I could buy that on certain issues like the Kurds, Syria, and Israel eventually. But I don't see any burgeoning relationship with Israel other than an antagonistic one.

And if we pull away from Israel—which I think we're going to do—remember, I think Israel is our tool, not the other way around. In the very near future, possibly within the next 18 to 24 months, it'll be either a force majeure move away or a clear, definitive "we're through with you" move away. I think we're going to. And that's going to really disturb a lot of these billionaires who've been placing

their bets on this relationship and pumping money into Congress, the presidency, and elsewhere in the country, trying to persuade everyone they can that Israel is essential to U.S. defense in Southwest Asia. At one point it was, but now we're leaving. Mark my words—we're leaving.

We're either going to go back to offshore balancing—which we should never have abandoned—or we're just going to leave and not even do offshore balancing, because, frankly, we're getting limited in our maritime assets, and those assets are getting increasingly dated. Take our carriers, for example. They've shown their vulnerability in this conflict. They won't get any closer than what we call in the Pacific the thousand-mile line. That's the reality of carriers in this world of drones and high-speed missiles.

So we're seeing a transformation taking place in several stages and on several levels now with this war in Southwest Asia. Incidentally, that's what a lot of people—like General Van Riper, who did the Millennium Challenge war game in 2002, I think it was, maybe 2003—and others who have studied this situation have predicted: that this would essentially mark, first, the end of the U.S. presence on the ground in any significant way in Southwest Asia, in the Levant even, in North Africa even, and eventually the end of Israel as a Jewish state in the Levant. It could prosper as a democracy if it were able to achieve that. And it will probably also mean the end of even maritime interests in the region, since we are now almost entirely dependent on ourselves for both LNG and oil.

And the only country that really ties us strongly to the Strait of Hormuz—other than the global impact on the economy if it were closed for an extended period—is Japan, because Japan still gets much of its petroleum through the Strait of Hormuz from Southwest Asia. That has really been the strategic interest of the United States for some time—not its own petroleum, but Japan's petroleum. And that relationship is getting very dicey, too, at the same time. For many of the same reasons, though colored a bit differently, Korea and other countries in the region are beginning to see what we really are—most strikingly Korea, because I think what I'm hearing from the peninsula is: get out of here, leave, the faster the better.

But they just don't have the politicians yet to take that on and do it. Maybe Kim Jong-un might help them a little bit. So it's all unraveling. The entire global framework that we crafted after World War II, mostly at our own behest, is unraveling—our mistakes, you might say. But it was inevitable. It was inevitable. As Colin Powell said to me in 1989 at Fort McPherson, Georgia, "They're all gone, Larry. The Thatchers, the Mitterrands, the Kohls, the Majors—they're all gone. When they're all gone, and when people who don't have their feet in the war, even as 12-year-olds, are in charge, the world is going to change majorly, and you're not going to like it, Larry." He was right.

#Glenn

Why did he say that? I know why they left, but why aren't there any qualified politicians replacing them?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

He had seen—and this is my surmise, because we only talked about that specific issue a couple of times over the following 16 years—most notably when I was working for him in a private capacity between '97, my retirement, and his assumption of the State Department, along with me, in December 2000. We were doing things like going to Nigeria with Jimmy Carter and the Carter Institute to oversee the election at that time of Obasanjo, and other things like going to Haiti, for example, to see if we could calm things down there. And we had a chance to chat about it again.

And I think his principal concern was that what H. W. Bush had started—and even he himself, at the end of his term in '93, had started to befoul the nest of—was a rapprochement of significance with Moscow: bringing them into the political alliance as well as the military alliance, and then spreading it out into a new European security architecture that would include Russia. When he was thinking about the possibilities of that actually happening, and realizing how fragile the chances were that it would happen, he saw chaos. And he saw the chaos not so much because there were no Kohls or Mitterrands—that was part of it, certainly—but because the memory, in the population at large, like most memories of cataclysmic events, would be so fragile, if not gone, that there'd be no force, if you will, to keep them together and no force to keep us in their midst. And I think he was right.

#Glenn

So across NATO, we're fragmenting. As you said, NATO is dead in East Asia—be it South Korea, Japan, or Taiwan. They're beginning to reconsider parts of this alliance system. But how about West Asia? How do you see the United States either leaving or being kicked out of West Asia? Is it because the Gulf states decide the alliance is a vulnerability? Is it that the United States loses interest, or is the U.S. essentially expelled—for example, by Iran holding on to the Strait of Hormuz and imposing crushing limitations?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

That's a huge question. And I don't want to conflate Southwest Asia with West Asia in general. By that, I mean I don't want to mix up what's happening in Iran with what's going to force us out of our ground positions in the Arab countries—and possibly Egypt, too. I suspect Egypt. I suspect they're going to get tired of us as well. And we may get tired of giving them the \$3.6 billion every year just to keep the peace treaty with Israel. After all, if there's no Israel to keep the peace treaty with, there won't be any money for the Egyptians, no matter who's there—Sisi or whoever. But I think it's different as you go north.

You start with Turkey. You have to include Afghanistan and Pakistan, of course. You have to include Western India, because Western India is very different from Eastern India. You have to include the Caucasus, I think. You have to look at what's happening and what the principal axis is for this inexorable shift of power. And it's the same principal axis that existed when it moved the other way—

bringing power to the West and making America, if you will. Now it's going back the other way. And that's the principal axis through Dushanbe, Samarkand, Tashkent, and so forth, on into Xinjiang province in China.

And I think that's going to make that area extremely important, particularly when all the pipelines that are pumping, under construction, or planned for construction are finished, and oil is moving more or less north-south rather than east-west, fueling these economies to the point that they're even greater than they are today. If you look at the economies in Central Asia right now, they are staggeringly successful. It doesn't matter that they have Nazarbayevs and people like that in charge—autocrats, basically, with golden statues of themselves in the town square. They are very successful. The hotels that we used to equate with Paris—and with London, well, sometimes with London—the Ritz maybe would meet that criterion.

And then you look at what's in these cities now, and they don't even compare. These hotels are magnificent—both in their grandeur and in the cost of their rooms, and the luxury of staying there. Central Asia is sitting on top of enough natural gas and oil at a time when the transition is going to have to take place; otherwise, we're going to destroy ourselves. But that's fifty to seventy-five years away. They're probably sitting on top of the most important energy reserves in the world, not least of which are under the Caspian Sea—if they can ever figure out how to deal with that. So I think those relationships, perforce, are going to have to be maintained.

South of there is a different ballgame altogether. And I include in "south of there" the southern rim of India. I also include Southwest Asia, because I think China is going to make sure we don't come back once we're out. And I'm confident we're going to be out—substantially out. We'll sail battle groups and strike groups and things through the South or through the North Arabian Sea, and through the Indian Ocean in general. Maybe our relationship with the Indian Navy will stay solid, because though Delhi's not all that happy with it, the Indian Navy is very happy operating with the U. S. Navy. They're learning a lot from it, and the interoperability is growing. That might become so obvious to the civilian leadership in Delhi, though, that it gets curbed considerably.

Not to say that India and the United States aren't going to stay fairly close—they are, I think, if only because of China. But it's going to be a different world, an entirely different world. And we don't seem to recognize that, Glenn. We don't seem to recognize it. And where we do recognize it, we're fighting it tooth and nail. Look at what we just started doing, with the Israelis carrying the lion's share of the bombing. We're bombing the hell out of that railroad China had finished all the way to the Persian Gulf, which was going to come up into the belly of the Caucasus and be its final southern road base initiative. They're bombing it—bombing the bejesus out of it now. Every day they're bombing that railroad.

That's not because they don't want Iran to have a railroad. It's because they know where that railroad is going. And that railroad will almost immediately, in conjunction with the other four—most of which, in one way or another, debouch into Europe, north, central, and south—take about 60% of

the commerce that China now generates, which is probably around 40% of the world's commerce, off the seas, where America has domain, or thinks it still does, and put it on land. We don't want that. We don't want that at all—any more than those Portuguese wanted it when it happened a thousand years ago and drove them off the water because they were charging too much for commercial shipping.

So they built a land route, and the land route was cheaper by quite a margin, and it put the Portuguese out of business. We're going to get put out of business in terms of maritime supremacy, because land is going to be the essence of economic contact. And these pipelines prove it too—running north-south and east-west. They're not over the water; they're on land. And I think that's where we're going. The Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Bab al-Mandeb—Bab al-Mandeb Strait—will still be there, and commerce will still be flowing, but not nearly to the extent it is today, because we're going over land, because China is saying we're going over land.

#Glenn

I feel like this is the revenge of Halford Mackinder. To an extent, yeah—the whole concern of the British, yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Look at what Putin's got to do. He's got to make a decision here, and I see him thinking about it. Every now and then he'll make a remark, or Sergei Lavrov will make a remark, that leads me to believe they're thinking about it and have people working on it. But which way does he go? I mean, with the Arctic doing what it's doing right now—and I just read the latest report—man, are we getting sea ice melt four or five times faster than we thought we would. And that's got its own negative ramifications, too. But Russia's got the longest navigable coastline. So all of a sudden, Russia, which didn't have a warm-water port, has a coastline that demands maritime power.

So he's got to make a choice here. I mean, he's got significant maritime power, mainly in his submarine fleet, but he's got it elsewhere too. I suspect we're going to see Putin building more icebreakers in particular—and he already has a bunch of them—and other ships that can ply the Arctic as it becomes more navigable. He's going to have to think about becoming, at least in that direction, a maritime power. So he's going to be both: the world's biggest land power outside China, and also a maritime power. And I heard someone the other day—I think it was Doug McGregor—and I wanted to reach into the screen and shake Doug.

I wanted to shake him. He said China had no maritime interests—the largest deep-water fishing fleet in the world, 6,000 ships fishing so intensely in the Antarctic that the Antarctic Council had an emergency meeting over the depletion of krill, the basic building block of protein on the face of the earth. And so, I mean, China has no maritime interests? Come on, Doug, wake up. You're too much a soldier. I like Doug, so I'm just saying that because I want to hurl rockets at him. China does have

interests in the deep sea—very, very integral interests. We get focused on the South China Sea, the Nine-Dash Line, Taiwan, and all that crap.

Meanwhile, they're fishing all over the world, and they just built the world's state-of-the-art port on the west coast of Peru. And that's maritime. So there's an interest there by that state, which is the magnet of all this change, really, because of its economic power. But Russia's got a decision to make. Do we go both ways? Do we look east and west? Do we look north and south? Do we just remain a major land power—ten time zones or whatever—or do we start courting people in the rest of the world? And that explains, I think, why Putin seems to have this incredible affection for, or at least a long-term attraction to, Donald Trump, because he's the present president, however faultily, of the United States. And Putin doesn't want to destroy that relationship. He's still looking in that direction, and he's looking in the other direction too—and he's looking north. So he's got a real tapestry to deal with.

So far, from what I've seen, I think there's competence in his administration and among the people in general—even in the Duma, some can handle this. But can we replace Putin? And can we have a leader afterward who might be even smarter than Putin, or better at dealing with all these multiple responsibilities that are falling on Russia now? Yeah. They're in a key geostrategic location outside China. And now that they're tacitly allied with China, they present the world with a tremendous challenge. Europe, in a significant way, has to accommodate them, learn to live with them, and benefit from that coexistence. It can't fight them. It'll be destroyed if it fights them—it'll destroy itself if it tries. And that's my big concern about this U.S. approach to China that's all bullets, bayonets, and sanctions. It's stupid. It's just downright stupid.

#Glenn

I think, unlike in the 19th or 20th century, the Chinese and the Russians—even though they're land powers—aren't willing to cede the oceans to the United States. And I think you're right that the Chinese, with both the Belt and Road, are going to focus on the sea as well. But the Russians too—they see their territory as important for tying together the Eurasian continent east-west and also north-south, especially with this International North-South Transportation Corridor, which the U.S. and Israel, as you said, are bombing now in Iran. But they also have ambitions of being a maritime power. You mentioned the Arctic route, of course, but if you look at the way they're flirting with countries like Indonesia, you can see they have some significant naval aspirations. They've been a real naval power since Peter the Great, at least, and they intend to remain one.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And when they sailed that old tanker—I think it made port in Matanzas, Cuba—that was in your face, Donald. The Monroe Doctrine, the Trump Doctrine, whatever you want to call it—call it what you want. In your face: I'm in Matanzas offloading a war. And also, two years earlier, when they sent the Gorshkov, the frigate, all my military mates said, "Oh, that frigate, that's nothing." That frigate had

hypervelocity missiles on it that could sink a U.S. aircraft carrier in a heartbeat. Kirov, I think her name was.

And they sent a nuclear attack sub in there too. So the Monroe Doctrine has been dead ever since they did that—if it wasn't dead beforehand. Putin knows what he's doing. He does it selectively, and he does it for real, fundamental reasons that are positive for him—and, I'd argue, positive for what I'm talking about. You have to accommodate this power shift, not fight it, because if you fight it, you'll wind up in John Mearsheimer's sandbox with the Thucydides Trap. And you'll get beaten—but so will a lot of the world.

#Glenn

Well, this is the problem, though—the adjustment to the new world. I think, for me, this was the first thing I thought about when I read the article by Krauthammer back in 1990, when he wrote about the “unipolar moment.” He coined the term. He had a very rational approach, saying, well, so much power is concentrated now. In the future, the world will probably have a multipolar distribution of power, and then we'll embrace that. But it doesn't work like that, because you have leaders who are ideologically committed to maintaining one center of power even after realities have changed. So it's very difficult for—well, you have some exceptions. You know, even Zbigniew Brzezinski, the national security advisor, wrote almost the Bible on the unipolar moment with **The Grand Chessboard**. However, what gets less focus is his book **The Choice**.

I think it was in 2012 when he recognized that, well, actually, the distribution of power is becoming multipolar. America has a choice: it can either accommodate that and carve out a position as first among equals—which is a very favorable format for a multipolar world organized by the U.S.—or it can resist it, but then see the rest of the world essentially create a multipolar order in opposition to the U.S., a kind of balancing, something along the lines of BRICS. And, you know, he took at least some pragmatism with him. But at this point, we've already built an ideological structure around the idea that the hegemony of the West is the foundation of peace and stability in the world. So there's no adjusting to reality. I mean, people often leave out the human aspect here. There's also a flaw, by the way, in political realism—which both I and Mearsheimer belong to—and that is the assumption of the rational state. I think it's not very rational at all.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

So they forget people—they forget people. They don't read; they don't read a lot of poetry. I may be mistaken—John and I have never talked about that. I'd love to talk to him about it. Do you read any poetry, John? Anybody who reads good poetry—and I'm talking about all over the world, from Persia to China to, you know, the English poets we always tout—usually ends up dwelling in the 18th century, 19th century... mostly the 18th century.

But if you read poetry and understand what poetry's power is, then you realize there's an element of human life that's quite significant—something that has nothing to do with rationality and everything to do with emotion, human emotion, which is probably one of the most unpredictable things on the face of the earth. You never know when it's going to go up or down, or do this or do that. Look at economic crises, for example. Most economists who are worth a damn will tell you that the key to a really deep economic crisis is when people lose confidence in the system. You can take all the statistics, lay them out, and say, "Oh, there's going to be a depression."

There's going to be a recession. If you still have the people's confidence, you can work your way through it. You can just see a few of those things indicating something bad is coming, and the people latch onto that—the people being the majority—and lose confidence in the system, and it completely collapses. That's really what happened from '29 to '32 in this country, when we had the Great Depression. Because if you look at the power indices and you look at what we had, you could see what we were going to do in World War II. You could see why Yamamoto, looking at Pearl Harbor burning—apocryphally or not, but very accurately—said, "I fear what we've done is awaken a sleeping tiger and filled it with a fearful resolve."

He was absolutely right, because he, as a young captain, had been in America. He'd seen us from New York to California, from Michigan to Texas, and he knew what we were capable of. That's what we're talking about when we talk about confidence—people doing what they have to do when they have to do it, and doing it more based on emotion than on strategic calculation. Both are necessary, of course. The Mearsheimers and the poets are necessary. But if you forget the poets, you're lost—you're going down. That famous poem by Matthew Arnold, which isn't really talked about much in the world of literature except by the real cognoscenti, has those lines at the end that he wrote in the late 1800s, in the Romantic period.

And he predicted everything that's happening today. The poem that's the most emotional in that sense is **Dover Beach**, where he concludes with, "And we are here as on a darkling plain, swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, where ignorant armies clash by night." That's where we are. That's where we are today. Of course, he was talking about the Huxley brothers and John Henry Cardinal Newman—religion dying in the world and science taking over. But aren't we looking at the same thing today, just in different clothing? Pete Hegseth is trying to bring religion back, just like John Henry Cardinal Newman did with the Catholic Church.

But Newman was a lot smarter than Pete Hegseth. We're still in the same struggle—at least America is—and it's causing us to taint our foreign policy. Where else do you get someone who calls in the Pope's emissary and chews him out for what Leo said, and essentially tells him—apparently, if it's being reported accurately, and I have sources that say it is, sources in the Vatican—that we actually suggested we might want to do an Avignon on the Pope? That we might want to move the Catholic Church to America, like the French did? That's how stupid and ignorant we are today.

We're playing with forces from the past that, once unleashed, are extremely dangerous and hard to get back under control. And we have an idiot at the top. We're in this period you and I were just discussing, even if only briefly. This is not the time when you want an idiot leading a country that's declining against a country that's rising. You just don't—because then you get what you and Mearsheimer are talking about. Well, I want to attribute it to you, but really, you get what John's talking about: the inevitability of a war. And we're going to lose. We're going to lose big time. My concern is that the whole globe is going to lose, because this is going to be nuclear.

#Glenn

Well, the problem is that often when social scientists put together theories, they assume it's the same people when we're rising as when we're declining. I think we need more strategies and theories on how to manage decline because, you know, when society is rising economically, people usually begin to embrace a very cosmopolitan mindset—openness, all of that. But when there's decline, it's human nature to retreat into the tribe. And after that, you get more vicious nationalism.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And into paranoia.

#Glenn

Yes, very much so. When you're declining, it's not just that we have to plan for a weaker army or a worse economy, but you also have to take into account a very tribal mindset—more angry, more vulgar, more aggressive, and more hateful toward adversaries. I find it often shocking that people don't appreciate how hateful we've become. I mean, if you open any newspaper and read about our adversaries—the Chinese, the Iranians, the Russians—you know, forget about even discussing rationally what their interests are. The way they're portrayed... I mean, there's something horrible happening in our societies, and we can't even talk about it. It's quite fascinating, and—

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And a manifestation of that—a recent one, not that it hadn't happened before—was the assassination of Charlie Kirk. Which, incidentally, Glenn, I don't know if you're following at all, but we still don't know who did it. We know categorically that the person they arrested, the rifle they have in possession, did not do the assassination. So what are they doing? What is the Trump administration doing with this incident? It doesn't rival a presidential assassination, or even Dr. King's or Bobby Kennedy's, but it was the assassination of a leading figure, and it tied directly to Israel and the U.S. relationship with Israel in a way that many people in the intelligence community in this country think is damning of Israel and of its prime minister.

And yet we're not even looking at it anymore. I can't find it anywhere in the press. This is terrible—that we do things like this, that we just hide these crimes and push them away when we can't find a convenient scapegoat. Or, you know, Lee Harvey Oswald, for example. I'm not trying to compare Charlie Kirk with John Kennedy, but it's the same kind of phenomenon, the same kind of symptom of decay—of empire, of thinking, of brain power. You could even go back to the Vietnam War and say that's where it started significantly for the empire. Anyway, it's a mess. It's a mess. And we're not going to get out of it by fighting our way out, by sanctioning our way out, by challenging everyone in the world to a duel. That's not going to work.

#Glenn

It contributes to further polarization as well. I mean, at least if there's openness, investigations, and airing out the problems, then a society can at least organize and find consensus around the truth. Whenever it's hidden, then a society will always polarize and follow convenient narratives instead. I did want to get back to something you said before, though, in terms of the consequences of the Iran war. You mentioned that—uh, if there is an Israel—and I thought, yeah, this is an interesting point, because it begs the question: to what extent has this permanent damage already been done during this war, which might not be over? I'd bet it's not. But do you see Israel being in danger, and can the Gulf states recover from this—essentially go back to the way things were?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think not—especially your latter statement, about going back to the way things were. I think that's impossible now. If it's not impossible at this moment, as you and I are talking, Glenn, it's going to be, because Iran will make it impossible. I think that's a fait accompli. And I think MBS has already shifted the sovereign wealth fund's plans away from Israel and toward Syria instead. In fact, I have it on really good authority that he's already redirected all that investment he was going to put into a pipeline running up through northern Saudi Arabia into Israel—eventually to Haifa, and then across to Ceyhan, probably.

And Israel was going to benefit not only from transshipment fees, but also by getting its oil, you know, basically now and forever, from Saudi Arabia that way. Now he's shifted all of that over to Syria. Quite a decision, if it's really been made. Like I said, I have some pretty good sources telling me it has been. That money is going that way now. Well, that's going to dry Israel up unless the United States is prepared to fund all of its petroleum, from wherever it might come. And that also includes funding them to develop the oil and gas fields they took in the Mediterranean from the Gazans.

It belonged to them, but now they're stealing it from Gaza. And the one they have in their own territorial waters—or their own economic zone, I forget which it is—in the extreme eastern Med, they're stealing Lebanon's too. That's one reason he wants to go ahead with Lebanon: he doesn't want

Lebanon ever to recover to the point where it could challenge them. This is all going to go to hell in a handbasket very shortly because of the moves being made by much more powerful countries in the oil and gas markets than Israel.

In fact, Israel has no power in those markets at all, except when it can shoot or kill for it. And it showed that with Marc Rich and Glenn Diesen, and all that stealing from Saddam Hussein—stealing from Syria when we had the war with Iraq, the real reason for the war with Iraq. If you've read Glenn Diesen, Gary Vogler's book, and also Dennis Fritz's book **Deadly Betrayal**, you know that the war was fought for Israel as much as anything else, which is why Israel was pitching for it. So, I think their days are very, very numbered. If they were to suddenly find the political oomph and the political will to shift to a one-state solution that included a truly democratic state—well, since Likud took over, Israel has not been a democracy.

That's all a farce. But if they were to shift, and if they were to accommodate—despite the power of the wound, as Yasser Arafat used to say all the time—despite that, if they were to shift and have a real democracy that treated its citizens roughly the same across the spectrum of citizens it would then generate, then Israel could survive, I think. And Palestine could come back in a significant way. The right of return, the return to '67, all the UN resolutions could be fulfilled. It isn't going to happen because of crooks like Tony Blair and Donald Trump. But that is something that could happen if we can get rid of this detritus that's plaguing us now—these grifters, these money-hungry bastards.

If we could get rid of them and get some decent leadership across the board, including in the U.N.—a new secretary-general is desperately needed—and a revamping and revising of the U.N. Security Council is desperately needed. The first thing I'd do is kick Britain off. I wouldn't even let Britain be a member of the U.N. Security Council anymore. They're just there on our toenails, if you will, standing on our toenails and hurting our feet. So if we could do these things, we could do them in a decade, maybe a decade and a half, and we could get the world squared away again, as it were, and maybe at least partially salvage some of our reputation and some of the power in the world that we've frittered away.

#Glenn

I don't think it's going to happen.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I don't think it's going to happen.

#Glenn

No, I saw a comment by Tucker Carlson today where he was asking, why is it that every single president seems more interested in governing the world instead of governing the United States? I

thought that was interesting, especially when it came to Trump, because I thought he would be the ultimate president to say, "Okay, I'll abandon the empire to save the republic." But I haven't seen that at all. If anything, he seems to be doubling down on the same mistakes he was criticizing when he was in opposition, yet he follows the same policies.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

In my international relations book, which kind of focuses on Fred Hartmann's **The Relations of Nations**—a terrific book, even in its sixth edition—it's still a terrific book. Those are small people. People like that are small people. They're the ones who throw rocks into the cogs of international relations. I like that phrase, too. Fred used it at Newport, at the Naval War College, when he was lecturing there. **The Relations of Nations**—not only is it sort of poetic, it also says it better. What are international relations? Well, they're the relations of nations. And one of the first prerogatives of a smart power, which it should avail itself of 100% of the time, is never to have more enemies than you can handle.

Look at what we've done. We've created an enemy out of the whole freaking planet. It's incredible—the terrible leadership we've had since roughly H.W. Bush. It's probably unprecedented. I can't quite say that, because there were some really poor times before, but we weren't so hard-pressed by international relations and power. We've had some terrible presidents—probably more terrible than great ones, certainly more terrible than the great ones. We've been damned for a generation here, and we need to get undamned. We've been damned in our Congress, and now we're damned in our Supreme Court, too. I was looking at some of the opinions expressed the other day. You know, we have this amendment going through...

Change the Constitution with a very short amendment that would just eliminate the effects of the **Citizens United** decision. That would be a terrific boon to our political process—to get all this dark money out of it. And we've been stunned at how fast it's moving. We already have 26 states. We only need 39, I think—two-thirds of the Congress, three-quarters of the states. I think we're going to get it, and probably within the next five or six years, which would be a real boon to our political process. But in five or six years, you can destroy yourself—and with the kind of leadership we have right now, we just might do that.

#Glenn

Yeah, I was speaking to Judge Napolitano. I actually had him on this program, and he expects a civil war. So there's a lot of pessimism going around. But what you mentioned about the institutions all being corrupted under this power is one thing—but also the international system. One should ask whether empire or hegemony becomes a curse, because if you go back to the 1990s, not only was the U.S. admired by almost the whole world, but the leading foreign policy strategy of China and Russia was to get along as well as possible with the United States. You know, I wouldn't only put the U.S. in this category.

The Europeans have been no better themselves. I mean, they were also seen as a preferable partner by a lot of countries. But now you see all of that being reversed—the power diminished, the reputation diminished. I have a feeling that if we hadn't gone down Krauthammer's path of, you know, not just the hegemony of the U.S., but this effort to have the hegemony of the political West, it could have been very different. But, you know, we are where we are. And I did want to ask you, though, how you see—again, I just want to get back to the ceasefire, to go full circle here—how do you make sense of this?

Because as the ceasefire is now in place, we also see troops being mobilized or sent to the region. Is this just insurance, like reassurance? Because in Iran, of course, they don't trust much of the diplomacy—and for good reason. They see it as very deceptive. Is this primarily an effort by Trump to get out of a horrible war he didn't want to be in? Or do you see Trump also buying time for a possible escalation? I mean, it doesn't necessarily have to be one or the other. It could be, of course, trying to end the war or taking advantage of it to ramp things up. But how do you make sense of this ceasefire situation?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think there are two ways to look at it—well, more than two, but two main ones. One, it's another subterfuge, just like you suggested. And I think probably Abbas Araghchi, the foreign minister of Iran, sees it that way right now. Maybe President Pezeshkian and the speaker of the Majlis, and others too. I would, if I were them. The idea is that Netanyahu's strenuous objections—"I'm going to keep my war going in Lebanon, to hell with you and your diplomacy"—were all orchestrated ahead of time. He was playing the bad guy, the one whose defiance would make it seem to the Iranians that this was a genuine effort.

And so what we're going to do is, two or three days from now, we're going to blow the hell out of them again—or maybe even make an assault on the uranium. I think that's what we were doing earlier. By the way, we lost some very expensive aircraft. We lost some people we haven't even reported yet. We lost assets in a way that made us look as stupid—really, Glenn—as stupid militarily as Jimmy Carter's military looked in, what was it, '78 or whatever, when we pulled off Operation Eagle Claw. We had the helicopter pick up and run into the C-130 in the desert in Iran, crash and burn, and kill eight or nine people. This was even dumber than that. So that had to be a shock—the old Pentagon exit—and a shock as it was reported to Trump, too.

But there doesn't seem to be any dissension there. They're still working together, sadly enough. So that's one thing that could be happening. We could be trying to lull the Iranians again—make them think we're going to have a ceasefire, that we're going to do diplomacy—and then hit them again in whatever way we can. That's one possibility. The other possibility is that we're serious about this. We're serious. And Donald Trump finally figured out, after that story broke in the New York Times and elsewhere about how he made his decision to start the war, that Bibi was the sole counselor.

Everyone else—from General Keane to J.D. Vance to Marco Rubio—was cautioning him. Pete Hegseth was a sycophant all the way, but everyone else was warning him.

And Bibi was saying, “Just do it. You’ll see—they’ll collapse. They’ll collapse. Go ahead and do it.” I think that’s probably a pretty accurate summary of what the decision-making environment was like. So, is he really serious? And being serious would mean figuring out a way to get out of this war and declare victory—and to hell with Netanyahu. If he’s really serious, then we have some hard negotiation ahead of us. And so do the Iranians. I mean, I’ve got their ten points right here—the same ten points I would have laid out if I were them: reparations, end of all sanctions, gone from Southwest Asia, you know, all these things. Will that be negotiable? Will they be able to work out something if they do go to genuine diplomacy in Pakistan, or wherever they might do it?

I think it would, if we had a team on our side—led by a president on our side—who was serious about, finally serious about, stopping a war. But I don’t think that’s going to happen. I think we’re more likely to just muddle through, or do the first thing I described—try to fool them again and strike them in the middle of it. Or we’ll get somewhere down the road and strike them again because Trump will get mad, get angry, and realize he can’t negotiate his way out—not in any way that’ll look good. And we’re coming up on the midterms, and right now all the polls show the Republicans are going to take a shellacking. And I do mean a shellacking. So, I mean, it’s a reason to be free and fair in an election—which is a question, too.

If it’s an election, period, that’s the question. So we don’t have anything good to look forward to, except maybe in the second possibility—if some success were to be achieved. Meanwhile, Glenn Diesen is “preacher packing,” as I call it—an old Southern term. You put the good strawberries on top and the rotten ones on the bottom. He’s preacher packing the military at all ranks, getting Christian nationalists wherever he can in the rank structure, so that when the time comes for the military to make a decision one way or the other—regarding the elections or whatever—he’ll have at least a sizable contingent in the military that will take his side.

#Glenn

Is that the reason behind all the purges—the firing of the generals? You see this as building a Trump-loyal army?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Absolutely. And the way he’s recruiting—the states he’s recruiting from, the Christian nationalist counties he’s recruiting from, the evangelical base he’s recruiting from—the conversions at the end of advanced individual training in the Army, for example: they go to the river and baptize sixty or seventy recruits in the name of Jesus and God. You can’t make this stuff up. I mean, this is something I was watching. You’ve probably seen this movie—Orlando Bloom sort of came to maturity in it. It’s about the Crusades. Ridley Scott did the movie, and it takes a lot of license with

Richard Coeur de Lion and the Crusaders and Saladin, and the confrontation between the Crusaders and Saladin on two or three occasions—one where he takes Jerusalem, of course, and Orlando Bloom is allowed to march the citizens out because he's been such a great fighter and everything.

Saladin has respect for him. So, it's Hollywood—but the times, the customs, and the actions of the Crusaders, I think, are very well displayed. They were there for money and profit. They were there for money, profit, and land. "Oh, I'm here for the Pope? Where's the Pope? Where's the Pope? Have you got him here with you? Oh, he's not here? I'm here for money and profit and land." And even if the Pope were there, he'd say, "Of course you're looking for money, profit, and land—for the Catholic Church." So, you know, Pete Hegseth has this warped interpretation of the Crusades, but that's what he believes. I'm convinced that's what he believes. And when he gets down on his knees and prays in front of the troops and begs them to get down with him and pray, he's serious. He's serious. That's a dangerous man.

#Glenn

Well, if this is preparing for what could essentially become a civil war, that's quite troubling. Yes.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

It could be a civil war with different segments fighting in it. You could have the Christian nationalists, the dominionists, the dispensationalists, and others looking to bring Armageddon a little closer to home. And you could have genuine Christians out there who take to the streets, or whatever, to protest that war—the manipulation and ultimate denigration of Jesus Christ—because there are some like that who are really getting angry at Hegseth and at people like John Hagee sending money to settlers on the West Bank even now. And there are others who are getting very, very angry at the MAGA crowd, and some of the MAGA faithful getting very, very angry at the people getting angry with them. So you have the potential for a lot of different people out there on the streets. And we have 400 million guns in this country.

#Glenn

More guns than people. It's quite an extraordinary statistic. Well—

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Some of them were floating guns across the Canadian border underneath drones. You heard about that one? No? These entrepreneurs up in Wisconsin and Minnesota put ten or twelve Smith & Wesson T-38s, or whatever they were, under a drone in a bag. They only cost maybe four or five hundred dollars in the U.S. They float them across to a buddy's backyard, drop them there, pick them up later, and sell them in Toronto for two thousand apiece.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

It's the invasion of Canada.

#Glenn

Yeah, that's what you get with these new technologies.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

It's driving the FBI crazy.

#Glenn

Well, thank you for taking the time. We're almost out of time. So, yeah, I wish there were some happier news, more optimism, given that the war possibly came to an end and the ceasefire is still in place. One would hope we'd have some optimism, but I don't see it quite yet. But yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I don't either. And I'll tell you, the place I'd least like to be—because I'd probably get so angry I'd get myself killed real quick—is Lebanon, where they're killing men, women, children, anybody who happens to be under their bombs.

#Glenn

Yeah, so the BBC reported that Israel had struck Hezbollah command centers across the country. But what you're actually seeing are residential buildings being blown up, with women, children, and men scattered. It's quite horrible.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I have a couple of friends there who tell me it's absolutely the worst they've seen. And they've been there a long time, so they've seen a lot of bad times. You don't know where to go, you don't know where to turn. You walk out into the street, and there's a bomb.

#Glenn

It just feels like everyone can see where this is going, and no one is trying to, you know, go for a course correction. It's not just the Middle East—you can say the same about Europe. I can see where this is going, and that's the war against Russia. This is going to escalate very soon. And it's just... is there any predictability in where we're going? And again, nothing. It's quite depressing.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

There are some people out there with gasoline cans just sprinkling it around.

#Glenn

Yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, thank you for the time. Thanks again, however morose it was.